
Adroddiad

gan Siân E Worden BA DipLH MCD MRTPI
Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion
Dyddiad:

Report

by Siân E Worden BA DipLH MCD MRTPI
an Inspector appointed by the Welsh
Date:

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

SECTION 62D

Application by Parc Solar Traffwll Limited

Land to the west and south-east of Llanfihangel yn Nhowyn and to the south and south-east of Brygwrn, Anglesey.

Cyf ffeil/File ref: DNS/3217391

Abbreviations used in this report:

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AIAL	Assessment of Impact on Agricultural Land
ALC	Agricultural Land Classification
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BMV	best and most versatile [agricultural land]
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CMP	Construction Management Plan
CPO letter	Letter from Minister for Climate Change to all Chief Planning Officers dated 1 March 2022
CTMS	Construction Traffic Management Statement
DA	Development Area [one of the three parcels of land which would be developed]
DAM	Development Advice Map
DNS	Development of National Significance
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIP	Energy Island Programme
ENIMP	Electrical Noise Interference Management Plan
ES	Environmental Statement
FCA	Flood Consequences Assessment
FMfP	Flood Map for Planning
GAPS	Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service
GCN	great crested newt
GVA	gross value added
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
IACC	Isle of Anglesey County Council
LDP	Local Development Plan
LEMP	Landscape Ecological Management Plan
LIR	Local Impact Report
LNR	Local Nature Reserves
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
MoD	Ministry of Defence
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
PAR	Precision Approach Radar
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
PV	Photo voltaic
RIGS	regionally important geological / geomorphologic sites

RVAA	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
SAB	Sustainable Urban Drainage Approval Body
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SoCG	Statement of Common Ground
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPALUPU	Soil Policy and Agricultural Land Use Planning Unit of WG
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Scheme
S106	Section 106 agreement or undertaking
TA	Transport Assessment
TAN	Technical Advice Note
VP	Viewpoint
WG	Welsh Government
WGHA	Welsh Government Highway Authority
WS	Wildlife Sites
'The 1990 Act'	The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
'The 2015 Act'	The Planning (Wales) Act 2015
'The DNS Regulations'	The Developments of National Significance (Wales) Regulations 2016
'The EIA Regulations'	The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017
'The Habitats Regulations'	The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
'The Procedure Order'	The Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016
WFGA	Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015
WLS	Welsh Language Statement
WMs	Welsh Ministers
ZOI	Zone of Influence

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DNS Application Ref: APP/ DNS/3217391

Site location: Land to the west and south-east of Llanfihangel yn Nhowyn and to the south and south-east of Brygwrn, Anglesey.

- The application, submitted to PEDW on 26 February 2022, was made under section 62D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015).
- The applicant is Parc Solar Traffwll Limited.
- The application was confirmed as valid on 11 April 2022.
- Site visits were made on 16 May, 27 July and 22 September 2022.
- Hearings were held on 26, 27 and 28 July 2022.
- The development proposed is a ground mounted photo voltaic solar farm, together with associated equipment, infrastructure, grid connection and ancillary works.

Summary of Recommendation: That planning permission be permitted subject to the conditions set out in Annex A of this document.

Procedural Matters

1. In accordance with Article 5 of The Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016, the applicant notified PINS (Wales) on behalf of the Welsh Ministers of the proposed development on 10 May 2021. The submitted application was subject to appropriate pre-application consultation and publicity from 6 August 2021 until 17 September 2021, and was accompanied by a Pre-Application Consultation Report, dated February 2022.
2. An Environmental Statement (ES) under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (the EIA Regulations) was submitted with the application. The ES was assessed for completeness by PEDW. A report was issued on 19 April 2021 confirming that the ES contained the level of information identified in Regulation 17 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations and was complete for the purposes of those Regulations. I have taken into account the ES and the environmental information, as defined in the EIA Regulations, in this report.
3. On confirmation of the validity of the application on 11 April 2022, PEDW undertook the specified consultation and publicity measures as required by the Order. The Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC) subsequently submitted its Local Impact Report (LIR) in May 2022.
4. In a letter dated 30 May 2022, I informed the parties of the matters that would be discussed at hearings; all other matters would be considered by written representations. The letter also informed the applicant that further information was required for the purposes of the hearings.
5. The hearing sessions were held on 26, 27 and 28 July 2022 and considered the following topic areas.

- Hearing 1 - Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land
 - Hearing 2 - Character and appearance
 - Living conditions
 - Hearing 3 - Community benefits and ownership
 - Conditions
6. I carried out unaccompanied inspections of the surrounding area on various dates, an accompanied visit to three dwellings adjacent to the site on 27 July 2022 and a further, post-hearings unaccompanied visit to various viewpoints on 22 September 2022.

The Site and Surroundings

7. The site of the proposed development comprises three parcels of land to the west of the island, close to the coast and RAF Valley. One, DA6, is to the south east of the village of Caergeiliog; the other two, DA4 and 5, lie opposite one another on the lane running out of Bryngwran and to the south of the A55. In total, the proposal site covers an area of approximately 63ha.
8. Despite its proximity to the trunk road, the area surrounding the parcels of land is rural and tranquil. The lanes connecting settlements and farms are narrow and, for the most part, bordered by tall hedges. The land around the sites is low lying with several bodies of water. It undulates gently and from several places there are wide reaching views towards the coast and of the intervening land. Much of it is in agricultural use, mainly grazing, but there are also scrublands, dunes and wetlands.

The Proposal

9. The proposed development is described on the application form as a ground mounted photo voltaic solar farm, together with associated equipment, infrastructure, grid connection and ancillary works. It is anticipated that the proposed development would have an electrical generating capacity of 30 - 40MW.
10. The Design and Access Statement provides a detailed description of what the proposal would include, namely:
- photovoltaic (PV) panels to a maximum height of 3m; the lowest part of the panel would be approximately 0.9m above ground level;
 - mounting frames - matt finished, small section, metal structure;
 - scheme of landscaping and biodiversity enhancement;
 - central inverters (inverters and transformers will be housed together in prefabricated containers to a maximum height of circa 3m), substations (DNO and Customer to a maximum height of circa 3m) and associated cabling (below ground);
 - point of connection;

- stock fencing up to a height of about 2m to secure the development areas;
 - infra-red CCTV (CCTV cameras would operate using motion sensors and would be positioned inward only to ensure privacy to neighbouring land and property);
 - temporary set down areas;
 - internal service roads; and
 - site access for the construction, operational and decommissioning phases.
11. The proposed point of connection would be located at an existing SP Energy Networks substation to the south of Caergeiliog on the eastern side of Cymyran Road. A customer substation would be located on DA6 and from here a cable would connect directly into the existing substation on Cymyran Road. DA4 and DA5 would be connected to the main customer substation at DA6 by underground cabling which would be located within the adopted highway or within land where an agreement is in place with the landowner.

National Planning Policy and Guidance for Renewable Energy

Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales

12. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Welsh Government (WG) to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in Wales by at least 80% for the year 2050 from 1990 levels with a system of interim emissions targets and carbon budgets. The Plan sets out how Wales aims to meet the first carbon budget (2016-2020) and consequently the 2020 interim target through 100 policies and proposals across Ministerial portfolios.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 11

13. WG published Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (PPW) in February 2021. This provides the overarching national level source of planning policy for Wales and is a material consideration alongside Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Future Wales). It has been updated to take into account Future Wales and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act which incorporates seven wellbeing goals. It seeks to support the requirement for sustainable development via the planning system whereby the presumption in favour of sustainable development forms the overarching role together with a firm view on improving population wellbeing.
14. PPW sets out the specific planning policies for achieving sustainable development across Wales. Figure 4 sets out the key planning principles of this national policy, stating that “The planning system has a vital role to play in making development resilient to climate change, decarbonising society and developing a circular economy for the benefit of both the built and natural environments and to contribute to the achievement of the well-being goals.”
15. Chapter 5 (Productive and Enterprising Places) of PPW sets out WG’s policies regarding Enterprising Placemaking and Wellbeing across Wales. One of the key aims in relation to energy is:
- For Wales to generate 70% of its electricity consumption from renewable generation by 2030;

- For 1 Gigawatt of renewable electricity capacity in Wales to be locally owned by 2030; and
 - Actively managing the transition to a low carbon economy.
16. PPW chapter 5 outlines the importance of the planning system to deliver these targets; paragraph 5.7.15 states: “The planning system has an active role to help ensure the delivery of these targets, in terms of new renewable energy generating capacity and the promotion of energy efficiency measures in buildings.
17. Paragraph 5.9.19 states that: “In determining applications for the range of renewable and low carbon energy technologies, planning authorities should take into account:
- the contribution a proposal will make to meeting identified Welsh, UK and European targets;
 - the contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - the wider environmental, social and economic benefits and opportunities from renewable and low carbon energy development.
18. Paragraph 5.9.20 states:
- Planning authorities should also identify and require suitable ways to avoid, mitigate or compensate adverse impacts of renewable and low carbon energy development. The construction, operation, decommissioning, remediation and aftercare of proposals should take into account:
- the need to minimise impacts on local communities, such as from noise and air pollution, to safeguard quality of life for existing and future generations;
 - the impact on the natural and historic environment;
 - cumulative impact;
 - the capacity of, and effects on the transportation network;
 - grid connection issues where renewable (electricity) energy developments are proposed; and
 - the impacts of climate change on the location, design, build and operation of renewable and low carbon energy development.
19. Chapter 5 also outlines that before an application is submitted “...developments should, wherever possible, consider how to avoid, or otherwise minimise, adverse impacts through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures”. Furthermore, active engagement with the local community should be undertaken at pre-application stage.

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

20. Supplementing PPW are Technical Advice Notes (TANs) which provide additional policy and detail on a variety of topics. Those of relevance to this case include:

- TAN 5, Nature Conservation and Planning;
- TAN 6, Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities;
- TAN 11, Noise;
- TAN 15, Development and Flood Risk;
- TAN 18, Transport; and
- TAN 24, The Historic Environment.

Development Plan Policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Future Wales)

21. Future Wales was published in February 2021. It comprises part of the development plan (in conjunction with the local development plan for the area concerned). It provides a spatial expression of national planning policy and sets the guiding framework for where large-scale change and nationally important developments will be focussed over the next 20 years. Anglesey is in the North region with connections identified within the region, to Mid Wales, England and, via the port at Holyhead, internationally.
22. DNS applications must be determined in accordance with Future Wales. Policy 17 states that WG strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs. In determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and targets. These are:
 - for 70% of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030.
 - for one gigawatt of renewable energy capacity to be locally owned by 2030.
 - for new renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership from 2020.
23. Policy 18 provides the criteria for assessing DNS proposals for renewable and low carbon energy and is required to be read together with Policy 17. The eleven criteria are that (briefly):
 1. the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape;
 2. there are no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings;
 3. there are no adverse effects on the integrity of Internationally designated sites and the features for which they have been designated;
 4. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on national statutory designated sites for nature conservation, protected habitats and species;
 5. the proposal includes biodiversity enhancement measures to provide a net benefit for biodiversity;
 6. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on statutorily protected built heritage assets;

7. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts by way of shadow flicker, noise, reflected light, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance;
8. there are no unacceptable impacts on the operations of defence facilities and operations (including aviation and radar);
9. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the transport network through the transportation of components or source fuels during its construction and operation;
10. the proposal includes consideration of the materials needed or generated by the development to ensure the sustainable use and management of resources;
11. there are acceptable provisions relating to the decommissioning of the development at the end of its lifetime, including the removal of infrastructure and effective restoration.

Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026

24. The Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP) was adopted in July 2017 and provides the overarching strategic planning framework for Anglesey and Gwynedd to 2026. As Future Wales is the national, and highest, tier of development plan in Wales, local development plans are required to be in accordance with it. S38(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms that “If to any extent a policy contained in a development plan for an area conflicts with another policy in the development plan the conflict must be resolved in favour of the policy which is contained in the last document”. For this application, the last document is Future Wales.
25. The JLDP covers a period of 15 years (2011 to 2026) and its strategy concentrates on ensuring sustainable development. A full review of the JLDP commenced on 31 July 2021.
26. All JLDP policies are interrelated and should be read together to understand their combined effect on a planning proposal. The parcels that form part of the application site all lie outside the development boundaries identified in the JLDP and none are allocated for a specific use. They are in the open countryside outside of the Ynys Môn AONB and Special Landscape Areas (SLAs).
27. The JLDP sets out the key issues to be tackled across the joint area. This includes the loss of young economically active residents, low productivity within the local economy and the need to respond to business development needs and employment needs of existing/new employers. The lack of appropriate training and skills is a barrier to growth. The need for the plan area to adapt and respond positively to the challenges of climate change is also highlighted as one of the key issues. The Vision for the plan area is:

By 2026, Anglesey and Gwynedd will be recognized for their vibrant and lively communities that celebrate their unique culture, heritage and environment and for being places where people choose to live, work and visit.
28. JLDP policies particularly relevant to the proposal are:
 - **Strategic Policy PS 7** promotes renewable energy technologies subject to criteria including that installations outside designated areas will be supported

provided they would not cause significant demonstrable harm to landscape character, biodiversity, or amenity of residential or holiday accommodation, either individually or cumulatively.

- **Policy ADN 2** is PV solar energy specific, directing proposals for solar PV farms of 5MW or more to the potential search areas shown on the Proposals Map. Proposals of this scale will only be permitted in other locations in exceptional circumstances when the need for a scheme can be justified and there are specific locational circumstances.

Proposals for Solar PV Farms of 5MW or more and other solar schemes of up to 5MW will be permitted provided that the proposal conforms to the following criteria:

- i. All impacts on landscape character, heritage assets and natural resources have been adequately mitigated, ensuring that the special qualities of all locally, nationally and internationally important landscape, biodiversity and heritage designations, including, where appropriate, their settings are conserved or enhanced;
- ii. The proposal will not result in significant harm to the safety or amenity of sensitive receptors including effect from glint and glare and will not have an unacceptable impact on roads, rail or aviation safety;
- iii. The proposal will not result in significant harm to the residential visual amenities of nearby residents;
- iv. The proposal will not have unacceptable cumulative impacts in relation to existing solar PV farms and those which have permission and other prominent landscape features;
- v. The panels and associated infrastructure will, at the end of the operational life of the facility, be removed in accordance with a restoration and aftercare scheme submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority;
- vi. That a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is provided to demonstrate that any potential negative effects arising during construction and decommissioning phases are avoided.

29. Other key policies are:

- **Strategic Policy PS 5:** Sustainable Development - supports development where it is consistent with the principles of sustainable development such as to "alleviate the causes of climate change...".
- **Strategic Policy PS 6:** Alleviating and Adapting to the Effects of Climate Change - In order to alleviate the effects of climate change, proposals will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that they have fully taken account of and responded to the following factors: the energy hierarchy; reducing energy demand; energy efficiency. In addition, proposals must demonstrate that they have fully taken account of and responded to matters including the ability of landscapes, environments and species to adapt to the harmful effects of climate

change is not affected, and that compensatory environments are provided if necessary...”

- **Strategic Policy PS 19:** Conserving and Where Appropriate Enhancing the Natural Environment - development must be managed to conserve and where appropriate enhance the Plan area’s distinctive natural environment, countryside and coastline, and proposals that have a significant adverse effect on them will be refused unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweighs the value of the site or area and national policy protection for that site and area in question.”
- **Policy PCYFF 1:** Development Boundaries – resists development outside the development boundaries identified in the Plan unless in accordance with specific policies in this Plan or national planning policies or the proposal demonstrates that its location in the countryside is essential.
- **Policy PCYFF 2:** Development Criteria – sets out criteria for all proposals including that planning permission would be refused where there was an unacceptable adverse impact on the health, safety or amenity of occupiers of local residences, other land and property uses or characteristics of the locality due to increased activity, disturbance, vibration, noise, dust, fumes, litter, drainage, light pollution, or other forms of pollution or nuisance.
- **Policy PCYFF 4:** Design and Landscaping – states that all proposals should integrate into their surroundings and that those failing to show (in a manner appropriate to the nature, scale and location of the proposed development) how landscaping has been considered from the outset as part of the design proposal will be refused.
- **Policy TRA 4:** Managing Transport Impacts – does not permit proposals which would cause unacceptable harm to the safe and efficient operation of the highway, public transport and other movement networks including pedestrian and cycle routes, public rights of way and bridle routes.
- **Policy AMG 3:** Protecting and Enhancing Features and Qualities that are Distinctive to the Local Landscape Character – states that development will be managed to conserve and where appropriate enhance the Plan area’s distinctive natural environment, countryside and coastline; proposals that have a significant adverse effect on them will be refused unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweighs the value of the site or area and national policy protection for that site and area in question. A proposal will be granted provided it doesn’t have significant adverse impact upon features and qualities which are unique to the local landscape in terms of visual, historic, geological, ecological or cultural aspects.
- **Policy AMG 5:** Local Biodiversity Conservation – states that proposals must protect and, where appropriate, enhance biodiversity that has been identified as being important to the local area by avoiding significant harmful impacts through the sensitive location of development. Opportunities to create, improve and manage wildlife habitats and natural landscape including wildlife corridors, stepping stones, trees, hedges, woodlands and watercourses must also be

considered. Proposals affecting sites of local biodiversity importance will be refused unless they can conform with criteria.

- **Policy AMG 6:** Protecting Sites of Regional or Local Significance – will not permit proposals likely to cause direct or indirect significant harm to Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Wildlife Sites (WS) or regionally important geological / geomorphologic sites (RIGS) unless there is a proven, overriding need for the development, and no other suitable site.
- **Policy PS 20:** Preserving and Where Appropriate Enhancing Heritage Assets – permits proposals that would preserve and, where appropriate, enhance heritage assets, their settings and significant views into and out of the buildings/areas.

30. Other JLDP policies which should be considered include: PCYFF 6 Water Conservation; PS2 Infrastructure and Developer Contributions; ISA 1 Infrastructure Provision; and Policy PS13 Providing opportunity for a flourishing economy.

31. In addition, the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (July 2019) and the Isle of Anglesey County Council's Community Benefit Contribution Strategy are also of relevance.

Planning History

32. The relevant planning history is summarised below:

Planning reference	Description	Decision Date
Development Area 4		
EL/974/E	Erection of electricity lines on land near Plas Llechylched, Bryngwran.	18/01/1980
16C132A	Erection of an agricultural shed on O.S 1815, Bryngwran.	19/04/2007
16C132B	Construction of track to gain access to the agricultural shed approved under planning application ref: 16C132A on land at Plas Llechylched, Bryngwran.	08/10/2007
16C132D	Full application for the erection of an agricultural dwelling on land adjacent to Plas Llechylched, Bryngwran.	04/04/2011
16C132E	Application to determine whether prior approval is required for the erection of an extension to the agricultural shed to store agricultural equipment and machinery on land forming part of O.S. enclosure SH 3477 1815, Bryngwran.	02/08/2011
16C187	Erection of an agricultural shed together with the construction of a new access to the field opposite Plas Llechylched, Bryngwran	13/12/2010

16C145G	Application to determine whether prior approval is required for the construction of a hardstanding area on land at Plas Llechylched Farm, Bryngwran.	12/07/2012
16C151	Alterations and extensions including the erection of a private double garage at Plas Llechylched Farm, Bryngwran	22/08/2003
16C151A	Full application for the re-siting of the garage previously approved under planning permission 16C151 together with alterations to the existing dwelling at Plas Llechylched, Bryngwran.	10/10/2014
16C204	Full application for conversion of outbuildings into 5 dwellings and 2 holiday letting units together with the installation of a package treatment plant at Plas Llechylched, Bryngwran	07/06/2016
16C204A/DIS	Application to discharge conditions (06) (management and maintenance for the communal foul and surface water system), (07)(full photographic record) and (11) (copy of an European Protected Species Licence) of planning permission 16C204 at Plas Llechylched, Bryngwran.	10/01/2017
16EL/1361/E	Erection of overhead electricity lines at Plas Farm, Bryngwran.	19/08/92
16/C/71	Formation of an 18 hole golf course with a hotel and club house at Llechylched Farm, Bryngwran.	06/04/1992
Development Area 5		
N/A		
Development Area 6		
N/A		

Environmental Statement (ES)

33. To determine the extent (or 'scope') of environmental topics to be considered in the EIA and reported on in the ES, the Planning Inspectorate [now PEDW] was requested to provide a formal opinion (Scoping Direction). This Direction (Appendix 1.1, Doc. Ref. 4.01.1 to the ES) confirmed the information to be supplied in the ES by the applicant. The ES has been prepared in accordance with the Scoping Direction from the Planning Inspectorate.

Environmental considerations not significantly affected by the proposals

34. A number of environmental topics were scoped out of the EIA as they were considered unlikely to result in any significant environmental effects. These included:

- **Major accidents and/or disasters** - due to the benign nature of the proposed development and the careful management of the construction and operation periods, it is unlikely to have a significant effect in terms of pollution, nuisance, accident or disaster.
- **Public health and wellbeing** – the proposed development is unlikely to release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air or land. Potential health impacts are therefore related primarily to construction and operational related impacts. A detailed Construction Management Plan (CMP) in accordance with statutory requirements and best practice methods will mitigate any construction related impacts. Once operational, the generation and transmission of electricity produced by the development can be safely managed and the panels themselves are inert, static structures which will be unlikely to release light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation.
- **Land use** - there are elements of 'Best and Most Versatile' agricultural land within the development areas. But given the varied nature of the identified Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) grades it is not possible to farm the land that reflects (in part) the higher grades. As such, agricultural management of the land has always fallen within the capabilities of the lowest grade hence the development areas have always been grazed or used for haymaking. No significant effects are anticipated from a land use perspective.
- **Air quality** - solar developments have no direct source of emissions to atmosphere during the operational phase. Possible impacts to local air quality only have the potential to occur during the short period of the construction phase through vehicular and plant emissions and through the creation of dust. It is considered that this potential effect during construction will be managed through a Construction Traffic Management Statement in accordance with best practice methods;
- **Glint and glare** - Pre-application discussions with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) confirmed the need for a glint and glare assessment. However, it was agreed that the assessment should only cover the potential from DA6, the closest deployment area to RAF Valley. Following the completion of the glint and glare assessment, the MoD confirmed that they had no objection to the proposed development.
- **Socio-economic** – the proposed development could potentially generate a range of socio-economic and economic benefits throughout its 40 year lifespan. These include job creation, multiplier benefits, carbon reduction, and local community and educational benefits. The need to upskill the current and future workforce across North Wales is a key aspiration within policy guidance and growth strategies. The proposed development offers the opportunity to build awareness of the energy sector and expand the knowledge network through potential collaboration with local schools. In addition to this the Applicant actively works with university research programs.

