

26 August 2021

Alex Bell
General Manager Strategy and Environment
Waitomo District Council
By email: Alexander.bell@waitomo.govt.nz
cc: cdawson@bbo.co.nz

Dear Alex

Waitomo District Council: Request for Clarification of Section 92 information – Application number RM200019 to amend conditions of the existing consent – Taumatotara Wind Farm Limited

First of all, congratulations on your new role at Waitomo District Council and welcome back! We will look forward to working with you on the wind farm project.

This letter formally responds to the letter from your predecessor Terrena Kelly, dated 10 May 2021.

We have undertaken a significant amount of work to try and bring to a conclusion the final issues raised in the 10 May letter. This letter and the attachments, responds to that request for further clarification of a number of questions.

The information below is responded to in the order it was requested.

1. Transportation

Thank you for your agreement that the conditions of the bridges can be assessed at a later stage. In respect of the confirmation of the transport route, we are not applying to make any changes to the transportation that relates to consenting matters from the original application. We have not had the opportunity to assess the viability of the alternate SH3 route after the bypass of the Awakino Tunnel is complete.

2. Noise

We do not propose any changes to the noise environment with taller turbines however It is good to know that your Council's noise concerns have now been satisfied. In respect of the noise conditions Siri Wilkening proposed as per your letter of 10 May, Michael Smith from our team previously recommended to Glenn Starr appropriate noise conditions in a letter dated 10 November 2020 (attached) which we thought were more appropriate. So, Michael corresponded with Siri by email several times on 23 June 2021 and they both agreed to use the conditions he had previously recommended, but with a change to part of condition 16, as recommended by Siri – see the email

train in the attached emails (“Emails Smith-Wilkening” attachment). We assume this now satisfies the noise requirements.

3. Ecology

I understand an advance copy of the Ecology report prepared by Dr John Craig and Simon Chapman has previously been sent to your Council (10 August 2021). I have also attached the report to this correspondence. This report answers the full gambit of questions asked by Leigh Bull on Avifauna and Bats.

The conclusion of this well researched report from two experts in the fields of Avifauna and Bats is that the application to vary the consent conditions will have clear positive benefits. This benefit will be derived from a number of factors, including halving the number of turbines, and consequently reducing the numbers of birds and bats that potentially may be a risk; by increasing the clearance area under the blades to lessen the potential impact on low flying bats and birds; by committing to undertake pest control programmes to improve habitats.

4. Landscape

Dave Mansergh raised concerns in his Project Memorandum (attached to 10 May letter) regarding landscape effects on those properties to the north of the proposed turbines, in Taharoa Road, Te Waitere Road and Taumatotara West Road.

Dave has also referred to many more houses on the map attached to his Memorandum. All of these houses with three exceptions are owned by landowners on which the wind farm will be located:

1. SA34B/404 – the owners of that property – Alan and Sue Smith – have signed a written approval of affected persons form – it is forwarded with this letter.
2. iSA48B/494 – The owners of that property are Tim and Mary Stokes. We have assessed the ZVI Maps prepared by Energy3, previously forwarded to Council and do not believe the views from this property are significantly different from the existing consented environment.
3. Attached to this letter is a further assessment in the form of a Memorandum, completed by WSP. This Memorandum concentrates on the effects on “houses 26 and 28”, both of which are located on Te Waitere Road – SA30d/453 (house 26), and SA42C/698 (house 28).

Overall, there are few dwellings to the north of the 11 turbine windfarm outside of the wind farm landowners. One of these have signed an affected party form. One has a view that is not significantly different from the existing consented environment. The other two dwellings on Te Waitere Road are some distance from the wind farm, with the furthest being able to view more turbines, and the effects assessed as being ‘moderate’ using the NZLI Assessment Guidelines, and the other ‘low’. However overall, the previous landscape assessment for the variation proposal identified the effects of the proposed variation as being ‘low’.

5. Tangata Whenua

A response was received on 27 July 2021 from Ngaati Mahuta ki te Tai Hauaauru (representing Te Hauaauru RMC) and copied to Chris Dawson, after we had several rounds of consultation, including a

site visit. This response is attached. The Te Hauauru RMC has said they cannot support the change of wind turbine size.

This response was disappointing, and we are still actively engaging with Ngaati Mahuta through Yvonne Ngahinaturae Armstrong to see if we are able to resolve their concerns. A planned meeting was not held due to the covid lockdown, and we are not sure when we will be able to meet with them again, but this will have to wait until after lockdown ends.

Please contact me if you have any queries re this response document and accompanying documentation.

I look forward to working to conclude the processing of this consent application.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Craig Shearer', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Craig Shearer
Principal, Shearer Consulting Limited