

From: Nerys Lloyd-Pierce <nerys@lloyd-pierce.co.uk>
Sent: 19 December 2024 11:49
To: Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee | Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith <SeneddClimate@senedd.wales>
Subject: More biodiversity loss and poor climate decision in Cardiff

Dear Llyr,

Cardiff City Society would like to bring to your attention a recent planning decision made by Cardiff Council which, in our opinion, has not taken the step-wise approach to preserving and enhancing biodiversity required by Planning Policy Wales seriously.

In October, Cardiff's Planning Committee made a decision to approve a large battery plant and data centre on the coast off Rover Way despite concerns over environmental impacts, in particular habitat loss. The development site is significant Open Mosaic Habitat surrounded by a number of sites of scientific and ecological importance.

The scheme was deemed to be acceptable 'on balance'. The paper considered by Planning Committee is online at

<https://cardiff.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s81428/2400624FUL%20Land%20at%20Rover%20Way%20Splott.pdf>

PPW12 (p.148) states:

'Planning authorities must follow a step-wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for.'

It is acknowledged that the proposed development will result in a 70% loss of habitat space. The paper (paras 8.68 onwards) dismisses the possibility of avoidance and minimisation and moves straight to considering mitigation and compensation. On-site compensation has not been taken as seriously as the County Ecologist considers it should have been. In relation to off-site compensation, no site has been offered in mitigation for the loss of land, and no explanation provided for this failure. Rather the council will benefit from a legal agreement with the developer which will see a payment of £250,000, hoping this can be used to fund biodiversity projects or find replacement land in mitigation. The County Ecologist raised concerns about the lack of on-site and off-site compensation as well as expressing wider concerns about the development which they opposed.

We are concerned that the approval of this planning application and the way in which avoidance and minimisation of negative environmental impacts were so quickly dismissed could set a precedent for other developers to take the same approach, thereby undermining the intent of national planning policy.

Yours sincerely,

Nerys Lloyd-Pierce
Chair, Cardiff Civic Society

email chair@cardiffcivicsociety.org