- **Traffic and transport** - over the 4 - 5 month construction phase, it is anticipated that approximately 330 return journey deliveries to site, or 660 individual movements, will be generated. Even at the most intense period of construction when solar panels, frames, posts and electrical support equipment and fencing are being delivered, there would be approximately an average of just over 5 HGV deliveries (10 movements) per working day. A package of measures would be put in place to ensure the safety of highway users and delivery vehicles. On the basis of the trip generation outlined above and given the temporary nature of the construction works, it is expected that the construction of the proposed solar farm would have minimal impact on the local highway network. Once operational, movements would be limited to maintenance vehicles and are anticipated to be no more than 1 – 2 vehicles per week.

35. From the above summaries it is clear the proposal will not lead to significant effects from the scoped out environmental topics.
36. The following sections summarise the environmental topic chapters of the Environmental Statement, Volume 1 (Doc. Ref. 4.01). Each section includes a brief description of any identified potential environmental effects resulting from the proposed development and the ways, if necessary, to reduce such impacts.

Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)

Landscape impact

37. The LVIA concludes that the Development Areas (DAs) are of a low-medium landscape value. They are noted for their contribution towards landscape condition (intact field systems), scenic quality (quieter areas away from transport corridors and the airfield) and conservation interests (cultural and ecological features). Such features would, however, be predominantly unaffected by the form of the proposed solar development. The DAs contain commonplace landscape features that are seen throughout the local area and provide very limited direct, recreational value / public access. Perceptions of the landscape are also influenced by the nearby busy transport corridors, overhead electricity pylons and views to, and audible aircraft disturbance, from RAF Valley.
38. The susceptibility to change of the pastoral landscape is considered medium largely due to the scale of the proposal, in terms of its vertical and overall surface area, and local landscape features which are a gentle undulating landform surrounded by blocks of mature hedgerows and scrub. The LVIA accepts that there would be some undue consequences from development. The local landscape of the DAs could, however, accommodate a solar farm of the form and scale proposed without a significant change in local character as the DAs contain few landscape characteristics that would be vulnerable to the proposal.
39. With regard to the construction and de-commissioning activities, any effects on landscape character and landscape receptors during the construction and decommissioning phases would be temporary and short term in duration. There would be no direct changes to the landscape immediately outside of the site

boundaries as the construction and decommissioning operations would be retained within.

40. A moderate significance of landscape effect is concluded overall and this is classified as a not significant effect.

Visual impact

41. The LVIA residential visual assessment (Doc. Ref. 4.01.7f) concluded that seven properties/groups out of thirty one assessed had the potential to experience 'major' visual effects that would be classified as 'significant'. Those seven properties/groups with potentially significant visual effects were considered in further detail through a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). The RVAA reviewed the properties against the defined criteria to consider the effect of the solar development upon the residential visual amenity on the living conditions of the residents. With regard to case law and residential visual amenity guidance, the assessment judged that there would be no situation where the solar development would appear 'overbearing, overwhelming or oppressive' in such a way that the visual effects would render the properties as unattractive and uninhabitable places to live. In summary the RVAA confirms that identified residential receptors will not experience significant adverse effects.
42. Five additional settlements within the study area were considered, the assessment concluding that there would be extremely limited visibility to the DAs from the settlements. The scale of visual effect was considered to be 'negligible' and therefore 'not significant' visual effects are concluded from the local settlements.
43. DA6 has the greatest concentration of public rights of way within 250m, nine in total. Only one footpath (32/017/1), which passes directly beside the southern boundary of the solar arrays within the DA boundary, was considered to experience effects of a 'significant' nature. However, the significant effects are limited to the short section beside the development only; outside of the DA the effects on the majority of the route are considered not significant.
44. The main vehicular routes have been assessed and it is concluded the effects from the main 'A' roads that pass through the study area would be 'not significant'. These routes are subject to the greatest volume of traffic movements in the study area. Visual effects from the minor roads that pass the DA boundaries have been considered as they are the location for numerous viewpoints. Of the nineteen viewpoints considered as part of the LVIA, four were assessed to have potentially significant visual effects, three of which were in open field gate access. These are stationary views, whereas in reality the views would be glimpsed, of a very short duration and so likely to be of a lower scale of effect. The remaining 'significant' viewpoint was from a locally elevated position on the highway. The majority of the road corridor close to this viewpoint is filtered and screened by mature hedgerows allowing a glimpsed view.
45. Overall, the LVIA demonstrates that the proposed development could be successfully integrated into the local landscape of Anglesey without causing significant and wide scale harm to the landscape character, and providing opportunities for enhanced mitigation and management of the 'undeveloped' areas

of the DAs, totalling c.29 ha. The assessment demonstrates that the development would result in no significant adverse effects upon landscapes including protected landscapes (The Anglesey AONB).

46. Whilst significant visual effects are noted, the assessment has established that these would be focussed upon a limited number of near highway receptors only. However, it is expected that the proposed planting mitigation and management of existing hedgerows will over time reduce the level of visual effects on the near highway receptors, filtering views to the DAs.

Noise and vibration

47. Six noise sensitive locations were identified within the vicinity of the DAs, including residential properties. Noise surveys were simultaneously carried out at these locations to understand the local noise climate. These background levels were then compared with likely sound levels generated during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the proposal.
48. During the construction and decommissioning phases there would be a variety of noise sources from various operations at different times such as deliveries, trenching or constructing the arrays. The highest noise levels relative to nearest receptors are likely to occur during site preparation and infrastructure activities. However, the proposed mitigation will ensure noise levels are kept to acceptable levels. Such measures include:
- Restricting operation to current permitted hours during the daytime;
 - Regular maintenance of plant;
 - Where required, use of local screening where plant is being used in close proximity to sensitive receptor boundaries or around plant (e.g. within 30m of sensitive boundary) using temporary hoarding.
49. Due to the relatively quiet nature of the equipment, during the operational phase noise levels will be low at identified receptor locations. As such, environmental effects are considered not significant.

Hydrology, hydrogeology and flood risk

50. All sources of flooding have been considered, namely fluvial (river) flooding, tidal (coastal) flooding, groundwater flooding, surface water (pluvial) flooding, sewer flooding and flooding from artificial drainage systems/infrastructure failure. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) identifies parts of DA4 and DA5 as being within flood zones C2 and 3 from undefended fluvial flood extents.
51. A Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) has been undertaken for the proposed development in accordance with guidance contained in PPW and TAN15. The FCA identifies and assesses the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the development and demonstrates how these flood risks would be managed so that the development remains safe throughout the life of the development taking climate change into account.
52. It was agreed with IACC that the proposed development would constitute 'less vulnerable development' as defined by TAN15. The FCA has demonstrated that the

risks of flooding can be effectively managed in the areas at risk within DA4 and DA5 and (together with the Planning Statement) has demonstrated that the Justification Test as prescribed in section 6 of TAN15 is met.

53. Research has found that, with well-maintained grass underneath, the solar panels themselves do not have a significant impact on the runoff volumes of surface water; as such, environmental effects are considered not significant. At present surface water runoff is discharged from the Dol Eithin housing estate and flows slowly through DA6 to Llyn Dinam Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Currently the poor state of the ditch network means that much of the silt and nutrients settle out in very localised temporary ponding/ flooding areas or are lost en route before reaching Llyn Dinam. As part of a package of enhancements the ditch network would be managed to ensure surface waters are retained for a sufficient period to maximise sediment and nutrient fall out prior to entering the SAC. Details of the enhancement are presented in the Sustainable Urban Drainage Approval Body (SAB) submission (Appendix 10.3, Doc. Ref. 4.01.10c).

Ecology and nature conservation

54. Of the five statutory sites designated for nature conservation (European) within 10km of the application site, two (Llyn Dinam SAC and Glannau Ynys Gybi /Holy Island Coast Special Protection Area (SPA)) have been scoped into the assessment. The remaining statutory sites have been scoped out of the assessment as there are no ecological or hydrological links with the application site.
55. Of the six statutory sites designated for nature conservation under national legislation within 10km of the application area, two (Llynau y Fali SSSI and Llyn Traffwl SSSI) have been scoped into the assessment. The remaining statutory sites have been scoped out of the assessment as there are no ecological or hydrological links with the application site.
56. There are fourteen non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation within 2km of the application site. Three sites are adjacent to some of the development areas and have been scoped into the assessment namely Cors Plas, Tywyn Trewan and RSPB Valley Wetlands Reserve. The remaining sites have been scoped out of assessment as there are no ecological features that are likely to be affected by the proposal.
57. A significant amount of baseline survey work has been carried out to fully understand the habitats in and around the site and the species they support. In consultation with NRW and IACC the following surveys have been completed:
- Great Crested Newt Survey Report
 - Common Bird Census (Breeding Birds) Survey Report
 - Wintering Birds Survey Report
 - Chough Report
 - Bat Report and Data Appendices
 - Water Vole and Otter
 - Pre-Application and Scoping Responses from Consultees
 - Phase 1 habitat maps

- Results of desktop data search - protected species & habitats
 - Reptile habitat suitability assessment
58. Semi-improved neutral grassland is dominant across DA6 while DA4 and DA5 comprise improved grassland. The survey also noted the varying amounts of rush pasture intermixed with the semi-improved grassland particularly on DA6.
59. In response to the findings the following mitigation is proposed:
- No deployment in DA6 where it overlaps the SAC/SSSI areas and undertake management of adjacent non-deployment area for key wildlife;
 - Enhancements to SAC/SSSI through no agricultural inputs to the development areas and management of the principal drain through DA6 to improve water quality;
 - Removal of DAs 8, 9 and 1 from the application to avoid potential impacts to choughs winter foraging and lapwing, golden plover breeding and foraging and breeding skylarks;
 - All DAs will be enhanced through re-sowing with a species-rich wild flower and fine grass mix suitable for grazing;
 - Installing bat boxes of multiple designs in taller trees at the margins of the DAs.
60. Whilst the construction phase may lead to temporary displacement and disturbance of foraging behaviour, this impact will be temporary (4-5 months maximum). Taking into account all the proposed mitigations, the scale should be contained within the immediate environs of the development and as such is not significant.
61. The increase in botanical diversity will lead to an increase in invertebrate diversity. In combination, such enhancements will produce significant environmental benefits for breeding and wintering birds, small mammals, bats, reptiles and amphibians. A monitoring programme will be established to assess the effects of the development, mitigation and enhancements upon key elements of biodiversity. The monitoring system will be designed to provide results that are comparable between years and between DAs.

Cultural heritage

62. Consideration had been given to the potential impact of the proposed Parc Solar Traffwll project on archaeological and cultural historic assets. Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service and Cadw have been consulted in relation to the archaeological assessment. The consultation took place before the assessment was undertaken, at each stage of the assessment process thereafter and in relation to final reporting.
63. There are no listed buildings within the application site but 94 listed buildings are located within the 5km search area. The desk-based assessment identified thirteen scheduled monuments within the 5km search area of the proposed development. The desk-based assessment (Doc. Ref. 4.01.9a) and the Historic Asset Setting Impact Assessment (Doc. Ref. 4.01.9d) determined that the scheduled monuments would not be directly or indirectly impacted upon by the proposed development.
64. No additional mitigation would be required for archaeological remains when the solar farm is operational as any issues would have been suitably resolved prior to

or during the construction phase of the project. It is anticipated that no additional mitigation would be required for listed buildings during the operation of the solar farm. The partial views to the Grade II listed buildings from the solar farm would be suitably mitigated through a combination of landscaping and/or the introduction of additional vegetation. The operational stage of the solar farm would not have a negative impact on the scheduled monuments in the proximity of the development. The removal of DA3 from the proposal ensures that there will not be an adverse effect on the setting of the Castellor Hut Settlement.

65. The residual significance of effect during the three phases of operation of the development has been assessed to be minor adverse for the archaeological remains and most of the affected listed buildings; the exception would be the Church of St Mihangel on which the solar farm would have a negligible effect. Overall, there will be no significant environmental effect on identified heritage resources.

Cumulative impacts

66. Of the environmental topic areas considered as part of the EIA, the significance of impacts from the continued operations which are considered would be greater than negligible are limited to:
- Ecology
 - Landscape and visual
 - Heritage
67. In terms of assessing the cumulative impact from the proposal in isolation, it is considered that the following topics would have an adverse effect:
- Minor impacts to certain habitats and species during the 4-5 month construction/decommissioning phases;
 - Minor impacts to landscape character and some nearby visual receptors during the 4-5 month construction/decommissioning phases;
 - Moderate impacts to landscape character and up to major impacts for some nearby visual receptors during the operational phase;
 - Minor impacts to known archaeology within the deployment area; and
 - Minor impacts to nearby Listed Buildings.
68. It is considered there would be no synergistic characteristics between temporary impacts to certain site-based habitats and species, landscape character/visual amenity and known archaeology during the construction and decommissioning phases. During the operational phase potential impacts to nearby visual receptors and landscape character were assessed, as were potential impacts to nearby Listed Buildings. It is considered that opportunities for synergistic effects to increase the impacts on identified receptors beyond that assessed individually would be negligible given the different sensitivities of the identified receptors. In terms of cumulative impacts with development from beyond the application site boundary, no potentially significant effects were identified.

The Case for the Applicant

Principle of development

69. The UK and Welsh Governments (WG), and IACC, have declared a climate emergency. In response, both UK and WG have legislated an ambitious net zero emissions target by 2050. WG has also set an interim target of net Welsh emissions to be 63% lower than the 1990 baseline by 2030. In December 2020, the CCC published a progress report on emissions reduction in Wales showing that emissions of greenhouse gases have fallen by 31% since 1990 according to 2018 reports. Although this progress is likely to meet 2020 targets, there is still much to be done in order to meet the net zero target by 2050, and the interim targets set by WG. WG's own figures on greenhouse gas emissions demonstrate a more gradual decline in emissions with the 2020 target of 40% reduction from 1990 levels unlikely to be met.
70. According to WG figures, Wales is substantially behind its own net zero target by 2050. The evidence shows that the effects of climate change are already being seen in Wales, including rising sea levels and an increase in extreme heat events, highlighting the need for greater urgency in decarbonisation efforts.
71. Welsh energy policy acknowledges that renewable energy development is a key contributor to the net zero target. Specifically, Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales and Net Zero Wales seek to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy generation in order to cut emissions. At a UK level, the National Infrastructure Strategy states that to achieve net zero by 2050, the power system will need to be carbon free and significantly larger to cope with additional demand. As set out in the Energy White Paper, generation of clean energy may need a four-fold increase to meet this additional demand and to replace the retiring of old capacity.
72. The proposed development will have an export capacity of circa 35MW of electricity, enough to power approximately 11,630 homes per year and offset over 7,161 tonnes of CO₂ every year, the equivalent of taking around 3,818 cars off the road.

Compliance with planning policy

73. There is unequivocal planning policy support for the principle of renewable energy development, primarily through Future Wales and PPW at a national level, and the Anglesey and Gwynedd JLDP at a local level. Future Wales, together with PPW, aims to ensure that the planning system focuses on delivering a decarbonised and resilient Wales, including through energy generation. Policy 17 of Future Wales provides strong support for the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales and requires that decision makers give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments, and the target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030. The proposal will make a significant contribution to meeting these targets.
74. The significant weight to be placed on the need to meet Wales' renewable energy targets is evident in recent decisions taken by Welsh Ministers in respect of other DNS applications .

75. Future Wales also considers the responsibility of the North Wales region (specifically the north west), with the supporting text to Policy 24 explaining that the region plays an important role in the decarbonisation of society. It also recognises the strong potential for solar energy generation in North Wales.
76. PPW strongly supports the principle of renewable energy development. It states (para 3.30) that the planning system plays a key role in tackling the climate emergency through the decarbonisation of the energy system. The energy section of PPW states that low carbon electricity must become the main source of energy in Wales, and that significant investment will be needed in energy generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure in order to ensure future demand can be met. It also states that the benefits of renewable and low carbon energy, as part of the overall commitment to tackle the climate emergency and increase energy security, is of paramount importance.
77. At a local level, the JLDP is supportive of renewable energy, with Strategic Policy PS 7 (Renewable Energy Technology) seeking to ensure that Anglesey realises its potential to provide renewable and low carbon energy technologies. With specific regard to solar energy, Policy ADN 2 (PV Solar Energy) states that proposals for solar farms of 5MW should be directed to 'potential search areas', and proposals elsewhere will be permitted in exceptional circumstances when the need for a scheme can be justified and there are specific locational circumstances.
78. Significantly, the JLDP was adopted in July 2017, predating both Future Wales and edition 11 of PPW. This is an important consideration in the planning balance as LDPs are required to be in conformity with Future Wales and PPW. In light of this, significant weight cannot be applied to Policy ADN 2 as the national policy context has changed since it was prepared and adopted, and it is now superseded by the policy expressed in Future Wales and PPW. PPW states that LDPs should be identifying the most appropriate locations for development of energy developments below 10MW, a threshold which the proposed development exceeds. As such, it is considered that ADN2 and the potential search areas it identifies are of limited policy relevance to the proposed development.
79. Notwithstanding this, it should be noted that the IACC officer recommendation report for an approved solar farm at Rhyd y Groes, Rhosgoch (application ref 20C310B/EIA/RE), which also fell outside a Policy ADN2 'potential search area', acknowledged that the policy does not prevent development outside of search areas but that exceptional circumstances must exist - being when the need for the scheme can be justified and there are specific locational circumstances. It was acknowledged that need is not a material planning consideration and that (in the case of that scheme), there was a lack of viable sites within the potential search areas. The same circumstances exist for the developed proposed at Parc Traffwll.
80. The ES (chapter 5) sets out the detailed criteria used for site selection and demonstrates the need for the development in the proposed location and why the 'potential search areas' were not suitable. On review of the opportunity area around Caergeiliog it was found that a significant proportion of this area was constrained by rocky outcrops which would make deployment very difficult and the project not viable. Land to the immediate north-east, east and south-east of the substation was

vegetated with scrub and trees. Approaches were made to landowners within the solar search area but none were interested in having solar on their land.

81. Renewable energy generation has an important role in achieving sustainable development. As part of decarbonising the Welsh economy, the proposal will provide economic, social and environmental enhancements. Economic benefits will include the creation of temporary jobs, supporting local supply chains during the construction phase and support the low carbon decentralised energy generation on the Isle of Anglesey as a key growth sector. Social benefits will be realised through decentralised energy generation and not relying on energy imports. Environmental gains would be secured through carbon reduction and local biodiversity enhancements.
82. National and local planning policy is overwhelmingly supportive of renewable energy developments and therefore the 'in principle' acceptability of the proposed development is considered to be established.
83. Policy 17 of Future Wales should be read alongside the criteria set out in Policy 18 for assessing large scale proposals for renewable and low carbon energy. These criteria are considered below, and notwithstanding the limited weight afforded to the JLDP, also demonstrate compliance with the criteria set out in the second part of Policy ADN2 of the JLDP.

Landscape and visual amenity

Landscape

84. The ES (chapter 7) presents the LVIA of the proposed development and confirms that the application site does not form part of any statutory landscape designation, with the Anglesey AONB being located c.850m south-west of DA6. The DAs are noted for their contribution towards landscape condition, scenic quality and conservation interests. These are all features considered to be predominantly unaffected by this form of solar development. The DAs also contain commonplace landscape features that are seen throughout the host LCAs (Landscape Character Area) and provide limited direct recreational value / public access. Landscape perceptions are also influenced by the busy nearby transport corridors, overhead electricity pylons and views to and aircraft from RAF Valley Airfield.
85. The development would not lead to a loss of pastoral grazing land at the local level, as grazing can continue throughout the life of the project, albeit at a lower intensity. It is also considered that due to the distribution of the individual DAs in the study area (and the overall reduction in number of DAs from the original proposal) that the local landscape could accommodate this particular form of development without a significant change in local character. The DAs contain few landscape characteristics that would be vulnerable to the proposal.
86. It is acknowledged that the character of the local landscape within the DAs will change. The retention and management of surrounding vegetation, however, and mitigation will aid integration and lessen the visual prominence of the solar farm.

87. Overall, it is considered that the DAs are of a Medium-Low landscape value. The magnitude of landscape change arising from the proposed development is considered Medium. A 'Moderate' significance of landscape effect is concluded overall, this is a 'Not Significant' effect. With regard to the construction and decommissioning activities, any effects on landscape character and landscape receptors will be temporary and short term. As such, it has been demonstrated that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape.

Visual amenity

88. The Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) assessed 14 properties/groups of properties, including 7 at which the LVIA had identified the potential to experience 'major' visual effects considered 'significant'. The RVAA focusses exclusively on private views and private visual amenity against defined criteria to consider the effect of the proposed development upon the residential visual amenity of local residents. In line with tests established in case law and residential visual amenity guidance, the assessment judged that there would be no situation where the solar development would appear 'overbearing, overwhelming or oppressive' in such a way that the visual effects would render the properties as unattractive and uninhabitable places to live. In summary, the RVAA confirms that identified residential receptors will not experience significant adverse effects.
89. In terms of visual effects on other receptors, only 1 footpath was considered to experience effects of a 'significant' nature, footpath 32/017/1, which passes directly beside the southern boundary of the solar arrays within the DA6 boundary. However, the significant effects are limited to the short section beside the development only. It is concluded the effects from the main 'A' roads that pass through the study area would be 'not significant'.
90. Of the 19 viewpoints considered as part of the LVIA, 4 were assessed to have potentially significant visual effects, 3 of which were in open field gate access with near range views of the DAs where significant effects would be expected. In reality the views would be glimpsed and of a very short duration so likely to be of a lower scale of effect. The remaining 'significant' viewpoint was from a locally elevated position on the highway. The majority of the road corridor close to this viewpoint is filtered and screened by mature hedgerows allowing transient and a glimpsed view. The proposed planting mitigation and management of existing hedgerows will, over time, reduce the level of visual effects on the near highway receptors.
91. The LVIA demonstrates that the proposed development could be successfully integrated into the local landscape without causing significant and wide scale harm to the landscape character. There would also be enhanced mitigation and management of the 'undeveloped' areas within the site (c.29 ha.) The scheme includes additional mitigation in the form of the reinforcement of hedgerows together with offsets and buffer zones and additional hedgerow planting to minimise impacts on residential dwellings.

Biodiversity.

92. Of the statutory sites designated for nature conservation within 10km of the application site, two European sites (Llyn Dinam SAC and Glannau Ynys Gybi /Holy Island Coast SPA) two national sites (Llynnau y Fali SSSI and Llyn Traffwl SSSI) and were scoped into the assessment. The remaining statutory sites were scoped out of the assessment as there are no ecological or hydrological links with the application site.
93. As part of the management of the DAs there will be a significant increase in botanical diversity, including a total of 750m of new species rich hedgerow be planted in DA4 and DA5, which will lead to an increase in invertebrate diversity. Such enhancements are likely to produce significant benefits for breeding and wintering birds, small mammals, bats, reptiles and amphibians. The management of the southernmost and western fields of DA6 as wet pasture / floodplain grazing marsh will provide a positive water quality improvement to Llyn Dinam SAC and Llynnau y Fali SSSI. The principal drain through DA6 will be managed as a vegetated ditch designed to slow the flow of water to aid settling out of sediment and filter the water. The significance of this impact is positive and moderate and there will be no unacceptable adverse impact on internationally or nationally designated sites, habitats or species.
94. In relation to net benefit for biodiversity, a calculation of Biodiversity Net Gain has been made using the Defra Biodiversity Metric 3.0. The proposed development will deliver an overall gain for habitats of 21.69%, with the main gains coming from the conversion of agricultural grassland to higher value habitats such as wild flower meadows, wild bird seed mixes and wet pasture in DA4 and DA5. The overall gain for hedgerow habitats is 70.25% achieved by improving the quality of existing hedges and planting new, species rich sections. The net gain delivered would meet Policy 18 of Future Wales. Overall, the proposed development would meet the biodiversity objectives of Future Wales, PPW11 and the JLDP.

Historic Environment

95. Following the Desk-Based Assessment and the guidance provided in the EIA Scoping Direction, an archaeological evaluation was conducted within the DAs to help determine the level of subsurface archaeology present. The desk-based assessment identified 13 scheduled monuments within the 5km search area of the DAs, the majority of which will not be directly or indirectly impacted upon by the proposed development. There are no listed buildings within the proposed DAs but 94 are located within the 5km search area of the desk-based assessment, four of which are located adjacent the application site.
96. Of the 131 trial trenches excavated, 77 contained no archaeological evidence. The remaining 54 confirmed the presence of archaeological features, primarily linears, which proved to be agricultural in nature such as field boundaries, trackways, plough furrows or land drains. The remaining four archaeological features within the trial trenches were isolated pits. The most notable of these contained a standing stone in DA5. Proposed further works include a control strip of an identified burnt mound in DA4, and a small ring ditch and possible standing stone in DA5.

97. A four-stage assessment found that the development of DA3 would result in considerable changes to the setting of the Castellor Hut Group Scheduled Monument as a result, DA3 was removed from the proposal.
98. The ES chapter concluded that no additional mitigation would be required for archaeological remains when the proposed development is operational as the matter would have been suitably resolved prior to or during the construction phase of the project. The partial views to the Grade II listed buildings from the proposed development would be mitigated through landscaping. After mitigation, no significant effects on any known archaeological remains, listed buildings and scheduled monuments are predicted.
99. The residual significance of effect of the proposed development has been assessed to be minor adverse for the archaeological remains and most of the affected listed buildings; an exception is the Church of St Mihangel on which the proposed development will have a negligible effect. The proposed development will not have unacceptable adverse impacts on heritage assets and meets the objectives of Future Wales, PPW11 and the JLDP.

Disturbance

100. There will be no impacts in relation to shadow flicker, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance.

Noise and Vibration

101. Five noise sensitive locations including residential properties were identified within the vicinity of the development area. Noise surveys were simultaneously carried out at these locations to understand the local noise climate. These background levels were then compared with likely sound levels generated during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the proposal.
102. During the construction and decommissioning phases, noise from various activities such as deliveries, trenching or construction is anticipated. The highest noise levels are likely to occur during site preparation and infrastructure activities but the mitigation will ensure noise levels are kept to acceptable levels. Such measures include:
- Restricting activity to current permitted hours during the daytime;
 - Regular maintenance of plant;
 - Use of local screening where plant is in close proximity to sensitive receptor boundaries
103. Solar farms are inherently quiet operations, with only the air-cooling systems for the inverters and substations and the operation of the transformers generating sound power levels. During the operational phase noise levels will be low at identified receptor locations. Due to the construction techniques used and the distance to sensitive receptors the potential for vibration effects is unlikely. There will be no significant noise impacts on sensitive receptors during the construction or operational phases. The project therefore satisfies Policy 18 of Future Wales and policy PCYFF2 of the JLDP.

Glint and Glare

104. Pre-application discussions with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) confirmed the need for a glint and glare assessment. It was agreed that the assessment should only cover the potential from DA6, the closest development area to the runways at RAF Valley. The glint and glare assessment confirms that no impact upon the Air Traffic Control Tower or the approach paths to the runways is expected. Whilst a marginal 'yellow' glare could occur it would be for only 14 minutes of the year and would be on the periphery of a pilot's field of vision. The MOD agreed that these potential risks were acceptable. Therefore, the proposed development meets the requirements of Policy 18 in that "there are no unacceptable adverse impacts by way of... reflected light..." and "there are no unacceptable impacts on the operations of defence facilities and operations (including aviation and radar) ...". Furthermore, the proposed development will be in accordance with Policy ADN2 of the LDP as it "...will not result in significant harm to the safety or amenity of sensitive receptors including effect from glint and glare and will not have an unacceptable impact on roads, rail or aviation safety."

Highways and Traffic

105. The Transport Statement and outline Construction Traffic Management Statement (CTMS) set out the current and proposed access arrangements to the three DAs, the anticipated construction programme, construction vehicle numbers and routing of deliveries, construction worker numbers and the proposed construction hours.
106. The construction of the solar farm is expected to last around 4 - 5 months. During this period, there will be journeys associated with the arrival and departure of site staff and the delivery of parts and construction materials. The construction phase will generate approximately 330 return journey deliveries to site, or 660 individual movements. At the most intense period of construction when solar panels, frames, posts and electrical support equipment and fencing are being delivered, there would be approximately an average of around 4-5 HGV deliveries per working day resulting in an average of just over 10 movements per working day.
107. Some materials and equipment will be delivered directly to the other DAs but in most cases will be transferred by smaller vehicles to and from DA4. These will be additional movements between the areas.
108. An estimated 120 to 190 staff will be on site during the peak of the construction period. Staff will be from both local and regional contractors who will be encouraged to use shared transport such as minibus or car-sharing. All vehicle parking will be provided within the temporary construction compound.
109. The Transport Statement concludes that the local highways are operating safely and there are no highway safety concerns which are likely to be exacerbated by the traffic generated from the proposed development.
110. The mitigation measures will be dependent on the appointed contractor for the construction of the facility. The submitted CTMS outlines several broad measures that could be readily implemented including:
- The use of a banksman to help guide deliveries into sites;

- Advisory temporary signage on the highway for works in the area;
- Temporary signage along the proposed route from the A55 to ensure deliveries follow agreed routes;
- Providing sufficient parking areas so there is no parking on the highway or potential blockage to access tracks;
- Vehicles carrying loose material will be sheeted;
- The use of bowsters/sprays during dry conditions to prevent dust and the use of wheel cleaning facilities to prevent transfer on to the highway;
- Securing the site to prevent unauthorised access;
- Regularly monitoring the condition of the highway for spoil transfer or damage and rectify as required;
- Contacting local residents prior to construction works commencing advising of anticipated duration and a contact number to advise of any issues/concerns; and
- Turning engines off when not in use.

111. The proposed development meets the objectives of Policy 18 of Future Wales, PPW11 and the JLDP.

Social economic

112. The social and economic benefits of the proposed development are clear. Through localised energy production more benefits can be directed to the local communities through skills, quality jobs and a greater retention of economic value. The Economic Benefits Statement identifies that the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd authority area, and the North Region, have a higher concentration of professional, scientific and technical jobs when compared to Wales as a whole. This is also the case for business administration, information communication and finance/insurance roles, highlighting the area's potential to meet the skills requirement.

113. The Economic Benefits Statement also notes that the environment and energy are becoming attractive career paths. Bangor University has a growing specialism in Nuclear and Low Carbon energy research and development. The solar farm would be supporting the industry's development as a key growth sector.

114. Key benefits identified are:

- creation or safeguarding between 162 and 192 jobs during the installation phase, followed by approximately two maintenance staff over the 40 year lifespan;
- the labour force employed throughout the installation stage could generate between £2.3m and £2.6m in gross value added (GVA);
- the two employees working throughout the 40-year operation phase could generate a further £3.3m in GVA;
- employment onsite would support local business through daily expenditure and also any accommodation required for the construction period.

115. The proposed development could allow local business to operate on clean energy and thus market themselves as low carbon businesses. Other socio-economic benefits include:
- Opportunities for local communities to invest in the project;
 - Community Benefit Fund;
 - Contribution to local services and infrastructure;
 - Provision of education packs on climate change and renewables as an education resource offered to schools.
116. The proposed development meets with the objectives of Policies 17 and Policy 24 of Future Wales

Agricultural Land Quality

117. Significantly, Policy 18 of Future Wales does not include a criterion relating to agricultural land. PPW11 states that best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land should be conserved as a finite resource for the future and only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development, and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is unavailable. The policy in PPW seeks to conserve the BMV resource but does not require BMV land to be used in any particular way or at any particular intensity.
118. After an extensive search exercise that considered criteria including solar irradiation levels, proximity to the distribution network, land availability, and agricultural land quality, an assessment was made of sites in Anglesey. The JLDP identifies potential search areas for solar development with one identified in the Caergeiliog area. On review of the search area around Caergeiliog it was found that a significant proportion of this area was constrained by rocky outcrops which were not conducive to the development of solar.
119. The principle of development is supported in national and local policy and the overriding need for renewable and low carbon energy development is established, as seen in decisions on other DNS applications.
120. During pre-application consultation, a response was received from WG's Soil Policy & Agricultural Land Use Planning Unit (SPALUPU). The matters raised in this letter have been addressed by an Assessment of Impact on Agricultural Land (AIAL). The AIAL highlights that WG's predictive land quality maps show over half of Anglesey falls within agricultural land classification (ALC) Grade 2 and subgrade 3a, and the western coastal area where the proposed development is located is mostly subgrade 3b. However, detailed studies for alternative sites confirm that whilst the higher quality land is present in the area, the pattern is highly complex and ALC changes from Grade 2 to Grade 4 in short distances.
121. The availability of previously developed land, or land of lower agricultural grades is limited within proximity to Caergeiliog substation, which is the only feasible option for connecting at this scale to the distribution. The proposed development meets the necessary tests in PPW on need and the availability of alternative land.

Current and Future Agricultural Use at the Site

122. The AIAL concludes that ALC grades 2 and 3a occur across approximately 15.5ha of the deployment area. This is below the threshold of 20ha, above which WG's SPALUPU consider a loss to be significant. The proposed development will not result in the significant loss of BMV agricultural land. The deployment area is the available land for the siting of the PV panels, the development area includes non-operational land for provision of biodiversity management and/or grazing.
123. The AIAL highlights that the pattern of BMV distribution is extremely complex across the site, with most fields involving a mix of BMV and non-BMV land. In practice this makes it impossible to utilise the better quality land differently from the rest of the field; the use of whole fields is mostly dictated by the poorest land in the field.
124. The area under and around the solar panels is, and will remain, grassland. Once the panels have been installed, the area will be mostly grazed with occasional topping to maintain grass quality and prevent weeds and scrub growth.
125. Current and future farming activities for each DA are set out in the AIAL, and can be summarised as follows:
- DA4 – part of Plas-Llechylched farm – currently used for sheep grazing. Use of the land for solar will continue with little change.
 - DA5 – outlying part of Bodrwnsiwn Farm – currently used for grazing of sheep and beef cattle. The area will continue to be used for sheep grazing after installation of solar panels. Currently a crop of silage is taken in June, but with the panels in place the land will be grazed all year round instead.
 - DA6 – Glan-y-Gors smallholding – currently used for horse grazing. The land will be grazed with sheep after installation of the solar panels and so will go from non-agricultural grazing to an active agricultural use.
126. Planning policy seeks to conserve BMV but does not require it to be farmed intensively or as arable land. The AIAL notes that WG's guidance makes clear that intensity of use does not affect ALC grade.

Recent DNS Decisions of Relevance

127. A recent DNS decision for a solar farm at Blackberry Lane, Pembrokeshire considered the issue of BMV agricultural land. In that case, the Minister concluded that 20.75 ha of Grade 2 and 3a land would be affected and accepted the Inspector's conclusion that it was likely, in that case, that installation would disturb the ground considerably and that BMV would be lost. The AIAL considers that in that case the Inspector had no evidence to demonstrate that BMV would not be reduced by the proposal, and the decision was significantly influenced by a lack of information from the applicant.
128. The AIAL notes the reference in the decision to TAN 6 and the statement that "soft" uses such as golf courses are often impractical to return to BMV quality but that this must be a judgement on a case-by-case basis. The golf course example involves earthworks to create greens, tees, hazards such as bunkers, and usually involves tree and bush planting to separate fairways. This is incomparable to the

works required to construct a solar development. TAN 6 does not specify that all 'soft' uses involve irreversible development. The installation and operation of a solar development does not differ substantially from normal agricultural activities and with an appropriate soil management plan, the quality of the site as BMV can be retained.

129. The Installation Soil Management Plan and a Decommissioning Soil Management Plan set out methodologies to ensure the soil structure is treated carefully and not harmed. Measures include:

- timing of works to avoid traffic moving over wet land;
- separating of the top and subsoils when laying cables, and their return in the correct order;
- stripping of topsoil for the small number of fixed buildings and its retention in a low bund adjacent to the fixtures so that it can be used for restoration;
- laying and removing of any stone in the gateways if needed to prevent the spread of mud onto the highway.

130. Conditions requiring the approval of these management plans could be imposed and would ensure that the BMV resource will be conserved.

Welsh Government Consultation

131. The response from WG's SPALUPU refers to 23.30ha of confirmed BMV agricultural land – a figure which includes areas of land that will not be developed. As the area of BMV land that will be developed is below 20ha, the proposed development does not meet the threshold where the loss would be considered, by Welsh Ministers, to be of national significance. The applicant made the following responses to comments made by WG on the scheme.

132. Weight given to protecting BMV agricultural land because of its special importance - PPW seeks to conserve the BMV resource, however it does not require BMV land to be used in any particular way or at any particular intensity and does not prohibit development of BMV in all cases. There will be no change to current agricultural activity following installation of the solar development, and with the implementation of management measures in the proposed soil management plans (secured by condition), the BMV resource can be conserved for the future, and as such the proposed development can comply with the policy requirement of paragraph 3.58 of PPW.

133. Sufficiency of the Site search area – as set out in Chapter 5 of the ES the site selection exercise considered a range of technical, environmental and economic factors, of which agricultural land was a consideration. Key factors for the deliverability of the proposed development are solar irradiation levels and proximity to a grid connection, which were applied to an extensive search area. The coastal area around the west of Anglesey receives some of the highest amounts of sunshine in north Wales, making it a particularly favourable area for solar development, and Caergeiliog substation is currently the only feasible option for connecting at this scale to the distribution network on Anglesey. The AIAL highlighted that agricultural land in the western coastal area of Anglesey is mostly

subgrade 3b. However, detailed studies for alternative sites confirmed that whilst higher quality land is present in the surrounding area, the pattern is highly complex and ALC changes from Grade 2 to Grade 4 in short distances, which makes it impracticable to farm at the higher grade. As such, the proposed development meets the necessary tests in PPW on need and the availability of alternative land.

134. Practicability of returning site to agriculture as best and most versatile agricultural land – the proposed development is a temporary use with installation and operation not differing substantially from normal agricultural activities currently present at the DAs. The management measures set out in the draft Soil Management (final plans to be secured by condition) will ensure that the return of the site to agriculture use as BMV land is practicable and achievable. As detailed in the AIAL and summarized above, the proposed development is in compliance with PPW in relation to agricultural land. There is an established overriding need for renewable and low carbon energy development, and limited availability of previously developed land or land of lower agricultural grades in the area, and as such the proposed development complies with the policy requirement of paragraph 3.59 of PPW.

Hydrology and Flood Risk

135. The TAN 15 Development Advice Maps identify parts of DA4 and DA5 as falling within flood zones C2 and B. A Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) has therefore been carried out in accordance with guidance contained in PPW and TAN 15. The FCA identifies and assesses the risks of all forms of flooding to and from the development and demonstrates how these flood risks will be managed so that the development remains safe throughout its lifetime taking climate change into account.

The TAN 15 Justification Test

136. The Justification Test defined in TAN 15 sets out the details required to justify siting a new development in an area believed to be at risk of flooding. The required criteria a site / development must fulfil are:
- i. its location in zone C is necessary to assist, or be part of, a local authority regeneration initiative or a local authority strategy required to sustain an existing settlement; or
 - ii. its location in zone C is necessary to contribute to key employment objectives supported by the local authority, and other key partners, to sustain an existing settlement or region; and
 - iii. it concurs with the aims of PPW and meets the definition of previously developed land; and
 - iv. the potential consequences of a flooding event for the particular type of development have been considered, and in terms of the criteria contained in sections 5 and 7 and appendix 1 found to be acceptable.
137. Discussions with IACC (as the Lead Local Flood Authority) confirmed that solar farms are considered less vulnerable development which can be accommodated

in higher flood risk areas subject to meeting the requirements of the Justification Test. TAN15 does not include any provisions or guidance specific to renewable energy development. However, the acceptability of renewable energy development within areas subject to flooding has been considered in a number of recent DNS decisions. These are outlined below.

138. The Inspector's Report on the Llanwern Solar DNS (ref. DNS/3150137) from October 2018, considered the Justification Test associated with the defended C1 flood zone application site. The Inspector acknowledged that the site was not previously developed land, but paragraph 306 of the report stated:

'There are, however, robust reasons why the proposal needs to be located in this area. Foremost of these are the availability and proximity to a grid connection, and the high number of hours of sunshine. The former is not present in most other locations in the plan area or even nationally, and the highest and second highest average values for sunshine duration are nearly all in coastal locations⁶⁴. In the absence in TAN 15 of any consideration of renewable energy installations, I consider these circumstances to present an alternative and strong justification for the proposed development's location in this area. Where there are exceptions to the general rule TAN 15 states that these will not be subject to the first part of the justification test but subject to the acceptability of consequences part of the test.'

139. The Inspector's Report on the Wentlooge Solar DNS (ref DNS/3216558) from March 2021, came to the same conclusion in relation to the TAN15 tests for the proposed development within a C1 flood zone with the inspector noting:

'I consider that there are robust reasons for locating the development within this zone as an exception to the first 3 justification tests. The Llanwern decision also established the Cabinet Secretary's view that, in this context, solar farms should not be regarded as 'power stations' or as highly vulnerable development, and there is no reason not to follow that approach'.

140. Chapter 5 of the ES sets out detailed site selection criteria for the proposed development. The coastal area around the west of Anglesey (where the site is located) receives some of the highest amounts of sunshine in north Wales, presenting a particularly favourable area for solar development as it allows for significantly more electricity generation than other site locations. In addition, Caergeiliog substation is currently the only feasible option for connecting this scale of project to the distribution network on Anglesey. The same circumstance as present in the cases highlighted above provides robust reasons for locating the development within areas of flood zone as an exception to the first 3 justification tests in TAN 15.

Meeting the Justification Test

141. It is considered the proposed development meets the justification tests with the exception of being located on previously developed land. It will make a significant contribution to national and local policy objectives in relation to renewable energy generation, economic opportunities, and sustainable living.

142. The flood risk to the site is explored in the FCA. This found that the potential significance of flooding was at worst low from fluvial and surface water sources. The consequences of flooding for this type of development were considered and found to be acceptable.
143. In accordance with TAN 15 the proposal has been designed to incorporate suitable mitigation to meet the criteria which require:
- Minimal risk to life – solar farm remotely controlled and not visited during adverse weather;
 - Minimal disruption to people living and working in the area – DAs in a low flood risk area and a safe access can be permanently maintained. The existing roads are about 600mm above the neighbouring fields and coincident with the upper confidence interval flood level in the 1 in 100 year and 1 in 200 year even;
 - Minimal potential damage to property – the solar arrays and vulnerable infrastructure will be located above the ground level and would be unaffected by floodwater depths;
 - Minimal impact of the proposed development on flood risk generally – the frame supporting the solar panels would not impede overland flow or reduce flood storage capacity, as it would only be the legs which would be within the path of overland flow or floodwaters. The ancillary structures: substation, transformers etc are also small structures and require shallow foundations which would limit ground disturbance and disruption to overland flow routes. The proposals are based on maintaining the existing drainage, the structures associated with the solar farm will introduce only small areas of impermeable surfacing;
 - Minimal disruption to natural heritage – where possible existing farm access tracks will be used, and the position of new access tracks will avoid the necessity for watercourse crossings to avoid changes to in-channel flow and disturbance of the riparian habitat.
144. The proposed development reflects the objectives of PPW11 in providing renewable energy generation as part of decarbonising the Welsh economy, and will provide economic, social and environmental enhancements. Given that the consequences of flooding can be managed, and the proposed development meets the requirements of the Justification Test, it is considered that the proposed development is entirely acceptable from a flood risk perspective.
145. In respect of hydrology, the ES concludes that potential impacts associated with the construction/decommissioning and operational phases of the development on identified hydrological receptors can be adequately controlled by proposed mitigation resulting in only negligible impacts. Proposed mitigation includes:
- A 4m minimum buffer strip on DAs 4 and 5 and a 6m buffer on DA6 adjacent to the top of any small watercourse;

- A Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) would be developed to manage the additional site runoff anticipated during the construction phase. The detail would be confirmed through a SuDS Design which will detail the methods that will be used to discharge the surface water runoff as part of a SuDS Approval Body (SAB) application. This has been subject to pre-application dialogue with the SAB.

Conclusion

146. The policy appraisal has considered the key planning issues associated with the proposed development. Future Wales is clear that decision-makers must give significant weight to Wales' need to meet its international commitments, and its target of generating 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030. Future Wales is the latest expression of national planning policy and therefore has precedence over the JLDP. Due to the contribution that the proposed development will make to meeting Wales' renewable energy targets and net zero objectives, it is considered to be fully compliant with Policy 17 of Future Wales.
147. The proposed development will result in some impacts as reported in the ES but there will be no unacceptable adverse impacts from the proposed development. In addition, the proposed development meets the requirements of TAN 15, will not result in the permanent loss of BMV agricultural land, and will deliver a range of benefits to the local area.
148. As such, the proposed development is considered to be fully compliant with Policy 18 of Future Wales. The proposed development should be granted planning permission, subject to appropriate and reasonable conditions being imposed.

Consultation Responses

Isle of Anglesey CC Local Impact Report (LIR)

Introduction

149. The Local Impact Report (LIR) has been prepared by the Isle of Anglesey County (the Council) in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority, Local Highway Authority and Host Authority. In preparing it, regard has been had to the Planning Inspectorate's guidance document *Developments of National Significance Appendix 5: Local Impact Reports*. In accordance with that guidance, the LIR details the likely impact of the proposed development on the Council's area based on local knowledge and evidence of local issues. It is focussed specifically on establishing the degree of local impact of the proposed development in relation to what are the principal planning issues, having regard also to the local planning policy context. Impacts have, where appropriate, been expressed in terms of whether they are positive, neutral or negative.
150. The LIR also includes confirmation of the planning history of the site, the identification of local designations, and recommendations for planning conditions

as well as evidence that the publicity required to be undertaken by the LPA has been carried out.

151. In accordance with the guidance, the LIR has not examined the relationship with national policy and guidance but instead is focussed specifically on establishing the degree of local impact in relation to the main planning issues, having regard also to the local planning policy context. For each topic, in accordance with guidance impacts have been expressed in terms of whether they are positive, neutral or negative; with the degree of impact, where relevant, being expressed as major, moderate or minor. However, in accordance with the guidance, the LIR does not contain a balancing exercise between positives and negatives, nor does it conclude on the relative merits of the development itself.

Local planning policy framework,

152. The JLDP was adopted in July 2017 and is the relevant local development plan for the purposes of the application. Policy PS 7 (Renewable Energy Technology) and Policy ADN 2 (PV Solar Energy) provide the policy framework for renewable energy technology and PV solar energy proposals. As part of the evidence base for the JLDP, an assessment of the potential for solar PV farms in the Gwynedd Planning Authority area and Ynys Môn was commissioned to identify areas of search. It was based upon the methodology outlined within Planning for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy – A Toolkit for Planners (2015) by WG. None of the Traffwll Solar Park site falls within the Potential Opportunity Areas identified in Table 11 of the JLDP and therefore, under the requirement of Policy ADN 2, proposals will only be permitted where the need for the scheme can be justified and there are specific locational circumstances.
153. The need for the scheme refers to the requirement to justify an alternative to the potential opportunity areas rather than questioning the specific need for additional solar PV farms. The specific locational circumstances refer to the justification of the site through the site selection process.
154. The Council notes that the applicant's ES provides detail in relation to the need for the development, the site selection process and detail of the alternatives that have been considered. It outlines how the project sites were identified based upon latest grid capacity as well as a range of technical, environmental and economic factors. The applicant's own network capacity review concluded that the area of search is severely restricted due to the lack of grid capacity. The area around Caergeiliog identified as a Potential Area of Solar PV development is constrained by rocky outcrops which would make deployment difficult and the project not viable. Approaches were made to landowners in the solar search area but none were interested in having solar on their land. The ES thus concludes that the site of the proposed development is the closest available to the identified solar search areas.
155. The grid capacity indicates a limited opportunity area this is why opportunity areas S3 to S9 (as identified in Table 11 in the JLDP) on Ynys Môn were not progressed further even though the ES does not specifically state this. Provided the

information is corroborated then the Council deems that the need for the scheme at this location can be justified as an alternative to the potential opportunity areas.

156. Other JDLP policies which may be relevant to the proposal are as set out in the Development Plan Policy section above.

157. In addition, the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (July 2019) is relevant.

Need for the development

158. The Council has a strong commitment and a track record of promoting, supporting and facilitating progress in the low carbon energy sector through the Energy Island Programme (EIP) which was established in 2008. The vision for the EIP is 'for Anglesey to be an exemplar in the transition to a prosperous and resilient low carbon economy, providing high quality jobs, education and supply chain opportunities, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural environment and enabling the Welsh Language and culture to thrive in vibrant communities.'

159. As identified in the Economic Benefit Statement 'the programme has established a credible status with developers, through regular interaction throughout the developmental process. The 'brand' is recognised by key players at UK Government level and companies in the energy sector. The Energy Island Programme is strategic in nature, aligning with the corporate objectives of Isle of Anglesey County Council, with the ambition of raising the economic performance of the island'.

160. The Collaborative Benefits Report confirms that the proposed development has the potential to produce a generating output capacity of circa 35MW. At peak capacity, the proposed development could generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of approximately 11,600 homes. The Council acknowledges that the Traffwll Solar Farm would assist in realising the overarching vision of its Energy Island Programme (EIP) in terms of producing low carbon energy and would contribute towards the UK and Welsh Governments commitment to achieve net zero by 2050.

161. In addition, the Council has recently published a Plan 'Establishing the Isle of Anglesey County Council Towards Net Zero Plan 2022 – 2025' which sets out the Councils aims, programme areas and the actions required to become a net zero carbon organization by 2030. The Plan refers to the EIP and notes that the outcomes of the Programme should support the Councils efforts in transitioning to a net zero organization. The development therefore has a positive impact in addressing need.

Socio-economic and community benefits

Local benefits and local ownership

162. The current WG planning and energy policy framework seeks to ensure that large scale renewable energy generation delivers benefits at the local level alongside the considerable benefits delivered in respect of climate change. Policy 17 of Future Wales requires applicants to describe the net benefits a proposed

development will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities. Against the background of these important matters and policy framework, the Council's support for the project is on the basis that the project represents a sustainable form of development that will provide real local benefits to those communities directly affected and to the local economy.

163. The applicant's Collaborative Benefits Statement notes that it has been prepared to demonstrate the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits that the proposed development could deliver - benefits that should be weighed positively in the planning balance. It also provides an overview of the engagement that has taken place (and its outcomes) with local communities to identify opportunities for local ownership.
164. Future Wales acknowledges that large-scale renewable and low carbon energy schemes can generate direct social and economic benefit to local communities and states that developers should explore how infrastructure improvements associated with a development may be utilised by the host communities to bring additional, non-planning related benefits. Although not a planning consideration, local ownership of projects, in whole or part, can ensure these benefits are accrued over the long-term.
165. In February 2020 WG published a policy statement on local ownership of energy developments. This set out WG's expectation for all new renewable energy projects in Wales to include at least an element of local ownership, to retain wealth and provide real benefit to communities. Some benefits can be justified as mitigation of development impacts through the planning process. In addition, developers may offer benefits not directly related to the planning process. Local authorities, where practical, should facilitate and encourage such proposals.
166. In order for Anglesey and its residents to fully capitalise upon the positive impacts of major development, the County Council has prepared a voluntary Community Benefit Contributions Strategy (updated version November 2021). It confirms that although the County Council is fully committed to playing its part in the pursuit of net zero 2050, this must not be at any cost. The Strategy aims to maximise local benefits to support the long term sustainability, quality of life and wellbeing of the Island and its communities.
167. Whilst the County Council has no powers to compel developers to provide voluntary community benefit contributions, it will work with developers and the impacted communities to secure meaningful benefits which address the need of those communities directly impacted from major development.
168. The applicant is proposing the following two options for the Traffwll Community Benefit Fund; i. an annual payment of £200/MWp/annum for the operational life of the project with no index linking i.e. the annual payment in year 40 will continue to be £200/MWp; or ii. an annual payment of £155/MWp/annum for the operational life of the project index linked to CPI. It has confirmed that, based on a current estimated figure of 35MWp this would equate to approximately £7,000 per annum under ii for the lifetime of the project or, approximately £280,000 in total, over the project lifetime.

169. The Council welcomes this updated offer to contribute for the operational life of the project as this recognises the siting of the development within the community area for a 40 year period, the changes to the landscape, changes away from traditional uses of land and intangible but important impacts such as changes in the sense of place and to qualities such as tranquillity. The Council requests that the applicant shares details of the offer with Bryngwran and Llanfair yn Neubwll Community Councils, who will administer the fund, to seek their views. The Council also wishes to see an effective and appropriate mechanism, such as a Section 106 or a similar form of agreement, put in place prior the granting of the DNS.
170. The Council welcomes the engagement between the applicant, WG Energy Service, the Energy Saving Trust, and Mentor Mon in order to meet WG's local ownership target for renewable energy projects. Partial or complete local ownership of a solar farm provides real and long term benefits to the host community.
171. At the time of submission, Mentor Mon were exploring whether it was interested in and capable of taking a stake in the project. It is anticipated that this work will continue during the application process and beyond. The Council encourages the applicant to progress and engage on local ownership as soon as possible.

Local jobs, skills, supply chain and education promotion

172. The proposed development will create or safeguard between 162 and 192 jobs during the installation phase, generating between £2.3m and £2.6m in GVA. Two maintenance jobs would be necessary during the 40 year operation phase, generating a further £3.3m in GVA. In addition, there would be a contribution to local services and infrastructure through the payment of around £115,500 in business rates per annum. The Council considers this to be a positive impact. The Council notes the intention to draw on the local skills base through the project stages and to connect with the labour workforce where possible. The Council also acknowledges the potential opportunities that will become available to local business including the need for locally based accommodation and food provision. The developer has already asked local suppliers with an interest in supplying the project to contact it. This should be communicated widely and any job opportunities should be advertised locally.
173. The following commitments are now included in the Collaborative Benefits Statement to ensure local jobs, skills and education promotion;
- 1) Facilitation of Meet the Buyer events to find local contractors with experience and a track-record of sourcing labour and supplies locally, and of providing local young people with skills, training and apprenticeships opportunities.
 - 2) A commitment to engage early with Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, STEM Gogledd and MSParc who are identified as key stakeholders for ongoing dialogue to provide important local context.
 - 3) Confirmation that the project will offer the opportunity to build awareness of the energy sector and expand the knowledge network.

- 4) The provision of an education resource on climate change and renewable energy to be offered to local schools.
- 5) Confirmation that discussions with the North Wales Wildlife Trust have identified benefits to the education of younger people through providing site tours of the solar farm. These trips can show how generating clean energy and providing biodiversity improvements go hand in hand.

174. The Council would welcome continued engagement with the developer in relation to ensuring local socio-economic benefits.

Landscape and visual effects

175. The Council does not dispute the points made in, or the findings of, the majority of the applicant's LVIA. In the interests of brevity and conciseness I only record in this section the instances of disagreement and diversion.

176. Policy PCYFF 3: Design and Place Shaping is excluded from the LVIA. As it is relevant to the character and appearance of the site and area and its context within the local landscape, the LPA considers it should be included.

177. The Council notes that, while the DAs exhibit LANDMAP qualities for the area such as being within a generally pleasant rural landscape absent of remarkable features, the wider study area contains detractors such as RAF valley and the A55. The A55 is also a principal transportation corridor from where visual impacts need to be properly considered.

178. While landscape and visual integration can be closely related to ecology enhancements, the Council considers that of the list of eight measures noted only the three below (two are broadly the same) have direct relevance to landscape and visual mitigation (the remainder are primarily for reasons of landscape and habitats). These are:

- i. Reinforce hedgerows to improve visual containment of deployment areas, improve landscape structure;
- ii. Provide additional hedgerow and tree / scrub planting mitigation to improve landscape structure and screen views from sensitive receptors;
- iii. Maintain a minimum offset distance of at least 50m from all residential receptors that will remain clear of all development.

179. Visual mitigation to address residential effects is proposed for DAs 4 and 5. This is estimated to be up to 790 metres of hedge planting. More limited planting is proposed for DA6. Although the landscape and visual mitigation will have positive effects on landscape features, it will not fully address the significant effects identified within the assessment. No details of species or numbers are contained within the landscape masterplans for the DAs.

Operational effects on Landscape Character

180. The negative impact on landscape character is assessed by the applicant in the LVIA as 'Not Significant' individually or cumulatively. The applicant's LVIA concludes that a positive effect on the main landscape feature, hedgerows, would result. The Council, however, considers the impact on landscape character to be negative.

Operational effects on Visual Amenity

181. Seven properties would experience major and significant negative effects. Boundary tree and hedge planting proposed as visual mitigation would not fully address negative effects which remain as residual impacts. The LPA considers that the open nature of the area limits rapid growth of hedges and trees meaning that residential visual mitigation will take from 7 years to begin to become effective.
182. The LVIA contains an additional assessment of Residential Visual Amenity. The assessment considers case law and Residential Visual Amenity guidance and while it considers that the proposal would not be 'overbearing, overwhelming or oppressive' or render properties unattractive or inhabitable, JLDP policies do not allow for this analysis as follows:

JLDP Policy	LPA Comments
PS 7	The assessment has identified significant adverse effects on the residential amenity of seven properties. Negative. It is understood that all energy infrastructure associated with the proposal would be placed underground. Neutral
AND 2	The proposal would result in significant adverse effects on the residential amenity of seven properties. There effects are not fully mitigated by new landscaping. Negative.

183. The LPA considers this to be a negative impact.

Visual effects on vehicular routes within 1km

184. The assessment includes minor roads near the site and the A55 and A5. The A55 is located to the north of the site and has elevated views over much of DA 4 and 5. Views are available in both directions but the quality and scale of the view depends on the vehicle position in the dual carriage way and differs between driver and passengers. This is a busy route for local, national and international travellers and includes frequent and occasional users. The Council considers that the visual impact on this receptor group due to the large scale change to the appearance of the area and duration of the view has been underestimated but in any event would be negative.

JLDP Policy	LPA Comments
PCYFF 3	The proposal would have an adverse effect on views from an important gateway into Anglesey. Negative.

Viewpoint assessment

185. The assessment identifies a number of localised views where, due to proximity combined with an absence of boundary screening significant, visual effects will result. These are 28 representative viewpoints and significant effects would result at other points near the site. Similarly there are other locations where boundary vegetation or buildings locally screen views of the site. While mitigation in the form of gapping up and increasing the height of boundary hedges will reduce views into the site, it will not reduce effects at site entrances. Overall, the proposal will have a negative impact on visual amenity as represented by the viewpoints.

JLDP Policy	LPA Comments
PS 7	The proposal would not affect the visual amenity or visual qualities of a designated landscape. Neutral.
PCYFF 3	The proposal would have an adverse effect on the appearance of the site and area. Negative
PCYFF 4	The development would have an adverse effect on a number of local views assessed in the LVIA. Negative

186. The Council's view is that mitigation through landscape management (boundaries) and new planting will not fully address these negative effects, although they are individually positive landscape interventions.

Ecology

187. The Council does not dispute the points made in, or the findings of, the majority of the applicant's ecology survey. In the interests of brevity and conciseness I only record in this section the instances of disagreement and points which the Council emphasises for clarity.
188. With regard to badgers, the Council notes that the 15m buffer distance proposed in the event that a sett is found will depend on the construction activities taking place in the vicinity; certain activities may require a 30m buffer. It is thus important to ensure that the pre-construction survey includes the surrounds of the development area.
189. Points of note on reptiles and red squirrel are:
- i. Reptiles – no evidence has been provided to confirm reptiles are isolated to field margins, and not likely to be present within the open field.

- ii. Reptiles are protected from reckless or intentional harm under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
 - iii. Details were given for strimming prior to construction in areas where vegetation was taller in order to protect reptiles, amphibians and small mammals.
 - iv. Red Squirrel – no COFNOD records were returned for red squirrel but incidental sightings were recorded. The Council accepted the undertaking of a pre-commencement survey and identification of appropriate buffer zones.
190. In respect of marshy grassland / swamp habitats on DA6 the Council requested that 'solar panels are re-arranged in a way that leaves more areas of marshy grassland in particular unaffected by the development'. No realignment of panels to avoid impacting marshy grassland is apparent. The Council acknowledged however that regeneration is likely post construction and that operational management may benefit this habitat.
191. Section 6 of Environment (Wales) Act 2016 includes the duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The Council acknowledges the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment that is provided in ES (Appendix 11.12). It notes the loss of low biodiversity value habitat and the smaller proportion of medium biodiversity value habitat but also that enhancement proposals are predicted to lead to an overall enhancement resulting in a net gain of 63 biodiversity units. All hedgerows will be retained and enhanced and 770m of new hedgerow planted. The Council considers this to be a positive impact.
192. Common ragwort is noted as dominant. Ragwort can be harmful to horses, ponies, cattle and sheep. Should grazing take place on the site, control of ragwort will be required to avoid harm to animals and associated welfare offences. Ragwort control shall also be undertaken to prevent spread to adjacent fields used for grazing, forage (silage or hay) and crops. Otherwise, ragwort may be left as a pollinator plant.
193. In summary, the Council is satisfied that no impacts on local or regional receptors are identified or, where minor impacts were assessed, appropriate mitigation has been incorporated. The impact of the proposed development on ecology is therefore considered to be neutral.

Cultural heritage

194. All stages of archaeological assessment and evaluation work have been carried out satisfactorily. However, post-excavation analysis of samples taken from archaeological features during trial trenching has not been undertaken. Technically this means that evaluation is incomplete which could affect the scope of mitigation to a minor degree.
195. The chapter has not assessed the impact upon all relevant assets, nor the potential for or impact upon buried remains that have not been identified by the work to date. Consequently, these have not been considered in the mitigation recommendations. Damage to or loss of potential buried archaeology should be acknowledged as an unknown potential impact.

196. The Council agrees that the proposed combination of mitigation techniques, of 'strip, map and record' and the formal observation and recording commonly termed a 'watching brief' is acceptable, although it is not considered that the strategy outlined deploys these techniques appropriately. Various assets within the area are not well understood, in some cases because they were flooded during trial trenching and could not be evaluated. They may be indicative of more extensive archaeology, may be of early date, and are likely to be compromised by development.
197. Mitigation of impact on historic agricultural features is proposed with a watching brief. This is impractical and unnecessary. They are extensive, simple features of low archaeological value, and development will have limited impact on their integrity, significance or the ability to investigate them in future, therefore specific mitigation is not justified. The Council recommends instead that a watching brief should be employed on groundworks in sensitive locations and where the nature of construction activity permits observation. This would be a proportionate response to the low risk of encountering archaeological deposits which have not been identified by the work completed so far.
198. The Council agrees with the conclusion of the assessment and concludes overall the impacts to be neutral. Subject to the implementation of mitigation under a suitable condition the Council is satisfied that the proposal will be compliant with Policy AT4.

Traffic and transport

199. The Traffic & Transport topic was scoped out of the ES following a Screening Opinion but the Council welcomes the preparation of a Transport Statement and Outline Construction Traffic Method Statement.
200. The LIR sets down in some detail the proposals for traffic access to and through the area. In the main it has no concerns with these and agrees with the conclusions of the transport assessment.
201. In addition, the Council believes that mitigation measures should be provided to protect cyclists at the Hebron Crossroads. It notes the conclusion that there are no highway safety concerns that are likely to be exacerbated by the vehicular traffic expected from the proposed development. However, the Council believes that the construction phase of the development will increase the total number of vehicles on the local highway network and in particular the number of HGVs and will therefore have a negative impact.
202. The Council is satisfied that the detailed CTMS to be agreed under condition will include a detailed Highway Safety Signage Strategy. This will mitigate the risks associated with the HGV movements on the surrounding highway network particularly in sensitive locations such as the vicinities of Bryngwran primary school and Plas Crigyll (Care Home). Restrictions on deliveries by large vehicles during school arrival and home times should be secured as part of the detailed CTMS.

203. The Council requested that an alternative site(s) should be identified for the central compound area in order to ensure that all vehicles can safely manoeuvre in and out avoiding the risk of collision. The Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) records an escort arrangement could be put in place for such vehicles in order to mitigate this risk. The Council considers that there is a need for the developer to identify an alternative site(s) on or close to the A5 where goods and loads can be transferred onto smaller flatbed vehicles which would result in less disruption and damage to minor and unclassified highways and pose less risk at highway junctions.
204. The Outline CTMS recognised that the visibility at the access to DA5 is limited, due to the existing hedgerows. To assist when HGVs are manoeuvring in/out of the access, use of a banksman is proposed.
205. The Council welcomes the confirmation that the detailed CTMS will include a communication plan, detailing how the applicant intends to consult, liaise and take on board the views and concerns of the affected communities, Community Councils and local members. The Council also welcomes that engagement will take place between the developer, contractors, haulage contractors and the Council as Local Highway Authority immediately prior to commencement of construction and during construction in order to discuss progress and any issues and local concerns.
206. The Council welcomes that joint road condition surveys will be carried out of the transport routes before, during and after the development. The survey undertaken prior to development will agree and record existing carriageway, footway and verge conditions; a survey carried out approximately 2 months after construction has commenced will inspect the highway for deterioration and/or defects and agree the condition of the highway and any damage that has been caused as a result of the project. The developer and Highway Authority will undertake a final joint video camera survey within 2 weeks after the construction has been completed. If there is damage to the carriageway, footway or verge, that can be reasonably attributed to the construction phase of the development, the developer will compensate the Highway Authority for the repair costs plus administrative charges for carrying out the required repairs to the highway in accordance with Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980.
207. The developer will arrange the installation of Automatic Traffic Counters on all haulage routes throughout the construction stage in order to collect associated traffic data. The Council requests that this is secured as part of the CTMS.
208. Any works to be undertaken on the public highway shall require the consent of the Council, as Highway Authority, under S.278 of the Highways Act 1980. The Council encourages early dialogue to take place between the developer and Council with regards to such highway improvements as they form essential mitigation that are required to manage the impacts of the proposed development.

Public protection and environmental management

Noise and Vibration

209. The Council confirms that the assessment shows that there would be no significant adverse effects during the construction or operation of the proposed development in relation to noise and vibration. It is satisfied that the Outline CEMP includes an appropriate outline of the measures to be incorporated into the development to control noise and that the detail will be approved through the approval of the detailed CEMP under condition. The Council is also satisfied that condition 7 as included in the LIR provides an appropriate limit to noise levels.

Working Hours

210. The CTMS confirms the site working hours to be 08:00 to 16:00 on a Saturday. However, the Council in its pre-application responses has requested that the CEMP confirms site working hours as being 0800 – 1300hrs on Saturdays. This is to protect the amenities of nearby residents and users. There is now agreement on this point confirmed in the SoCG between the Council and the applicant.

Drainage

211. A number of surface water features are present within the vicinity of the site and. A culverted watercourse and an open watercourse flow through the development site. The Council has no record of flooding associated with the watercourses, however the exact route and condition of the culvert should be established prior to undertaking any works on site. Structures should not be placed within 3m of the watercourses as this may hinder future maintenance. In addition, any permanent or temporary works which could affect the flow of the watercourses will require Ordinary Watercourse Consent.
212. The proposed development will be in line with the requirements of the National Standards for Sustainable Development Systems which will be demonstrated through the application for Sustainable Drainage Approval to the Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB), prior to the commencement of works. Pre-application consultation has taken place with the Council as the SuDS Approval Body and that the information provided indicates that the developer is considering sustainable techniques to manage surface water.

Welsh Language

213. JLDP Policy PS 5 states that all proposals should protect, support and promote the use of the Welsh language. In accordance with JLDP Policy PS 1 a Welsh Language Statement forms part of the application documentation. The methodology of this complies with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (July 2019).

214. The Statement demonstrates that the proposed development will generate direct employment opportunities across a range of occupation types. Through the land preparation, installation and grid connection stage (covering 4 – 5 months), the development could generate between 120 and 190 positions. When the

development is operational, it will require two positions in maintenance roles (for 40 years).

215. The Statement also identifies a number of enhancement and mitigation measures which would support the local community and linguistic effects including:
- 1) Use of bi-lingual signage;
 - 2) Job advertisements to confirm that the ability to speak Welsh will be beneficial to the applicants;
 - 3) Local job advertisement undertaken within the industry;
 - 4) Local advertisement/marketing of the development,
216. The Statement demonstrates that the proposals provide the opportunity for an overall positive community and linguistic impact. The Council agrees with this conclusion subject to the mitigation being implemented and considers the impact on the Welsh Language to be positive.

Agricultural Land

217. A letter from the Minister for Climate Change to all Chief Planning Officers (1 March 2022) (CPO letter) confirmed that PPW paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59 outline national policy towards safeguarding Wales' BMV agricultural land. Future Wales identifies BMV agricultural land as a national natural resource under Policy 9. Criterion 6 of JLDP Strategic Policy PS6 (Alleviating and adapting to the effects of climate change) states that proposals must fully take account of safeguarding the best and most versatile agricultural land. Further guidance is provided in TAN 6, including the consultation arrangements with WG included at Annex B.
218. Specifically PPW states that: '...in development plan policies and development management decisions considerable weight should be given to protecting such [BMV] land from development, because of its special importance. Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development, and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is unavailable, or available lower grade land has an environmental value recognised by a landscape, wildlife, historic or archaeological designation which outweighs the agricultural considerations'.
219. The purpose of the CPO letter is to clarify that in accordance with WG policy outlined above, where BMV land is identified within a proposed solar PV array development, considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because of its special importance, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise it will be necessary to refuse permission.
220. The Council refers PEDW to seek the views of WG's Land Quality Advice Service in relation to the impact of the proposal with regards to BMV agricultural land.

Cadw

221. Cadw had no objections to the proposed development. It noted that the impact of the proposed development on the settings of the designated historic assets inside 3km of the site had been fully considered in the ES. The assessments had concluded that, apart from three listed buildings, the proposed development would have no impact on the settings of any of the assets. In regard to the listed buildings at the Church of At.Mihangel, Pandy Cymunod and the bridge east of Tyn Lidiart it was considered that with appropriate landscaping and vegetation planting, the proposed solar farm would have, at worst a minor, but not significant, adverse impact on their settings. Cadw concurred with these conclusions.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

222. NRW had previously raised concerns regarding potential impacts on chough and Llyn Dinam SAC but were now satisfied that these had been addressed and ruled out any adverse effects on the above sites and their features. It noted the commitment to address risks from construction and operation through a CEMP and a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP). It was generally satisfied with the Outline CEMP. Conditions would be necessary ensure the approval and implementation of the CEMP and LEMP.
223. Prior commencement surveys for great crested newt (GCN) would need to be undertaken and should be included within the LEMP condition 2. Given the scale of the development and the fact that GCN have been found within 130m of the development boundary NRW advised that construction should be carried out under derogation licence issued by NRW. The outline proposals regarding GCN conservation action to be included in the LEMP were welcomed. In NRW's view, this had the potential to appropriately contribute to GCN conservation action.
224. NRW welcomed the removal of the other proposed development areas, and the commitment to protect important areas for birds in DA 6. It concurred with the recommendations for mitigation and enhancement which should be included within the CEMP and LEMP conditions as appropriate. NRW would welcome discussions during the development of the LEMP and would like to see more details in relation to the management proposed for DA 6 where in proximity to the Llynnau y Fali - Valley Lakes SSSI.
225. NRW concurred with the assessment which judged that there would be no significant visual effects upon the AONB.
226. The proposed development is shown to be partially within Zone C2 of the Development Advice Map (DAM) contained in TAN15. The Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) identifies the application site to be at risk of flooding and being partially in Flood Zone 2/3 Rivers/Sea. NRW had reviewed the Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) and advised that multiple revisions had been issued due to previous consultation on the document with NRW and IACC. The revisions were made to ensure that the risks could be managed and included removal of various plots where the risk could not be managed along with addressing the impact of climate change on flood risk. NRW was therefore

satisfied that the risks associated with the development could be managed in accordance with TAN15.

227. It is noted that the IACC have confirmed that 40 years of climate change should be applied. As such NRW would welcome confirmation that the development lifetime was 40 years rather than 75 years as recommended by WG. NRW advised the flood mitigation of raising the leading edge of each panel by approximately 0.90m above ground level would be sufficient. It was thus satisfied with the mitigation measures outlined within the FCA, and had no concerns, subject to the FCA being secured through condition. The report should be included in the 'approved list of plans / documents' condition within the decision notice should consent for the project be granted.

228. NRW noted the proposal is to allow for a buffer/easement strip of 4.0m along the top of the banks for each small watercourse. The applicant should be aware that the river Crigyll (DA 4) is designated as a main river and as such any activity within 8m of a main river may require a Flood Risk Activity Permit under the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016; agricultural style fencing is an exempted activity.

SP Energy Manweb

229. In general, SP Energy Networks has no objection to the proposed development subject to required measures to protect SP Manweb network assets and ensure safe working around the affected network. In relation to protecting SP Manweb assets, the proposals do not appear to take into account the SPM network that crosses the site. This network includes a 33kV tower line which is a significant part of the network in the wider area. The avoidance of any adverse impact on this network is critical.

230. SP Energy Networks also requires unfettered long term access to these assets which would be made difficult by the proposed development.

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

231. The proposed project/development does not currently fall within the consultation distances of any Major Hazard Installation(s) or Major Accident Hazard Pipeline(s).

Shell (NOP) Pipelines

232. Having reviewed the information provided, the Shell (NOP) pipelines are not affected by these works which are free to continue as planned.

Dwr Cymru

233. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water has no objection to the proposed development.

RSPB Cymru

234. The ES includes a programme of ornithological survey work and assessment information; RSPB did not raise any concerns with the conclusion of the ornithological assessment. It acknowledged that the scheme had been amended

to exclude ecologically sensitive areas including DAs 1, 8 & 9 to avoid impacts to chough foraging areas, and lapwing breeding and foraging areas.

235. RSPB noted that the application site overlaps Llyn Dinam SAC and Llynau y Fali - Valley Lakes SSSI within DA 6. The ES implies that this area will not be developed and will be managed for biodiversity gains. The RSPB welcomes the commitment to establish mitigation and enhancement measures on the development site including land adjacent to Llyn Dinam within the SSSI and SAC that borders the RSPB Reserve.
236. RSPB would like to see more detail in respect of the ways in which the developer intends to manage the development site and its vicinity with regard to biodiversity resources of acknowledged importance. In the event that the application is consented, the RSPB wish to be involved in discussions on the design, delivery and monitoring of necessary mitigation and enhancement measures. It noted that the detailed prescriptions for the various measures would be captured in a LEMP which is yet to be written. RSPB Cymru asked to be consulted on the development of the LEMP as it was progressed. Furthermore, it is essential that the developer legally secures the contents of the LEMP including agreements for securing the land, management and monitoring and has sufficient funds in place to maintain mitigation and enhancement measures for the lifetime of the development.
237. The ES states that construction works will be 50m from the boundary of Llyn Dinam SAC & Llynau y Fali - Valley Lakes SSSI. Owing to this close proximity, there remains potential for changes in run-off of water into the SAC and SSSI wetlands around the development and potential for hydrological changes and water quality impacts on designated features during the construction phase. The RSPB defers to the technical expertise of NRW in respect of the issues that may arise as a result of the proposed development.
238. The application area is adjacent/in proximity to the Valley Wetlands Nature Reserve which is owned and managed by the RSPB. The developer was reminded that the RSPB has a legal interest and holds further legal rights within the development area. It drew the developer's attention to an existing access agreement held within DA 4. It is essential that the access route is not compromised by the development, and access is maintained for reserve management purposes.

Ministry of Defence - Defence Infrastructure Organisation

239. The application sites occupy the statutory aerodrome height, birdstrike and technical safeguarding zones surrounding RAF Valley. They also occupy the statutory aerodrome height and bird safeguarding zones encompassing RAF Mona. The proposed development will not affect safeguarding requirements for RAF Mona.
240. The proposed development does not infringe beyond the surrounding safeguarding height criteria protecting operations at RAF Valley and therefore will not cause a physical obstruction to the movement of aircraft to and from the aerodrome. However, the development at DA6 falls within the technical

safeguarding zone drawn to preserve the operation and capability of the Precision Approach Radar (PAR) that surveys the approach to runway 19, providing navigational guidance to aircraft using this runway. Technical assessments indicated there is the potential for thermal/electrical noise interference from components of the PV array installation to cause significant interference to the PAR, degrading the effective performance of this navigational aid, and thereby affecting the safe management of air traffic completing landing procedures on to runway 19.

241. In order to prevent this harm, it will be necessary for a condition to be added as part of any consent issued, requiring the submission, approval and implementation of an Electrical Noise Interference Management Plan (ENIMP).

Soil Policy and Agricultural Land Use Planning Unit of WG (SPALUPU)

242. Following an objection made by the SPALUPU during pre-application consultation and representations made on the final submission, a SoCG was produced. This was agreed between SPALUPU and the applicant and covers matters including the relevant national policies; the CPO letter; amounts and usability of BMV on the site; the effects on BMV of construction and operation; and the feasibility of grazing the land with solar panels in place. Salient points agreed in the SoCG, several of which were also made in SPALUPU's original consultation response, included that:

- a) the agricultural land classification by Land Research Associates (LRA) could be accepted as an accurate reflection of land quality on site;
- b) 23.3 ha of BMV land was identified within the red-line application boundary;
- c) it would not appear practicable to farm some BMV areas to their full potential;
- d) the reasons for c) included: (i) the dispersed nature of BMV land; (ii) the extent to which BMV grades are intermixed with non-BMV grades; (iii) the shape of BMV areas limiting the scope for mechanical and agricultural operations; (iv) topography and drainage;
- e) exceptionally in this case, PPW11 paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59 should apply only to part of DA4 extending to 6.3 ha of ALC Grades 2 and 3a, for the reasons set out in d);
- f) accordingly the application was not considered by SPALUPU to be a matter of national agricultural interest;
- g) the distribution of panels would cover only part of the area identified in e) amounting to 0.8 ha of Grade 2 and 2.3 ha of Subgrade 3a;
- h) the area of BMV outside the panels would be managed as traditional agricultural meadows for the objective of ecological mitigation - these biodiversity proposals would adversely affect the versatility of farming the land;
- i) the areas of track and the inverter within the parcel identified in e) are considered as irreversibly developed - whilst their restoration to agricultural use

at the decommissioning stage is possible, both parties agree to treat these areas as “lost” to agricultural use;

- j) the biodiversity proposals described in h) would affect the versatility of farming the land and to that extent PPW paras 3.58 and 3.59 are relevant, as are Future Wales Policies 9 & 17.

243. The only matter that the parties disagreed on was whether Future Wales Policy 9 is directly relevant to BMV and agricultural land; SPALUPU considered it was.

Objections to the Proposal

244. The proposal has attracted public opposition. At least 40 objections from individuals were received together with a petition containing approximately 500 signatures and many more online. The points made in these objections are included below.

Objections from Residents and the Public

245. The main points raised in the objections are:

- There would be an unacceptable loss of agricultural land, including BMV. This is particularly concerning at time when the country should be producing a lot more home-grown food to counter shortages resulting from recent international events. It would be difficult to return to productive farmland
- The proposal would be unsightly and have an industrial appearance which would cause harm to the natural beauty of the countryside. The scale would be inappropriate in this location. It would take several years for the trees and hedgerows to grow sufficiently to screen it. It would be clearly visible from an historic footpath.
- There would be harm to history, wildlife and the tranquillity of the rural community. The area is already affected by A55
- The proposal would not be an area identified in the JLDP as suitable for solar development.
- The narrow lanes are used by cyclists and walkers and are unsuitable for construction traffic. There would be danger to all road users from heavy traffic delivering to site.
- There would not be any benefit to the community; jobs created would be short term and specialised only. There would be no employment for local people and a negative impact on employment in the area through loss of farmland and agriculture related jobs.
- Glare from the solar panels would affect the planes at Valley.
- There would be a detrimental impact on Llyn Dinham nature reserve

- There would not be any element of local ownership. It would have a negative impact on the value of neighbouring properties but no compensation would be paid by the developer.
- There would be harm to amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Views from houses and gardens will be disrupted;
- There would be disruption on the road and noise and fumes during construction.
- Sufficient renewable energy is planned and not needed, alternative sites have not been exhausted and better sites are available.
- Risk of fire.
- It would harm residents' identity, history, culture and language. It would drive young people and families away
- It would not meet the exceptional circumstances criteria of LDP and not have an economic legacy.
- It should not be built on greenfield land.
- The scheme would have an unacceptable impact on a local campsite business.
- It is a profiteering exercise with little regard for long term loss of environment.
- There would be noise from the transformers and substation.
- There would be damage to drainage pipes and potential flooding.
- The solar farm would be sold on for profit.
- The proposal would be contrary to the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

Rhun Ap Iwerth MS AS

246. This representation was in regard to the proposal and also to the cumulative impact of solar farm applications on Ynys Môn. It expressed concern about the large number of planning applications for solar farms which have already been submitted or are proposed.

247. It stated that, although in the planning process there is a requirement to consider the cumulative impact of developments, each application is considered individually in sequence. The first one to submit an application (which may not be the first to go public) could therefore be more likely to get approval than the last, if cumulative impacts are too great, even if the later ones are considered a better development for the local area.

248. Given there are currently so many solar farms proposed in a relatively small area, PEDW was asked to look at the issue of cumulative effect now, rather than wait until it was too late. The objector was concerned about the nature of many of the plans that are being developed at the moment, and their effects on communities in his constituency.

Sam Rowlands MS AS

249. The objector highlighted concerns raised with him by constituents in relation to planning application DNS/3217391 - Parc Solar Traffwll, and trusted that they would be taken into account when determining the application.

250. Loss of good quality farmland: The development would result in the loss of a significant amount of good quality farmland, which could be used for other agricultural purposes. The agricultural sector is an important part of Anglesey's local economy, supporting many jobs. The loss of this land is contrary to the aims of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act.

251. Impact on existing dwellings: The planned development is in close proximity to a number of existing residential dwellings. Some individuals living in close proximity to the development are concerned about sun glare from the solar panels, as well as the arrays overcrowding their properties. The objector had contacted the developer to ask what steps they were taking to mitigate this, but had not received a reply.

252. Community ownership: WG expect all new, large scale renewable energy projects in Wales to include an element of "community ownership" to retain wealth in local communities and deliver a some local benefit. At this stage it isn't clear that some sort of "community ownership" mechanism is in place. This should be clarified at an early stage.

Say No to Traffwll Solar

253. A group of residents have formed the Say No to Traffwll Solar group. Several members appeared at the hearing and spoke eloquently and knowledgeably about the proposed development and what they considered it would mean for them and their community.

254. Their representation provided detailed views on the matters of site choice, cultural wellbeing and the Welsh language, the need for renewable energy, visual impact, transport, and ecology.

255. Helpfully, it was prefaced with an Executive Summary as follows:

'As a group we are not opposed to renewable energy, particularly solar but we are opposed to this particular development for the following reasons:

- There is strong local opposition to the proposal in Bryngwran due to it being within the community and in a residential area.

- It will have a detrimental impact on the residents' identity of their 'cynefin' with a strong potential of having a negative impact upon both physical and mental wellbeing.
- Being within a community it is visible from many viewpoints and will have a significant impact on the resonance of the 'traffwll' name as established by history and culture.
- It will take just over 20 hectares of best and most versatile land out of food production at a time which we can ill afford to do so.
- There will be a significant transport impact when the proposed journeys involved with construction are considered in the light of existing traffic using the roads around the 3 development areas.
- It will have a negative impact on the Welsh language.
- There is no certainty at all that there will be community ownership of this solar farm if it is granted planning permission.
- The community benefit proposed is insulting bearing in mind the long lasting blight this will have on the area.
- The 'exceptional circumstances' criteria for allowing a solar development to be permitted outside the areas designated as suitable within the Anglesey and Gwynedd Local Development Plan have not been met
- It will not provide an economic legacy for the area.
- We question the appropriateness of a County Councillor acting as a landowner introducer for the developer and not declaring his interest (subsequently found to have breached the Code of Conduct).

Llanfair yn Neubwll Community Council

256. The development is contrary to the areas designated for solar developments in the JLDP and also Future Wales. The development at Plot 6 would be very visible to many residents and particularly those living in the village of Llanfihangel yn Nhowyn. Residents are not convinced that there is sufficient screening to minimise this. This development would have a negative impact on those properties.
257. The site is mainly wet land that is rich in wildlife including birds, newts, plants and insects. It was considered that a development of this kind would have a major impact on the site, spoil this diverse habitat and make the public footpaths totally inaccessible throughout the construction period.
258. The development would not create jobs for local people; any contract work offered locally would be minimal. There would be little or no financial benefit to the community arising from the development and all profits are likely to be made outside Wales.

259. The development would lead to heavy traffic along a busy school route. Ysgol Caergeiliog Foundation School attracts pupils from the village itself, from the RAF base at Valley and from as far afield as Bangor and Llandudno. Some pupils will arrive on foot along the narrow unpaved lane. The extremely wide catchment area of the school already causes huge problems with heavy traffic congestion in the vicinity. Large construction traffic travelling this same route would most certainly increase the risks of injury and cause significant damage to the roads.
260. Residents continue to be concerned about the likely route for cabling. It was considered unlikely that the developer would be able to secure the agreement of each landowner to allow the several miles of cabling required between the three sites to the station on Cymyran Road, Caergeiliog to be buried on private land. In that case several miles of public highway would have to be dug up for the cabling to be put in the ground. This would include the channelling of the only route to Caergeiliog School. Residents felt that the many months of disruption this would cause was totally unacceptable.

Responses on Elwy Solar Farm Decision

261. The Welsh Minister's decision for Elwy Solar Farm (DNS/3247619) was issued on 14th September. Under Regulation 15(2) of the DNS Regulations, I invited the Applicant and the Local Planning Authority to comment on this, although the latter did not do so. Say No to Traffwll Solar also asked that it be able to make comments and I agreed to this request. I have not reported any comments that were not strictly related to the Elwy decision.

The Applicant's Comments

262. The Minister refused to grant planning permission for Elwy Solar Farm on BMV land the Inspector's recommendation. The Minister's reason for refusal was centred on the following (our emphasis):

Nationally Significant Amount of BMVAL

263. Parc Solar Traffwll falls below the threshold of 20ha over which the development of BMVAL for alternative uses would be classified as nationally significant for the purposes of Paragraph (p) of Schedule 5 to the Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016. The Inspector concluded that the Elwy proposal would not result in a significant adverse impact even though the area of BMVAL affected by the development would be in excess of 20 ha. The SoCG agreed that paras 3.58 and 3.59 of PPW only apply to 6.3 ha of land DA4. The loss of BMVAL at Parc Solar Traffwll is considerably below the 20ha threshold considered to be nationally significant.
264. The Minister's decision on Elwy Solar Farm gives weight to the significant amount of BMV land there but the amount of BMVAL that can be farmed to its full potential at Parc Solar Traffwll is, at 6.3ha, not of national significance. SPALUPU stated in their written representation that Parc Solar Traffwll is not considered a matter of national agricultural interest - SPALUPU did not attend the Hearing session on BMVAL for this reason.

265. Circumstances at Parc Solar Traffwll meant that PPW only applied to 6.3ha of the site. These were: • the dispersed nature of BMVAL throughout the site; • the extent to which BMVAL grades are intermixed with non-BMVAL grades; • the shape of BMVAL areas limiting the scope for mechanical and agricultural operations; and • topography and drainage. This was in direct contrast with Elwy which included BMVAL in distinct, contiguous parcels.
266. Only 3.1 ha of BMVAL would be utilised for solar panels. The remaining area would be used for 'ecological mitigation managed as traditional agricultural meadows. The applicant therefore considers that PPW therefore only applies to 3.1ha of the application site which is significantly below the threshold of national significance.

Impact on ensuring Future Food Security

267. The Minister had concerns over the impact of the Elwy proposal on food security. There would be no impact on food security from the Parc Solar Traffwll proposal as it is not practicable to farm the land as BMV. It has not been farmed successfully for arable crops at any point. As set out in the AILA for Parc Solar Traffwll the historic and current uses are as grazing and / or silage. These uses will continue if the proposal is refused. There is no prospect of the land being farmed for food crops and there would be no impact on food security from the proposal.

Overriding need to justify the loss of a significant amount of BMVAL

268. In the Elwy decision the Minister acknowledges the benefits of and the need for increased renewable energy. These are covered in the Parc Solar Traffwll application and not repeated here. The relevant development plan policies for both Parc Solar Traffwll and Elwy Solar are Policies 17 and 18 of Future Wales. Policy 17 states that 'decision-makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency.' A letter issued by the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs states that 'the over-riding imperatives to produce more renewable energy to reduce the impact of climate change and meet our decarbonisation targets are crucial'. It is therefore clear that the need for renewable energy to combat climate change is overriding.
269. The characteristics of the land at Parc Solar Traffwll make it unpracticable to farm as BMVAL and therefore lessen its special importance. Furthermore, the amount of BMVAL contained within the development area is not significant. The temporary (and reversible) loss of BMVAL at Parc Solar Traffwll should be overridden by the need for the development.

Soil Management

270. The Minister was not convinced that the measures proposed at Elwy during construction, operation and decommissioning would be sufficient to protect soils leading to a significant risk of permanent loss of BMVAL. The mixing of soil profiles at the application site would not downgrade agricultural land classification

and the risk of severe compaction of the soil is low if completed in appropriate conditions. During operation soils would not be adversely affected and the length of the operational period would help to conserve BMVAL. There are currently no examples of large-scale solar farms having been decommissioned and removed. However, conditions have been agreed with the LPA relating to soil management plans. These would require the submission and approval of a Construction Soil Management Plan, an Operational Soil Management and Decommissioning Framework Plan and a Decommissioning Soil Management Plan. The Parc Solar Traffwll application was accompanied by outline Soil Management Plans which demonstrated through examples from other projects that the development of a solar farm would not have an adverse impact on BMVAL. It is notable that no draft soil management plans were provided as part of the Elwy Solar Farm application.

Conclusion

271. Parc Solar Traffwll does not require the development of a nationally significant amount of BMVAL whereas Elwy Solar did; there would be no impact on food security from Parc Solar Traffwll; and Outline Soil Management Plans have been submitted with the Parc Solar Traffwll application to demonstrate that the BMVAL resource can be preserved whereas no draft soil management plans were provided as part of the Elwy Solar Farm application.

Say No to Traffwll Solar Comments

272. The submission quoted some of the points raised by the Inspector and the Minister in the Elwy decision (in italics below; in the interest of brevity I have shortened these where it does not detract from the overall gist). It drew comparisons with the application in this case as set out below the quoted sections.
273. Para 9.[of the Elwy decision] ‘... *the affected fields would be densely packed with solar arrays for the most part. The Inspector considers the vast and continuous rows of solar panels would result in the loss of open fields and would represent an uncharacteristic element in the predominantly rural, agricultural landscape for a period of 37 years.*’

[Say No to Traffwll Solar’s comment] This applies to Traffwll as well but for a period of 40 years.

274. Para 10... ‘*the Inspector notes the development would remain visible in part, particularly from close quarters*’.

This is very relevant to the Traffwll Development especially when taking the close proximity to residences into account.

275. Para 38. The CPO letter is noted by the Inspector. “...*where BMV land is identified within a proposed solar PV array development, considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because of its special importance, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise it will be necessary to refuse permission*”.

There is no limit on the amount of BMV land. 45% of the land is BMV at Traffwll compared with 38% of the land at Elwy.

276. Para. 39. The Inspector has based the assessment of impact on 30,000 piles. We at Traffwll don't know how many piles will be inserted or how many panels will be used but the effect cannot be different.

277. Para 41. *The Inspector notes that SPALUPU has raised an objection to the scheme as: (i) the proposal has failed to give considerable weight to protecting BMVAL; (ii) there remains a significant risk that, once developed, its return to agriculture as BMVAL would not be possible; and (iii) the department views the arguments of overriding need and possible alternative sites as insufficient to justify the scheme on BMVAL.*

We have already raised concerns about the allocation of land based on a few soil samples. A different allocation based on the same soil samples could have been made as we did resulting in a contiguous block of BMV land. We were disappointed that WGCC accepted the land surveys as is. The premise that because one part of a field is of a low quality the whole field must be used as though it is all of a low quality is absurd.

278. Para 42. *SPALUPU considers the proposal would not only prevent 43.1ha of BMVAL (despite not all of this land being under panel) being available for food production and non-food uses both now and for future generations but would risk the permanent loss of a nationally significant amount of BMVAL.*

279. Lots of 20Ha parcels of BMV land adds up. My mother used to say "look after the pennies and the pounds look after themselves". This is a significant amount of land in our community.

280. Para. 43. *The Inspector is aware BMVAL is a finite resource which cannot be recreated once it is lost and considers the need to protect the resource during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the solar farm is of principal importance.*

If constructed this would never go back to agricultural land.

281. Para. 46. *SPALUPU considers the siting of the development on BMVAL would significantly affect the agricultural status of the site so that it would not be available for food production both now and for future generations thereby undermining the objective in section 3(2)(a) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.*

This would be the case at Traffwll as well.

282. Para. 47. *The Inspector does not dispute the development of a solar farm would mean the land would be taken out of production ... for the cultivation of food crops... The Inspector states the use of parts of the site for other agricultural uses, such as the grazing of livestock, cannot compensate for the failure to use the BMVAL efficiently, even for a temporary period.*

This would be the case at Traffwll as well.

283. Para. 52. *The Inspector notes “overriding need” is not defined in planning policy and guidance and considers, in terms of establishing whether this test would be met, need can be local or national and is not restricted to identifying a single site which is deemed to be the best and/or only option. The Inspector considers the proposal’s large-scale contribution to renewable energy in the context of strong national policy support is capable of constituting need.*

But as shown above there are many more sites possible of meeting national need without using BMV land thereby meeting the need within the constraints.

284. Para. 69. *The affected BMVAL land would be unavailable for food production for the 37 year duration of the project, a considerable period of time for the loss of full productive capacity of BMVAL, which could impact on the objective of ensuring future food security. I note the land could be used for grazing during this period, however, I do not consider this compensates in any way for the loss of BMVAL. ... Irrespective of whether the land could be restored to BMV quality or whether the loss of BMVAL would be permanent, it is not disputed that the proposed development would involve development on BMVAL land. In such circumstances PPW is clear, the BMVAL should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development.*

Please apply this constraint to the Traffwll application.

285. Para. 70. *I [the Minister] acknowledge and accept the benefits of the scheme... These benefits include the generation of a substantial amount of renewable energy. However, I am not satisfied the benefits of the scheme and the acknowledged need for increased renewable energy override the need to protect the significant amount of BMVAL on the application site from development, which would have a 37-year lifespan.*

Please apply this constraint to the Traffwll application

Para. 74. *I [the Minister] accept the proposed development aligns with and supports the requirements of FW and PPW, regarding the need to achieve decarbonisation of energy, build resilience to the impacts of climate change and support the delivery of renewable energy. ...However, I conclude the amount of renewable energy that would be generated, and the other identified benefits of the proposal do not override the need to protect the significant amount of BMVAL on the application site from development.*

Please apply this constraint to the Traffwll application. There will only be 35MW produced here!

286. Para. 77. *The decision takes account of the long-term benefits of protecting BMVAL, supporting the Welsh Government’s objective to continue to value and protect our agricultural land and ensure it can feed and support us. Refusing planning permission for the proposed development ensures the BMVAL is protected and maintained for the long term.*

Please refuse Traffwll Solar on the same reasoning

Matters not in dispute between the main parties

287. There is no dispute that, in the interests of reducing the effects of climate change, WG has a commitment to facilitating the development of renewable energy sources and such schemes should thus be considered favourably.

Inspector's Considerations

Appraisal

288. I consider that the main considerations in this case are:

- whether the proposed development would conserve BMV, consistent with national policy;
- the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers with particular regard to outlook and noise; and
- whether the proposed development would provide sufficient benefit to the community.

289. Other matters to be taken into account in reaching a decision are the effect of the proposed development on:

- highway safety in the surrounding area, particularly during the construction phase;
- whether the proposed development would be consistent with national and local policy on flooding;
- biodiversity and ecological interests on the site and in the surrounding area; and
- Welsh language and culture.

Best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV)

290. Several objections referred to the loss of good quality agricultural land. People were concerned that, particularly at a time when the effects of Brexit and the invasion of Ukraine were being felt in terms of the pricing and availability of foodstuffs, it was important to retain land in agricultural use.

291. Future Wales tends to support this view. A map entitled 'Agriculture' (page 27) shows the nationwide location of the three grades of BMV and is accompanied by the comment:

'Our productive land is a vital resource. Agriculture has shaped our landscapes and supported our rural and market towns for generations. We must continue to value and protect our agricultural land and ensure it can feed and support us'.

292. In addition, the chapter describing Future Wales' spatial strategy notes that:

‘By focusing large scale growth on the urban areas, development pressures can be channelled away from the countryside and productive agricultural land can be protected. Rural areas have an important function as providers of food, energy and mineral resources.’

293. BMV is also identified in Future Wales on the map of National Natural Resources (page 79). Whilst not referred to in the accompanying policy, Policy 9, the implication is that BMV is green infrastructure, can be part of ecological networks, and should be protected as such. The only outstanding disagreement noted in the SoCG was whether Policy 9 applies to BMV land. SPALUPU considers that it does and, as the Policy 9 map shows BMV land and the CPO letter states clearly that BMV land is a national natural resource, I agree with that position.
294. PPW is more prescriptive stating (para. 3.58) that BMV should be conserved as a finite resource for the future and adding that considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development because of its special importance. BMV should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development, and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is unavailable, or available lower grade land has an environmental value which outweighs the agricultural considerations (para. 3.59).
295. The purpose of the CPO letter was to clarify that in accordance with WG policy, where BMV land is identified within a proposed solar PV array development, considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development because of its special importance. The CPO letter pointed out that, unless other significant material considerations indicated otherwise it would be necessary to refuse permission.
296. TAN 6 Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities dates from 2010 and is therefore the oldest of these national policy documents. Its main thrust is that, in deciding planning applications, the quality of agricultural land and other agricultural factors should be considered. It points out that BMV is the most flexible, productive and efficient land in response to inputs.
297. In my view, the crux of the BMV land consideration in this case is the PPW policy requirement to conserve such land as a finite resource; it should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the proposed development and other previously developed land or land of a lower agricultural quality is not available.
298. There are additional considerations, however, which have a bearing on that central judgement. The most significant of these is the amount and current useability of the BMV land. A second important matter is whether BMV would be conserved by retaining or restoring its high quality during the construction, operational and decommissioning periods. A final contribution to the BMV land decision is the question of whether the loss of the land’s agricultural potential during the scheme’s lifetime would amount to a failure to conserve BMV land. These five factors are addressed below.

Overriding need

299. The hearings were held in July 2022, a month during which temperatures reached record highs all over the country. The exceptionally hot, dry weather served as a reminder that climate change is a real and dangerous phenomenon which must be addressed urgently. Future Wales explains that climate change will have a significant impact on well-being and puts pressure on ecosystems, infrastructure, built environment and Wales' unique landscape and cultural heritage. These elements all contribute to social, economic and ecological resilience. Climate change is also an equality issue as it disproportionately affects the most vulnerable communities (page 45).
300. Future Wales points out that generating renewable energy is a key part of WG's commitment to decarbonisation and tackling the climate emergency. To that end, ambitious targets for the generation of renewable energy have been set; foremost is for 70% of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030. In March 2021, new legislation came into force in Wales, amending the 2050 emissions target to net zero, and increasing the 2030 and 2040 targets. Locally, IACC declared a climate emergency in September 2020 and backed WG's plans to achieve a carbon neutral public sector by 2030.
301. WG's figures on greenhouse gas emissions show a gradual decline in emissions from the 1990 baseline but the 2020 target of a 40% reduction from 1990 levels is unlikely to be met. Wales is also substantially behind its target of net zero by 2050.
302. The proposed solar farm would have an export capacity of circa 35MW of electricity which would be sufficient to power approximately 11,630 homes and offset over 7,161 tonnes of CO₂ every year: it would be equivalent to taking around 3,818 cars off the road. Those would be significant amounts of energy generated from a renewable source, making a sizeable contribution towards Wales' targets and playing a valuable part in addressing climate change.
303. In order to combat the climate emergency, Policy 17 of Future Wales instructs decision-makers determining planning applications for renewable energy development to give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and the target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030. In this light, there is undoubtedly an overriding need for the proposed development.

Availability of other land

304. The applicant's site selection process is set out in the ES (section 5.3). It explains that Anglesey is a favourable area for solar deployment because of its high levels of solar irradiation resulting from its proximity to the coastline. This is illustrated effectively on a map (ES Figure 5.1: UK Irradiance Levels) which shows that the levels seen in the west of Anglesey are found elsewhere in Wales only at its extremes such as the Llŷn Peninsula, Pembrokeshire and a fringe along the south coast. In the UK as a whole such levels are only experienced along the East Anglian coast and in the south.

305. A second, essential factor is access to the local distribution network; in order to export the generated electricity, there must be sufficient capacity in the network to accommodate the additional power from the development. This is also illustrated on a map (ES Figure 5.2 Scottish Power Energy Network Heatmap, May 2021) showing that the area of search was severely restricted by the lack of grid capacity. The ES explains clearly and convincingly why connecting to the substation at Caergeiliog would be the only feasible option for the proposed development.
306. A range of other pertinent factors was considered in assessing sites for their suitability for solar development. As well as agricultural land quality; landscape sensitivity and visual impact; and proximity to the local population, factors which are all central to this case, these included topography; field size and shape; any potential for overshadowing; development plan policy; access to the site for construction/decommissioning traffic; nature conservation issues and potential for enhancement; flood risk; and the availability of the land for the proposed development.
307. The site for the proposed solar farm originally comprised nine DAs. During work on the EIA, six of these were removed from the scheme as it was considered that the potentially significant adverse impacts of their development could not be adequately mitigated. DAs 1, 8 and 9 were removed as they were the location for foraging by chough, a behaviour which could suffer a significant adverse impact from the presence of solar arrays. DA 3 was taken out because of its detrimental impact on the setting of the Castellor Hut Settlement, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). DA 2 was excluded as, had a 50m buffer around residential properties been introduced here as recommended, the amount of land remaining would not be sufficient to feasibly accommodate solar arrays. Finally, DA7 was removed from the proposals following a landowner's request during the initial consultation exercise.
308. The removal of these six areas from the scheme and the reasons for their exclusion convince me that the site selection criteria were adhered to and implemented appropriately. I note also that whilst the SPALUPU expressed some concerns as to the robustness of the site selection process in its original representation, it did not pursue these.
309. The applicant's AIAL, indicates that about 46% of the total site area is land of Grade 2 and 3a quality. PPW requires such land to be conserved as a finite resource for the future; considerable weight should be given to protecting this land from development because of its special importance. In this case, however, it has been demonstrated firstly, that there is an overriding need for the development, and, secondly, that neither previously developed land nor land in lower agricultural grades is available. In that light, the proposed development would comply with PPW, which provides the substantive policy on safeguarding BMV agricultural land. Consequently, it would also be consistent with the clarification set out in the letter from the Minister for Climate Change.
310. On the matter of site selection, JLDP Policy ADN 2 directs solar farms of 5MW or greater to potential search areas identified on the Proposals Map. These are

limited in extent but one is located in the vicinity of Caergeiliog. The applicant found, however, that a significant proportion of this area was constrained by rocky outcrops which would make deployment difficult and, consequently, the project not viable. Land to the immediate north-east, east and south-east of the substation at Caergeiliog was covered with scrub vegetation and trees. In addition, although approaches were made to landowners within the solar search area, none were interested in having solar development on their land.

311. The applicant therefore considers that the application site is the closest available to an identified solar search area, a view with which I agree. It is, however, somewhat of a moot point. As Future Wales was published more recently than the JDLP, in the case of any conflict the policies of Future Wales are preferred over those of the JDLP. Future Wales does not direct solar development to specific areas but relies on the criteria set out in Policy 18. Thus, the JDLP's requirement to site solar development in potential search areas no longer carries any weight.

Amount and useability

312. Subsequent to submitting a letter in response to consultation on the scheme, SPALUPU confirmed that it had been discussing its concerns, and my initial questions, with the applicant resulting in a SoCG agreed between the two parties. This has been very helpful.
313. The AIAL carried out by LRA is confirmed in the SoCG, and thus by SPALUPU, to be an accurate reflection of land quality on site. It states that throughout the site as a whole there are 6.1 ha of Grade 2 agricultural land and 17.2 ha of Grade 3a land; the total amount of BMV on the site is 23.3 ha. Being more than 20 ha, the need to consult with WG was triggered as required by TAN 6 (Annex B). In its letter responding to consultation SPALUPU stated that, having taken into account PPW, the DNS Order, Future Wales and the Minister's letter, it did not consider that the application in question was a matter of national agricultural interest.
314. SPALUPU also acknowledged that it was not possible to farm all the identified BMV land on the three DAs to its full potential. The reasons for this, as set out in the SoCG, were:
- (i) the dispersed nature of BMV land;
 - (ii) the extent to which BMV grades were intermixed with non-BMV grades;
 - (iii) the shape of BMV areas limiting the scope for mechanical and agricultural operations;
 - (iv) the topography and drainage of the DAs.
315. SPALUPU thus advised in its letter and confirmed in the SoCG that, exceptionally in this case, PPW's policy conserving BMV land (paras. 3.58 & 3.59) should only apply to a contiguous block of about 6.3 ha of BMV land lying within DA4. The proposed panels would cover a part of this area, a total of about 3.1 ha of which 0.8 ha would be Grade 2 and 2.3 ha would be Grade 3a. The parties have agreed

in the SoCG that the areas under tracks and the inverter are to be treated as irreversibly lost to agriculture.

316. The remainder of the 6.3 ha of BMV land would be kept free from development and preserved for ecological mitigation in the form of wildflower meadow which would provide a winter source of seeds for birds. Although this part would be managed as traditional agricultural meadows, it is agreed in the SoCG that these biodiversity proposals would adversely affect the versatility of farming the land.
317. I do not have any reason or evidence to disagree with SPALUPU's comments and position or the agreements reached in the SoCG. My findings on this matter are therefore that, although there is over 23 ha of land classified as BMV within the application site, in practice only 6.3ha could be farmed as such and used for the production of food crops. If it is considered that the BMV quality of the land could not be retained or restored, a point I discuss in the following section, the proposed development would thus result in the loss of only 6.3ha of BMV land. This is agreed by SPALUPU which also states that it does not consider the application to be a matter of national agricultural interest.
318. The 6.3ha of BMV land to which it is agreed that PPW applies is also well below the threshold of 20ha above which the DNS (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016 (para p of Schedule 5) requires consultation with Welsh Ministers. The corollary of this is that such an amount is not nationally significant.

Retention/restoration of value

319. The amount and quality of the agricultural land on the site, including the BMV, would not be changed by differing management or cultivation practices, or by it not being cultivated, or by it being neglected. It can, however, be harmed by being compressed, particularly during wet conditions, or by being extensively disturbed. The applicant has explained in its evidence the management measures which would be employed to avoid such consequences. These would include: timing the works to avoid vehicles moving repeatedly over wet land; separating top and subsoils when laying cables and returning them to the trenches in the correct order; stripping off topsoil for the platforms of the fixed buildings and keeping it in a low bund nearby to be used for restoration work.
320. If the proposed development gains planning permission, that permission will be subject to a condition requiring a detailed CEMP being submitted by the developer and approved by the local planning authority. The CEMP would provide details on a number of important matters including the construction schedule and implementation timescale.
321. Other conditions would put soil management plans and a decommissioning framework plan in place before any development began on site. These would provide details of measures to be implemented during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the site in order to protect the agricultural quality of the soil. In addition, they would detail the works to be undertaken in order to return the site to its original agricultural condition, including the method for removing the solar panels, structures, enclosures, equipment and, as appropriate, all other apparatus above and below ground level.

322. In the recent decision on a solar farm DNS at Blackberry Lane, Pembrokeshire (DNS/3245065) the Minister concluded that just over 20 ha of Grade 2 and 3a land would be affected. The Minister accepted that Inspector's conclusion that it was likely, in that case, that the ground would be considerably disturbed and that land of BMV quality would be lost. In this case, as a result of the attention given to the matter and the safeguarding conditions which would be imposed, I do not consider that the quality of the BMV land would be significantly reduced.
323. TAN 6 states that once agricultural land is developed, even for 'soft' uses such as golf courses, its return to agriculture as BMV agricultural land is seldom practicable. The applicant pointed out at the hearing that the construction of golf courses involves much excavation and movement of soil to create the typical features such as bunkers and other hazards, greens, and fairways. The installation of a solar farm would not require as much disturbance of the soil, which as explained can be one of the main causes of a degradation in quality. The comparison with golf course construction is not, therefore, compelling or helpful.

Agricultural potential during scheme's lifetime

324. Whilst PPW requires BMV to be conserved it cannot insist that such land be farmed in any particular way or at an intensity commensurate with its high value. Indeed, it need not be farmed at all. Financial incentives can be provided for using land in a specified manner, for example for rewilding, but as far as I am aware there are no other policy regimes which dictate how land must be farmed.
325. It is possible that the position might change, although I have no evidence that this will happen in the near future, and greater encouragement given to, or pressure placed on, farmers to cultivate high grade land to its full potential. The proposed development would not permit this to take place within the DAs, either where the land was covered with panels, or where the areas of undeveloped land remaining were too small to farm effectively. In my view, therefore, the full potential of the BMV land would be lost and not conserved during the period that the solar farm was in place.

Conclusion on BMV

326. PPW requires that BMV land should be conserved as a finite resource and that considerable weight should be given to protecting it from development. In this case, however, I have found that there is an overriding need for renewable energy and no previously developed land or land in lower grades is available. These two circumstances together permit BMV land to be developed for the solar farm proposed in line with PPW.
327. A substantial additional consideration is that, for a variety of physical and practical reasons, it is not possible to cultivate all of the BMV land commensurate with its value. Only a single contiguous area of 6.3 ha is considered by SPALUPU to be subject to PPW's conservative policy for BMV land. With regard to other considerations, I have found that the BMV value would be retained and/or restored during construction, operation and when the proposal was decommissioned subject to the recommended conditions. These further two

considerations are significant and weigh heavily in support of my decision on BMV.

328. Not farming the land to its full BMV potential, for example during the lifetime of the scheme, would not be contrary to planning policy. Nonetheless, the proposed development would render that option impractical. The full potential of the BMV land would therefore not be conserved during the period that the solar farm was in place. Given the small area of land which could be farmed to its full, BMV value in this case, however, this is a minor failing. It does not undermine my conclusion that the proposed development would not harm the BMV resource and, in any case, would be consistent with PPW.
329. The Elwy proposal for a solar farm was refused by the Minister, contrary to the Inspector's recommendation and on the grounds of a loss in BMV land, in September 2022.
330. A significant difference between the Elwy and the Parc Solar Traffwll applications is the amount of BMV land affected; at Elwy there were 43ha of BMV land within the application site. Although 23ha of land are classified as BMV in this case, as explained elsewhere in this document, only 6.3ha of this could realistically be farmed to produce food crops consistent with its BMV value. This point was made by SPALUPU in its original consultation response in which it also stated that, exceptionally, PPW would only apply to this 6.3ha area. Furthermore, SPALUPU considered, for that reason, the application was not a matter of national agricultural interest. SPALUPU did not, therefore, object to the application scheme, unlike at Elwy. As stated earlier, I do not disagree with SPALUPU's comments, reasoning or findings.
331. Arising from the scale of the BMV land loss, a further reason for the Elwy refusal was the impact on the objective of ensuring future food security. This does not apply to the application here as only a small area is capable of being cultivated for food crops.
332. The amount of BMV land that could realistically be farmed for food crops at Elwy and in this case is thus the fundamental difference between the two proposals. The Elwy decision, therefore, does not provide a helpful comparison or a precedent for the refusal of this scheme.

Character and appearance

Landscape character

333. Landscape and visual effects are assessed separately. Landscape effects are those of change and development on the landscape as a resource and on the elements that make up the landscape and its distinctive character.
334. The topography around the proposal site is undulating with rocky outcrops. There are also patches of semi-natural habitats, such as hedges, trees, and wetland, throughout the area as well as fields of agricultural grassland. The A5 and A55 roads and the main railway are close by. DA6 is slightly different from DA4 and DA5, being more enclosed with many mature hedgerows. The area is also

influenced by RAF Valley and the military and civil flights operating from it which reduce tranquillity. The applicant's LVIA assesses the overall landscape scale and features of the DAs as being of a lower sensitivity.

335. The main change to the landscape would be the installation of the continuous and extensive areas of solar panels on the existing grassland. The inverters and associated equipment and site tracks would have hard bases and surfaces. Although numerous, the fixings for the panels – metal stanchions driven directly into the ground – would be relatively insubstantial and removeable. The cable trenches would be dug out, and the soil from them stored and returned, in such a way as to minimise disruption to the soil structure. Other distinctive landscape features, particularly the field pattern and hedgerows with their scattered trees, would remain in place and unaltered.
336. Another, much valued, feature of this area is its tranquillity although there are significant local detractors, such as the A55 and RAF Valley, which impinge upon this. During construction and decommissioning, the peace and minimum levels of activity in the area would be greatly disrupted. These would be restored, however, during the operational period of the proposed solar farm; the installation would be monitored remotely and there would be very few occasions on which it would be attended by maintenance vehicles and staff.
337. The proposed solar arrays would thus be noticeable, uncharacteristic and widespread new features within the existing fields. They would, however, be contained within the existing, long-established field pattern. In addition, the existing use of the fields, namely grazing, would be continued under and amongst the panels. Mitigation measures, particularly the retention, protection and management of existing hedgerows and the planting of new ones, would help to integrate the panels into the landscape and to screen them from view. The opportunities for those in the vicinity of the proposal to experience the changes to the landscape would thus be limited.
338. The type of landscape here covers a fairly extensive area and, whilst attractive, is not unusual or unique in character. The proposed development would result in obvious alterations in the landscape but, because of its wider form and scale, it is assessed as having some capacity to accept change. I agree, therefore, with the finding of the LVIA that the changes to the DAs would not have notable effects on that wider distinctive, but commonplace, landscape. The change to the existing landscape elements and characteristics would be partial and classified as moderate.

Visual effects

339. Visual effects are defined in the LVIA guidance as the effects of change and development on the views available to people and their visual amenity. These include how the surroundings and views of individuals or groups of people may be affected by the change or loss of existing elements of the landscape and/or the introduction of new elements. Whilst I appreciate that many in the local community would prefer not to see solar panels in their neighbourhood, limited,

distant, filtered, or partial views are not likely to result in significant harm to the appearance of the landscape.

340. I found the applicant's LVIA to be a thorough and robust assessment, which was prepared in accordance with up-to-date, industry standard, guidance. It assessed the predicted visual effect of the proposal on nineteen viewpoints, the locations of which were agreed with IACC. The issues considered in describing and comparing the view from these included:
- whether views of the development would be full, partial, glimpsed;
 - the proportion of the development that would be visible;
 - distances to the development and whether the viewer would focus on the development due to its scale and proximity or whether it would be a minor element in a panoramic view;
 - whether the view would be stationary or transient or one of a sequence; and,
 - the types of changes eg to the skyline profile; a new visual focus; changes in visual simplicity or complexity; alteration of scale.
341. Of the nineteen viewpoints, only four - VP6, VP7, VP8, and VP10 - were found likely to suffer a major and significant visual effect from the proposed development. These are all on local roads and close to the dwellings at Caer Ddol Farm; Plas Llechylched; Tyn Rhos; and, Arfryn.
342. All are at field entrances and would provide clear, close-range views of the solar arrays. These are, however, the most open locations along their respective sections of road; views from most sections of the surrounding lanes would be filtered and screened. VP6 would be representative of fleeting views from passing vehicles and riders on National Cycle Route 8. VP10 overlooks DA6 and would have the most open views over it. The visual effect from here would mostly be experienced by road users travelling west. The four VPs also provide views that are partially representative of those from nearby residential properties.
343. Most views from the surrounding lanes would be screened by hedgerows; extensive views of the solar arrays would only be available from gateways and thus of relatively short duration for those travelling through the area, even when on foot. Nonetheless, all passers by would be left with the knowledge that there was a large solar farm in the area. Those living in the neighbourhood would be reminded of this more frequently, perhaps on a daily basis; for some residents this would be an unpleasant position which would be difficult to accept.
344. The DAs, or parts of them, would be visible from several of the remaining assessed viewpoints. The visual effects from these were assessed to be noticeable but not dominating when the development was viewed within the overall visual environment. They were therefore judged to be not significant. I agree with the LVIA assessment of the outlook from them.
345. Five settlements including Bryngwran, Llanfihangel-yn-Nhywyn, Caergeiliog, and Llanfair-yn-neubwll were considered, the assessment concluding that there would be extremely limited visibility to the DAs from them. The scale of visual effect was considered to be negligible and therefore not significant. Following my site visit, I agree with this assessment. Although the residents of these villages would be

able to see the solar farm from locations within them, the distance, angle of view, intervening vegetation and topography would make such views insignificant and the proposed development would not be obtrusive.

346. The A55 dual carriageway is close to the boundary of the site. This is the main route from North Wales and North West England to the Holyhead ferry. Although not constantly busy it carries a large number of freight and tourist vehicles heading to or from Ireland as well as local and tourist traffic heading to other parts of the island. At the request of IACC, photographs were taken from the passenger side of a moving vehicle and included amongst the LVIA VP photos. They show visibility from the main road corridor where it is not possible to stop and take photographs.
347. I have experienced some of these views myself and agree with the assessment that visibility to the DAs would be limited and fleeting. The road corridor runs through shallow cuttings and is bordered by mature vegetation which restricts extensive views into the DAs. Although several glimpses of different parts of the proposed development might be seen during a single journey along the A55, the scheme would not be so clearly visible as to be harmful or obtrusive in the wider landscape. I do not consider that the presence of the solar farm would be harmful to the character of the island or to people's perception of it.
348. A range of mitigation measures would be provided which, in time, would bolster the existing screening of views by landscape features. These would include:
- the retention of all existing boundary hedgerows, including hedge trees, and where appropriate on boundaries adjoining receptors (residential, roads and footpaths), allowing them to grow up to at least 3m tall to help to screen visibility;
 - maintaining a minimum offset distance of at least 50m from all residential receptors to remain clear of all development;
 - filling existing gaps in the perimeter hedgerows with native mixed species;
 - planting additional feathered sized hedge trees along the hedgerows at random spacings to increase local tree coverage levels, filter visibility and provide green links between existing woodland and scrub areas.
349. In the light of the distance of the proposed development from the boundary of the AONB and the presence of intervening, screening vegetation I do not consider that the proposal would have any affect on the character of the AONB. If parts of the proposed solar farm were seen from within it, it would be a minor element in the wider landscape and not obtrusive or harmful.

Conclusion on character and appearance

350. All in all, the proposed development would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character or visual appearance of the surrounding landscape and, in that respect, would comply with Future Wales Policy 18. As it would not cause significant demonstrable harm to landscape character or appearance the scheme would also be in line with JLDP Strategic Policy PS 7. All impacts on the landscape would be adequately mitigated as required by JLDP Policy ADN 2.

Living conditions

351. An LVIA is a tool for assessing the visual impacts of a proposal on a landscape. As the saying goes ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’ and, to a certain extent and by the same token, so is a lack of beauty. In that light, the methodology and language of the LVIA have been developed to assess as objectively as possible the highly personal and subjective experience of seeing a landscape. The LVIA cannot, however, measure the emotional impact of seeing unwanted change in a much-loved and familiar landscape that is inextricably connected to your home.
352. I heard at the hearings how upset and concerned the residents of some of the most affected dwellings were about what they thought would be fundamental, negative changes to their living environment. All described the pleasure and sanctuary they derived from their homes currently, including from the presence of wildlife and the pleasant views, which they expected to be considerably damaged by the proposal. It was apparent that, in this close-knit community, other residents who would not be as affected by the scheme were concerned for their neighbours.
353. The main residential visual receptors within c.200m of the site were assessed by the LVIA. Five properties or groups of properties close to DA4, one adjacent to DA5 and one adjacent to DA6 were considered to experience potentially significant visual effects. The properties are all close to the site boundary and would have near-range views, including from upper storey windows, over large areas of the DAs. I visited the gardens of three of the most affected homes and was able to envisage the potential effects for myself.
354. The landscape mitigation plan has taken full account of the LVIA findings of the major and significant impacts of the proposal on adjacent residential properties. Hedgerows would be enhanced, have gaps in them filled and be planted with new hedgerow trees to screen and filter views of the solar arrays from them. New planting would be of native, locally appropriate species and the site boundary fence would be stock fencing of a type commonly seen in agricultural areas. It would, however, take the best part of a decade before the mitigation was fully effective and, even then, views would not be completely blocked out. Most of the species comprising the hedges are deciduous; whilst the framework of bare branches can be dense and obscuring, the solar arrays would be likely to be more clearly visible in winter when the branches are bare of leaves.
355. At Plas Llechylched the ground slopes down from the garden boundary and thus the further parts of the DA would be likely to remain visible. Pen Bont is to the north of DA4 and separated from it by the lane. Some views are already filtered by existing trees and hedges but others would remain unobscured. At Tyn Rhos the land rises away from the house and its garden which, despite mitigation, would increase the amount of visible area of solar panels.
356. A further mitigation measure would be to leave a minimum 50 m zone clear of development, and managed as grassland for reptiles, invertebrates and birds, between the properties’ boundaries and the site boundary fence. This would reduce the scale of the installation for those seeing it from their houses and make

ancillary items, such as security cameras, less obvious. Nonetheless, views of the proposed development would be available from nearby properties until new planting matured and it would always be visible from upstairs windows.

357. The proposed development would result in a considerable change to nearby residents' views. Open fields would be the site of uniform rows of engineered structures. In some lights, the surface sheen, regular shapes, and shadows thrown by the panels would be in sharp contrast to the muted shades and irregular outlines of the surrounding landscape and its features. Nonetheless, in my opinion it would not equate to the creation of an industrial landscape in either appearance or character.
358. In planning law, however, no one has the right to a view. Several appeal decisions are cited by the appellant in the Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) which was carried out as part of the LVIA. These clarify that the acceptability or otherwise of changes to the outlook from homes is judged by whether the proposed development would appear so unpleasant, overwhelming and oppressive that a dwelling would become an unattractive place to live.
359. I have taken into account the height of the panels; the 50m buffer distance; the existing hedgerows, where they are present now, and the mitigation planting where they are not; as well as all the other factors mentioned in respect of this matter. It is, therefore, my judgement that the proposed development would not be overwhelmingly unpleasant and oppressive, or that it would make the surrounding dwellings unattractive places in which to live, even before the new planting matures. I appreciate that the occupiers of the most affected dwellings will not agree.
360. We heard from the appellant's noise consultant at the hearing. During the construction period noise would emanate from various operations including deliveries, trenching and other construction activities. This would be mitigated to some extent by restricting the hours of work on site, regularly maintaining plant to keep it at minimal noise levels, and screening those sensitive receptors close to a noise source with temporary hoarding.
361. The only noise from solar farms in operation is that arising from the air-cooling systems of the inverters and substations, and from the general operation of the transformers. The noise emitting equipment is all located as far as possible from the properties neighbouring the DAs. Because of these distances and the relatively quiet nature of the operational equipment, during the operational phase noise levels will be imperceptible in neighbouring dwellings and their gardens. The potential for vibration effects is unlikely. I do not consider, therefore, that the proposed development would result in levels of noise that would be sufficient to harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
362. I am aware that several residents have said they will move away if the proposal is permitted and that they have had advice that the value of their houses would be reduced. These would both be unfortunate outcomes but they are not sufficient for me to alter my conclusion on the matter, unpopular as I know it will be for many.

Conclusion on living conditions

363. There would be no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings and the scheme would comply with Future Wales Policy 18. The proposed development would not result in significant demonstrable harm to the living conditions of nearby occupiers by reason of either visual amenity and outlook or of noise. The proposed development would thus be in line with JLDP Strategic Policy PS7 and Policy ADN 2.

Community Benefit

364. Several objectors mentioned the lack of benefit from the proposed development to the local community in their representations. The Say No to Traffwll Solar group, for example, considered that there was no certainty that there will be community ownership of the solar farm if it were granted planning permission and that the community benefit proposed was far too little bearing in mind the long-lasting blight the proposal would have on the area.
365. The matter of benefit to the community was therefore discussed at the hearing and at some length. There seemed to be a feeling amongst some that the proposed development would be exploitative and that the community should be compensated for that. For others no amount of contribution to community assets would alleviate the harm that they consider the proposal would cause. Furthermore, several people said that, were the proposed scheme fully or partially owned by the community, they would still not see it in a different, more favourable light.
366. The applicant submitted an updated Collaborative Benefits Report in May 2022. Amongst other benefits, a payment equating to about £7000 per annum for the life of the project would be made to a Community Benefit Fund. This would be approximately £280,000 in total, depending on the amount of electricity generated, and would be administered by Bryngwran and Llanfair yn Neubwll Community Councils.
367. As reported earlier, WG has a target for renewable energy projects to have an element of local ownership. To that end, the applicant has been liaising with national and local organisations, including Mentor Mon, a not-for-profit company based on Anglesey, to explore that potential. The applicant's parent company has previous experience and a track record in this area having developed and obtained planning approval for what is now the largest community owned solar farm in England (Ray Valley Solar Farm). The applicant pointed out that finalising any local ownership scheme was normally impractical unless and until planning permission had been granted for the scheme in question.
368. Policy 17 of Future Wales states that proposals should describe the net benefits the scheme will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities. Future Wales also advises that the developers of DNS energy schemes should explore how infrastructure improvements associated with a development (including transport infrastructure and communications systems) may be utilised by the host communities to bring additional, non-planning related benefits.

369. PPW advises that WG supports projects which are developed by wholly Wales based organisations, including community groups or which provide proportionate benefit to the host community or Wales as a whole. Additionally, in February 2020 WG published a policy statement on local ownership of energy developments. This set out the expectation for all new renewable energy projects in Wales to include at least an element of local ownership. The statement also recommended that local authorities, where practical, should facilitate and encourage such proposals which offered benefits not directly related to the planning process. As reported above, the Council in its role as the host authority for the proposal has argued this position strongly in its LIR.
370. From a planning point of view, however, both Future Wales and PPW recognise that despite WG's objectives for local ownership, shared ownership within a proposed development should not be a consideration in the decision-making process. Future Wales' advice regarding non-planning related benefits is set out in the explanatory text, rather than Policy 18 itself, and goes on to state that it is not a planning consideration.
371. PPW clarifies that, although the principle of securing financial contributions for host communities through voluntary arrangements is supported, such arrangements should not impact on the decision-making process or be treated as a material consideration, unless they meet the tests set out in Circular 13/97: Planning Obligations. The latter proposition is not put forward in this case.
372. As well as the contribution to the community fund and the potential for some local ownership, other benefits provided by the proposed development would be:
- carbon savings of over 7,840 tonnes in CO2 emissions each year;
 - energy generation output capacity of circa 35MW, the approximate equivalent to electricity requirements of 11,600 homes;
 - creation or safeguarding of approximately 162 and 192 jobs during the installation phase, generating between £2.3m and £2.6m in GVA;
 - creation of 2 maintenance jobs during the 40 year operation phase generating a further £3.3m in GVA;
 - contribution to local services and infrastructure through the payment of around £115,500 in business rates per annum;
 - provision of education packs on climate change and renewables for schools or colleges;
 - biodiversity and habitat enhancements (additional to those required to mitigate the effects of the scheme).

Conclusion on community benefit

373. There would be consequential benefits arising from the proposed development, such as income from business rates, construction jobs and the economic knock on effects of these, and biodiversity enhancements. Importantly, the developer would also make annual payments to a community fund which, dependent on the amount of electricity generated, could be over a quarter of a million pounds in

total. This is not an insignificant sum. Moreover, the developer is actively and genuinely investigating the prospect of some local ownership of the scheme with relevant organisations as the application progresses.

374. The applicant's updated Collaborative Benefits Report fully describes the net benefits the scheme would bring in terms of improvements to local communities and therefore complies with Policy 17 of Future Wales and PPW. In exploring local ownership the proposal would be in line with the WG policy statement on local ownership of energy developments. In decision making terms, however, these factors carry little weight as they are not planning considerations.

375. All things considered, the proposed development would provide sufficient benefit to the community.

Other Considerations

Highway Safety

376. The lanes around the site are narrow and winding with forward visibility often restricted by the high hedgerows bordering many of them. They are used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders as well as vehicles; during the lockdowns they were a valuable resource for many wanting to exercise and take solace in the countryside. I have noted the survey data collected by Say No to Traffwll Solar on existing traffic using the local road network.

377. During the operational period of the proposed solar farm, traffic to the development site would be negligible. It would be much more of an issue during the construction period. This would probably last 4 to 5 months, during which it is estimated that there would be approximately 330 return delivery journeys in total. At the busiest time there would be an average of 4-5 HGV deliveries per working day. In addition, extra movements, but of lighter vehicles, would arise from the transferral of materials to smaller trucks for delivery to DA4.

378. Whilst obviously a considerable increase on the heavy traffic such as tractors and other farm machinery which currently use these routes, the lanes would not be constantly used by HGVs. Staff movements to and from the site by as many as 190 workers would also be a significant addition. The majority of these, however, would be concentrated into short periods at the beginning and end of the working day. Whilst the lanes would therefore be busy at these times they would be comparatively free of workers' vehicles outside of them.

379. Mitigation measures, as outlined in the CTMS, would include: using a banksman to guide deliveries into sites; signs to ensure deliveries follow agreed routes from the A55; and the provision of sufficient parking areas so there is none on the highway or in the mouths of access tracks. In addition, and importantly, local residents would be contacted prior to the start of construction to let them know how long the works were likely to take and to supply them with a contact number for reporting any concerns. The final CTMS would be imposed through a condition if the application were permitted. I have noted that the Council generally agrees with the conclusions of the applicant's transport assessment.

380. As there would be no unacceptable adverse impacts on the transport network through the transportation of components during its construction and/or ongoing operation the proposal complies with Future Wales Policy 18. Overall, I consider that the proposed development would not have an unacceptable impact on road safety and is consistent with JLDP Policy ADN 2.

Flooding

381. Parts of DA4 and DA5 would be within flood zones C2 and 3 as shown on the DAM in TAN15. Whilst TAN15 remains extant, the DAM has been replaced by the FMfP. This shows that the application site would be partially within Flood Zone 2/3 Rivers/Sea and thus at risk of flooding. In accordance with PPW and TAN15 the applicant undertook a Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA). The FCA was revised following consultation with NRW and IACC, revisions being made to ensure that the risks could be managed. Some plots were removed from the scheme because of the flood risk. The applicant also agreed with IACC that the proposed development would constitute less vulnerable development as defined by TAN15.
382. The Hydrology and Flood Risk paragraphs of the Case for the Applicant, summarised above, explain the TAN 15 Justification Test and process in some detail. The FCA demonstrates that the risks of flooding can be effectively managed in the areas at risk within DA4 and DA5 and overall, the Justification Test is met. NRW advised that the flood mitigation of raising the leading edge of each panel by approximately 0.90m above ground level would be sufficient and was satisfied that the risks associated with the development could be managed in accordance with TAN15.
383. The proposed development would manage flood risk and maximise the use of sustainable drainage schemes in line with JLDP Strategic Policy PS 5: Sustainable Development.

Biodiversity and ecology

384. The ecology of this area is rich and diverse. The applicant has rightly, therefore, carried out a considerable amount of survey work and assessment, including considering the impact on designated sites which have ecological or hydrological links to the application site.
385. NRW had previously raised concerns with regard to the potential impact on chough and Llyn Dinam SAC but was satisfied those concerns had been addressed in the final scheme. NRW also recorded concerns in respect of the GCN survey considering its conclusions to be inconclusive. As a result, prior commencement surveys for GCN should be undertaken and the need for these included in the LEMP condition. That condition requires the LEMP to provide details of all landscape and ecological objectives and management, maintenance and monitoring proposals. As it would be produced in consultation with NRW I am satisfied that the shortcomings in the GCN survey would be adequately addressed.

386. The applicant's ecological survey work was carried out in consultation with NRW and IACC and, with the exception of the single case outlined above, I have no reason to believe that it was not thorough, robust and fit for purpose.
387. A range of mitigation measures are set out in response to the findings of the ecological assessments. These include: keeping the part of DA6 where it overlaps the SAC/SSSI areas free from development and managing the adjacent area for wildlife; enhancing the SAC/SSSI by ensuring no agricultural inputs to the DAs; and managing the principal drain through DA6 in order to improve water quality. In addition, the DAs will be re-sown with a species-rich wild flower and fine grass mix suitable for grazing, bat boxes will be installed in taller trees, many metres of new, species-rich hedgerow will be planted.
388. The appellant considers that the impact on biodiversity of the proposed development would be positive and moderate with no unacceptable adverse impact on internationally or nationally designated sites, habitats or species. Taking into account the consultation responses from NRW and the RSPB, and IACC's LIR, I have no reason to disagree with that conclusion.
389. A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is provided in the ES, noting the loss of low biodiversity value habitat and the smaller proportion of medium value habitat which would be retained. Overall, however, the enhancement proposals are predicted to lead to a net gain of 63 biodiversity units.
390. In conclusion on this matter, there would be no unacceptable adverse impacts on national statutory designated sites for nature conservation (and the features for which they have been designated), protected habitats or species; the proposal would also include biodiversity enhancement measures to provide a net benefit for biodiversity. In these respects, the proposed development would comply with Future Wales Policy 18. All impacts on natural resources have been adequately mitigated, ensuring that the special qualities of all locally, nationally and internationally important biodiversity designations are conserved or enhanced, in line with JLDP Policy ADN 2.

Welsh language and culture

391. The applicant's Welsh Language Statement (WLS) has been prepared in response to JLDP Strategic Policy PS1: Welsh Language and Culture. This states that the use of the Welsh language in the Plan area will be promoted and supported by measures including requiring a WLS, to protect, promote and enhance the Welsh language, where the proposed development would employ more than 50 employees. The proposal must meet this requirement as over 50 people would work on it during the construction period.
392. The submitted WLS follows the methodology set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance – Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities (adopted July 2019). In line with that methodology it provides a record of the Welsh speaking characteristics of the local area, and of the policy context. At Step 3 this information is analysed to carry out the community and linguistic impact assessment.

393. On the whole, this seems to provide an accurate portrayal of the likely effects. One exception is the answer to the question: 'Is there a likelihood that local people will migrate from the community as a result of the development?' to which the answer is: 'There are not considered to be any negative impacts on surrounding residential development or existing communities...it would not generate impacts resulting in the community migrating away from the surrounding area of the site'.
394. This reply is not completely borne out by the results of consultation on the proposed development, several of the responses to which stated that the proposed development would lead to people leaving the area. Indeed, some people responded that they themselves would move away from their own homes. Deeply regrettable as this would be, I do not consider that the proposed development would lead to considerable numbers of people, Welsh speakers amongst them, migrating from the local communities.
395. The assessment's conclusion is that, mainly through the creation of jobs during the construction period, the proposal would have a positive impact on the community characteristics of existing Welsh speakers. A number of mitigation measures are put forward to enable and increase the speaking of Welsh in the local area. These would include the provision of bi-lingual signage; the ability to speak Welsh being listed as desirable in all job advertisements; the local advertisement/marketing of the proposed development.
396. I have no reason to dispute these conclusions and note that the Council also agrees with them, subject to the mitigation being implemented. The impact on the Welsh Language would thus be positive and the proposal would comply with JLDP Strategic Policy PS 1.
397. I am aware of the rich history of the area and its strong presence in literature. The proposed development would largely be constructed on top of or within the existing landscape. The intrinsic character of the land would remain clearly identifiable in such elements as the field pattern, the routes through it, the buildings and archaeological features, the landscape features and topography, and placenames. To my mind, therefore, the proposed development would not undermine or sever the historic, literary or cultural associations with the landscape.

Other matters

398. Several other matters were raised by representors including those I cover now.
399. A glint and glare assessment was carried out following pre-application discussions with the MOD. The assessment indicated that there would be no adverse effect upon the air traffic control tower or the approach paths for runways 01, 19 and 31. A solar reflection would be possible on the approach to runway 13. At some distances the predicted glare intensity would be unacceptable but only for 14 minutes per year. The weather would have to be clear and sunny at these times and a pilot would also have to be on the approach path. In addition, the maximum duration of the glare would be for less than five minutes. Its intensity would be only marginally greater than the threshold for acceptability on the intensity chart.

400. In the light of these mitigating factors, any glint or glare arising from the proposed development would not have unacceptable impacts on the operations of defence facilities and operations (including aviation and radar) at RAF Valley, consistent with criterion 8 of Future Wales Policy 18.
401. Several objectors mentioned the potential for cumulative effects to occur in combination with other schemes in proximity to the proposed development. The potential for cumulative effects, including visual, on ecology, and on traffic, is assessed fully throughout the ES and application, as is required by Future Wales Policy 18 and JLDP Policy ADN 2. In order to do this, the Council provided the applicant with information on planning applications made since November 2018 within 5km of the DAs as well as on nine Energy Island Projects.
402. Eight planning application schemes were selected as having the greatest potential to create cumulative effects. Along with all Energy Island Projects these were assessed, and a summary of each analysis was set out in Appendix 12.1 of the ES. It concluded that there would be limited potential for the proposed development to create cumulative effects with schemes that had permission, whether they were yet in operation or not. The analyses appear to be accurate and reasonable, such that I have no reason to disagree with the overall conclusion.
403. In this document I can only deal with the potential cumulative effects arising from the proposal in front of me. I understand the point about the sequence of planning applications, and the contention that preferable local proposals could be penalised by the accumulation of impacts from schemes permitted earlier. This is not, however, a matter that I am able to address here.
404. The proposed development would be monitored remotely with staff available to react promptly to any emergency situations such as fire or intrusion. The security cameras on the fence around the panels would point into the site and would not compromise the privacy of surrounding occupiers. I do not consider that the presence of cameras would attract wrong-doers or make properties adjacent to DAs more vulnerable to intrusion or any other unacceptable attention. Neither do I consider that the sound of wind blowing through the fencing and around the panels would amount to a noticeable nuisance.
405. I note the figures advanced by Say No to Traffwll Solar questioning the need for renewable energy. It remains the case, however, that WG has ambitious targets for the generation of such and that meeting them will be a challenge. The behaviour of the County Councillor who is also a landowner is not a matter for me.

Conditions

406. I have considered the conditions that should be imposed in the event of a decision to grant planning permission. In so doing I have had regard to the tests for conditions and guidance in Circular WGC 016/2014. The applicant and LPA have worked together to prepare and agree a set of conditions which include the topics required by SP Energy Manweb, NRW, MOD Defence Infrastructure Organisation and Dwr Cymru. Helpfully, representatives from the latter two bodies attended the final hearing to explain their concerns and how the agreed conditions would

address these. They were also happy to respond to questions from the objectors. The objectors were afforded the opportunity to comment on the potential conditions.

407. Several of the conditions included references to details being approved by the local planning authority 'in consultation with' other organisations. As this could be construed as requiring the approval of a third party, whereas in practice the local planning authority must be wholly responsible for discharging the conditions, I have removed that reference. From what was said at the hearings, however, it seemed to me that the Council was happy to take advice from other bodies on specialist matters. This amendment does not mean that it will not continue to do so.
408. The list of conditions discussed at the hearing included one requiring the applicant to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that finance would be available to fund decommissioning. Such conditions are not considered to be enforceable. As Condition 6 requiring the provision of a DEMP, which would cover all the salient matters relating to decommissioning, twelve months prior to that event, I do not consider the legal agreement condition to be necessary. I have not, therefore, included it in the schedule.

Planning Balance

409. The application site consists of three parcels of attractive agricultural land set in between rural villages and, in some places, adjacent to isolated dwellings. The proposal has caused much opposition and disquiet amongst the local community which feels that the scheme would be a blot on its treasured landscape and would undermine its traditional and invaluable community character and culture.
410. We are, however, at a point where climate change is an incontestable reality, the consequences of which are already causing considerable, permanent harm to large swathes of the planet. In the form of exceptionally high temperatures and more frequent, more serious incidences of flooding, they are also being experienced in Wales.
411. The proposed development would have an export capacity of circa 35MW of electricity which would be sufficient to power approximately 11,630 homes per year and offset over 7,161 tonnes of CO₂ every year. The applicant states that this is the equivalent of taking around 3,818 cars off the road. It would be a considerable and valuable contribution.
412. The site has been chosen in line with a lengthy list of appropriate criteria. During a process of evaluation, including the assessment of potential impacts, the original nine DAs were whittled down to three. Recognising the effects that it could have on neighbouring properties and settlements, the scheme has been designed to minimise negative impacts. The mitigation measures proposed would take advantage of existing, characteristic landscape features such as the high hedges, managing and supplementing these to minimise the visual effects of the proposal. In addition, areas would be left without panels to provide clear areas adjacent to neighbouring properties and for biodiversity enhancement. The proposed

development would also be constructed and decommissioned using methods designed to cause as little disruption as possible to the soil and its structure.

413. As a result, and with regard to the main considerations, the proposal would conserve BMV agricultural land, and would be clearly visible from only a limited number of public vantage points such that the character and appearance of the wider landscape, would not be harmed. Although the scheme would be clearly visible from several homes immediately adjacent to the DAs, the solar panels themselves, fence around them and other ancillary features would not be so close to properties as to have a significantly detrimental effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. In addition, the proposed development would provide benefits to the community, not only in consequential advantages such as jobs and business rates but also in payments to a community fund and with the potential for some local ownership.
414. Having witnessed myself how perturbed members of the local community are by the proposed development, this has been a difficult recommendation to make. Nonetheless, it is my considered opinion that the proposed development would not result in significant harm to the BMV land resource; to the character or appearance of the landscape and surrounding area; or to living conditions or any other interests on the site or in the surrounding area. It would thus be consistent with Future Wales Policies 17 and 18, and with JLDP Policy ADN 2. Any minor harm is more than justified by the significant renewable energy benefits which would arise from the proposed scheme.
415. I have taken all the matters raised into account but not found any which are sufficient for me to recommend that the scheme be refused. In making my recommendation, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this recommendation is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

Recommendation

416. For the reasons given in this report, I recommend that planning permission for the proposed solar farm (DNS Application 3217391) be allowed subject to the imposition of the conditions set out in Annex A.

Síân Worden

Inspector

Annex A – Schedule of Recommended Conditions

- 1) The development to which this permission relates shall begin no later than the expiration of five years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents, except where otherwise amended by any other condition attached to this planning permission:

Title	Drawing reference
Planning Application Boundary	LOC1001/11/03
Indicative Site Arrangements	LOC1001/11/04 & LOC1001/11/05
Panel and Frame Specification	LOC1001/11/06
Customer Substation Details	LOC1001/11/07
DNO Substation Details	LOC1001/11/08
Inverter, Transformers and Control Equipment Details	LOC1001/11/09
Inverter, Transformers and Control Equipment Acoustic Fencing Details	LOC1001/11/10
Perimeter Fence and CCTV Details	LOC1001/11/11
Fencing and Security Layout	LOC1001/11/12 & LOC1001/11/13
Landscape Masterplan	LOC1001/11/14, LOC1001/11/15 & LOC1001/11/16
Temporary Set Down Areas	LOC1001/11/17, LOC1001/11/18 & LOC1001/11/19
Access Details	LOC1001/11/20 & LOC1001/11/21
Access Construction Details	LOC1001/11/22
Cable Route	LOC1001/11/23 & LOC1001/11/24
Flood Consequences Assessment	KRS Environmental Final report Feb 2022

Reason: To ensure development is carried out in accordance with the permitted application details and with the policies of the JLDP and for the avoidance of doubt.

- 3) Notwithstanding the requirements of condition (02), no development shall take place until a detailed final layout plan of the site has been submitted to and

approved in writing by the local planning authority. This shall include the precise location and appearance (materials and colour) of the arrays, inverter buildings, transformer buildings, sub-station, and lighting and any other ancillary/associated infrastructure within the project sites.

Reason: To comply with Paragraph 4.16 of Welsh Government Circular 016/2014.

- 4) The date when electricity from the development is first exported to the local electricity grid network (excluding any testing or commissioning), hereafter known as the "Operational Date", shall be notified in writing to the local planning authority within 28 days after its occurrence. The authorised development shall cease operating 40 years after the operational date. This planning permission authorises the decommissioning of the development and shall expire on the date that the site has been decommissioned in accordance with an agreed Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan ("DEMP").

Reason: To define the scope of the permission and establish the commencement date for the 40 year operational life of the solar farm and to define the time scale of the permission in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with Future Wales Policy 18 and JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 5) No development or site clearance shall take place until a final Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP shall provide the following details;
- i) Measures to ensure environmental protection at the site to cover all construction operations
 - ii) Details of any temporary fencing required for construction, including the precise location and appearance
 - iii) Detailed construction schedule and implementation timescales for all elements of the CEMP
 - iv) Reporting and monitoring responsibilities and delivery mechanisms for all elements of the CEMP
 - v) Noise mitigation measures during the construction phase
 - vi) Details of site working hours;
 - vii) Reasonable Avoidance Measures in relation to relevant protected species;
 - viii) A method statement and risk assessment for the protection of the structural condition of DCWW assets crossing the site and the proposed cable route (as required under Condition 13); and

- ix) A method statement for liaising and engaging with the local community during the construction phase.

The CEMP shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity, visual amenity, and public health and safety, and in compliance with Future Wales Policy 18 and JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 6) No later than 12 months before the end of the 40 year operating period (or within 12 months of the permanent cessation of electricity production if earlier) a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) shall be submitted for the written approval of the local planning authority.

The plan shall include details of the following:

- i) Surveys and assessments to identify the existing ecology and habitat status at the time of decommissioning;
- ii) Method Statement detailing the process and extent of removal of surface elements of the photovoltaic solar farm and associated development and any foundations, anchor systems, trackways and subsurface cabling and associated works;
- iii) Proposals for effective recycling and disposal of decommissioned elements;
- iv) Traffic management plan to address likely traffic impacts arising from decommissioning operations;
- v) Measures to ensure environmental protection at the site to cover all decommissioning operations;
- vi) Measures to ensure ecological protection at the site to cover all decommissioning operations informed by the surveys and assessments under i) above;
- vii) Implementation timescales for all elements of the DEMP;
- viii) Reporting and monitoring responsibilities and delivery mechanisms for all elements of the DEMP;
- ix) Site restoration measures following all decommissioning operations; and
- x) A final Decommissioning Soil Management Plan based on the Decommissioning Framework Plan approved under Condition 19.

The approved details shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved details and timescales.

Reason: To ensure that upon the expiry of the lifespan of the development, the development is decommissioned, and the land restored appropriately, in the interests of visual amenity and ecology and to comply with Future Wales Policy 18 and JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 7) Site 'rating' noise levels at the nearest non-financially involved residential property (in free field conditions) lawfully existing at the time of this planning permission

shall not exceed 4dB above the representative background sound level (background measured in terms of LA90). The applicant shall submit to the Council confirmation that the above noise limit is being achieved within 2 months following normal site operating conditions. In the event that the information confirms that the noise limit is being exceeded the operator shall propose measures to mitigate the noise to ensure compliance with the above noise level limit.

Measurements and assessments shall be made in accordance with BS 4142: 2014 +A1: 2019 'Methods for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound'. Where the site rating level shall be expressed as a LAeq 1hr during the daytime period (i.e. between 0700 to 2300 hours) and as a LAeq 15mins during the night-time period (i.e. 2300 to 0700 hours).

Reason: In the interests of amenity protection, consistent with Future Wales Policy 18, JLDP Policy PS 7, and Policy ADN 2.

- 8) No development shall take place until a Written Scheme of Investigation for a programme of archaeological work has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out and all archaeological work completed in strict accordance with the approved details.

A detailed report on the archaeological work set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority within 12 months of the completion of the archaeological fieldwork.

Reason: In the interests of archaeological protection and to comply with JLDP Policy PS 20.

- 9) No development or site clearance shall take place until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The LEMP shall provide details of:
- i) All landscape and ecological objectives and management, maintenance and monitoring proposals to deliver these objectives;
 - ii) Schedules and timescales for delivery of the LEMP; and
 - iii) Reporting and monitoring responsibilities and delivery mechanisms for all elements of the LEMP.

The LEMP shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of landscape character and ecology, and to comply with Future Wales Policy 18 and JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 10) No development shall take place until a final Construction Traffic Management Statement (CTMS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CTMS shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highways safety and to comply with Future Wales Policy 18 and JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 11) Prior to the operation of the site, no CCTV and supporting structures shall be installed until details of any such CCTV installations for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All CCTV installations within the site shall be retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to comply with JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 12) Prior to the operation of the site, no fencing for the site required during its operation shall be erected until details of any such fencing have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All CCTV installations within the site shall be retained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to comply with JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 13) No development shall take place until details of a scheme to either protect the structural condition or divert the water mains crossing the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include the precise location of the water mains in relation to the development, a detailed design, construction method statement and risk assessment outlining the measures taken to secure and protect the structural condition and ongoing access of the water mains. No other development pursuant to this permission shall be carried out until the approved protection measures or diversion scheme have been implemented and completed. All temporary physical protection measures shall be retained thereafter for the duration of the construction works and any permanent physical protection measures or diversion scheme shall be retained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To protect the integrity of the public watermain(s) and avoid damage thereto.

- 14) No development shall take place other than as shown in relation to the existing overhead lines shown on the following submitted plans which have been prepared and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
- i) The Final Site Arrangement DA6 Drawing No. PLE-03 Rev 0X with an agreed minimum clearance distance width measured from the outer edge of the existing overhead line to the nearest solar panel throughout the length of the overhead lines crossing the site; and
 - ii) The Final Site Arrangement DA4 and DA5 Drawing No. PLE-02 Rev 0X with an agreed minimum clearance distance width measured from the outer edge of the existing overhead line to the nearest solar panel throughout the length of the overhead lines crossing the site

No development permitted by this decision shall infringe the statutory clearance distances of the existing 11kV and 33kV overhead electricity lines crossing the site and prevent the implementation of SP Manweb's statutory rights to maintain and operate these overhead lines.

Reason: To protect overhead electricity lines.

- 15) No development shall take place unless or until such time as an Electrical Noise Interference Management Plan (ENIMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted ENIMP shall contain, but not be limited to:
- i) manufacturer's specifications for generating, and associated, infrastructure to be installed at the site, to include any inverter(s), substation(s), PV panels, and any associated cables (including all interconnecting cables as well as the export cable(s) to the national grid) and connectors;
 - ii) details of measures designed to prevent electrical noise interference being caused to transmitter/receiver technical installations at RAF Valley;
 - iii) a schedule setting out how the development will be operated, maintained, and tested throughout its life to ensure that any electrical noise interference on transmitter/receiver technical installations at RAF Valley is prevented; and
 - iv) a protocol through which the site operator can be notified of electrical noise interference issues or observations, the measures that would be taken to investigate, and a description of the approach to resolving/rectifying/mitigated those impacts.

The provisions set out in the ENIMP and any modifications or mitigation, as agreed in writing with the local planning authority, shall be maintained for the life of the development. No electrical component or electrical equipment that is not specified within the approved ENIMP shall be installed or operated within the site without the express written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason: In the interests of maintaining the effective operation of national defence infrastructure and to maintain aviation safety. To comply with Future Wales Policy 18.

- 16) No development or site clearance shall take place until a final Construction Soil Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. All development and site clearance shall be carried out in accordance with the approved CEMP.

Reason: In the interests of protecting agricultural land quality, consistent with Future Wales Policy 9, PPW and TAN6.

- 17) No development or site clearance shall take place until final Landscape Masterplans have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Landscape Masterplans shall deliver the principles and content of the proposals set out in drawing series Landscape Masterplans Plots DA 4, DA 5 and DA6 (Ref. LOC10001/11/14 Revision 1, LOC10001/11/15 Revision 1 and LOC10001/11/16 revision 1) including planting to mitigate effects on residential visual amenity.

The Landscape Masterplans shall include sufficient information to enable effective compliance monitoring or enforcement to include:

- i) Plant specification
- ii) Plant species, varieties and cultivars
- iii) Planting stock specification (stock size, form, root condition etc.)
- iv) Planting specification
- v) Depths of topsoil and subsoil; ground preparation and cultivation
- vi) Dimensions of planting pits or trenches and proposed backfill material
- vii) Planting densities/spacing or numbers
- viii) Methods of weed control, plant protection and support
- ix) Seed mix specifications and sowing rates; and/or turf specification

Reason: In the interests of residential and visual amenity, landscape character and biodiversity. To comply with Future Wales Policy 18 and JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 18) The approved Landscape Masterplans, as submitted to discharge condition 17, shall be fully implemented in the first planting season following the commencement of development and retained for the lifetime of the development hereby approved unless agreed through landscape plan updates. If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any tree or hedge proposed as part of the Landscape Masterplans, or any tree or hedge planted in replacement of it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies or becomes, in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective, another tree or hedge of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place during the next planting season immediately following the death/removal/destruction of that tree or hedge.

The landscape masterplans must be reviewed by the undertaker and a plan with any updates required as a result of the review must be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval every five years for the operational life of the authorised development to ensure that the objectives set out are being met. The updated landscaping masterplan must be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of residential and visual amenity, landscape character and biodiversity. To comply with Future Wales Policy 18 and JLDP Policy ADN 2.

- 19) Prior to the commencement of development, an Operational Soil Management and Decommissioning Framework Plan (the Framework Plan) shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The Framework Plan shall include details of:-
- i) the measures to be implemented during the operation of the development to safeguard the agricultural quality of the soil within the development site, and
 - ii) the works necessary to revert the site to its original agricultural condition, including (as appropriate); the method for the removal of all the solar panels,

structures, enclosures, equipment and all other apparatus above and below ground level from the site.

All development and site clearance shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Framework Plan.

Reason: To ensure best and most versatile agricultural land is protected during operation and that upon permanent cessation of electricity production the land is restored appropriately, consistent with Future Wales Policy 9, PPW and TAN6.

Annex B - Appearances

Applicant

Ben Lewis BSc MSC MRTPI	Stantec (formerly Barton Willmore)
Ifan Gwilym	Stantec (formerly Barton Willmore)
Tony Kernon	Kernon Countryside Consultants Ltd
James Hartley-Bond	Low Carbon
Dean Kettlewell MSc MIOA MAE I.Eng	Noise & Vibration Consultants Ltd

Local Planning Authority

Craig Whelton	Burges Salmon, legal representative for IACC
Angharad Crump (officer)	IACC
Iwan Jones (officer)	IACC
Ed Henderson	IACC

Defence Infrastructure Organisation

James Houghton	
Debbie Baker	

Dŵr Cymru

Siôn Jones	
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Interested Parties

Graham Loader	Say No to Traffyll Solar
Geraint Thomas	
Hefin Jones	
Marian Jones	
Margaret Jones	
Sue Williams	
Emlyn Williams	
Hywel Hughes	
Cllr Celfyn Furlong	Llanfair yn Neubwll Community Council
Cllr Iorwerth Roberts	Bryngwran Community Council
Cllr Neville Evans	Bryngwran Community Council