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CF10 3NQ

Crown Buildings,
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Cardiff, CF10 3NQ

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8

Dyddiad / Date: 12/06/2025

Ffôn / tel: 0300 123 1590

Ebost / email: PEDW.Infrastructure@gov.wales

Dear Ellen Hornsey-Fortt

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

The Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017

Potential DNS Application

Site Address: Land at Court Farm, Ponthir, Monmouthshire

Proposed Development: Installation and operation of ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.

On 07 April 2025 Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) received a request made under regulation 31(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 ("the Regulations"), for the Welsh Ministers to make a screening direction as to whether or not the development proposed is "EIA Development" within the meaning of the Regulations.

PEDW is authorised by the Welsh Ministers to provide that screening direction.

The project, as described above, falls within the description at paragraph 3(a) industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1), in column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 to the Regulations.

As the proposal is a potential Development of National Significance (DNS) application, the attached screening assessment identifies the key areas which have been considered. Having taken into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3 to the Regulations and the advice in Welsh Office Circular 11/99: Environmental Impact Assessment on establishing whether EIA is required, the assessment concludes that:

The proposal is seeking to install a solar farm with a generating capacity of up to 46 MW, and associated infrastructure, over 14 field parcels (approximately 123.3 ha).

Given the appropriate conditions and mitigation, significant effects on water resources and ancient woodland are unlikely. The implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan secured by condition could mitigate against the potential risk of

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth Gymraeg. Cewch ateb Cymraeg i bob gohebiaeth Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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pollution, noise and disturbance. The impact on the historic environment and archaeological assets is not considered to be likely to be significant.

However, concerns have been raised by consultees about the potential effects of the proposed development in relation to landscape and visual impacts, residential amenity, Public Rights of Way, Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, and ecology. It is proposed to provide further detail on the assessment of these effects as part of the planning application. However, due the lack of information currently available in relation to these effects and any mitigation measures, it is not possible to rule out significant effects at this stage. I therefore consider that significant effects in relation to these matters are likely. The proposal is therefore EIA development.

Therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Regulations and the authority referred to above, the Welsh Ministers hereby direct that the development subject of this application **is EIA development** within the meaning of the Regulations.

Consequently, this application must be accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Under regulation 17(1) of the Regulations an Environmental Statement must contain, for the purpose of assessing the likely impact on the environment, the information specified in that regulation. It is recommended that you refer to the Regulations and the accompanying Circular, Welsh Office Circular 11/99, before and during the preparation of the Environmental Statement. In the meantime, you may wish to have regard to the particular environmental topics identified in the attached screening assessment.

This letter will be copied to Monmouthshire County Council, Torfaen County Borough Council and Newport City Council, so that this screening direction is placed on Part 1 of the Planning Register in relation to the application in question, in accordance with the Regulations.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

Marloes Holtkamp

Marloes Holtkamp

Swyddog Cynllunio | Planning Officer

Penderfyniadau Cynllunio ac Amgylchedd Cymru | Planning and Environment Decisions Wales

Llywodraeth Cymru | Welsh Government

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STAGE 1 – INITIAL EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

1 Case Details				
A	Case reference			
	DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8 - Court Farm Solar			
B	Brief description of development			
	Installation and operation of ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure.			
2 EIA Screening Details				
2A Schedule 1				
	Is the project Schedule 1 development as described in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations?	No		
	<i>If Yes, under which description of development? If No, consider whether project is 'Schedule 2' development below in part 2(B).</i>			
2B Schedule 2				
(i)	Is the project listed as a description of development under Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations?	Yes		
	<i>If Yes, under which description of development? If No, EIA is not required.</i>			
	3(a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)			
(ii)	Does the project change or extend development described in paragraphs 1 to 12 of Column 1 of schedule 2, where the change or extension may have SIGNIFICANT* adverse effects on the environment?	No		
	<i>If Yes, provide reasons for your answer below. *If unsure, discuss with PET. Proceed to point (iii).</i>			
	N/A - not a change or extension			
(iii)	Is the project located wholly or partly within a 'Sensitive Area' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations?	No		
	<i>If Yes, state which area and more to Question 3. If No, proceed to point (iv) below.</i>			
(iv)	Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded / met?	Yes		
	<i>If Yes, note which applicable threshold/criteria. If No, EIA is not required.</i>			
	The site is approximately 123.3 ha and therefore exceeds the threshold of 0.5 ha.			
3 LPA / Welsh Ministers' Screening				
(i)	Has the LPA issued a Screening Opinion (SO)?	No		
(ii)	Have the Welsh Ministers issued a Screening Direction (SD)?	No		
4 Environmental Statement (ES)				
	Has the applicant/appellant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?	No		

Is a detailed screening assessment (Section 5) required?

If Yes has been answered in response to either 2B(iii) or 2B(iv), send to relevant team to undertake detailed screening assessment.

If No has been answered for both questions, or the questions are not applicable, start appeal.

Sign-off

Signature

Marloes Holtkamp MSc

Date

15/05/2025

STAGE 2 – DETAILED EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

As per Schedule 3, Para 3: When considering the potential impact, take into account; (a) magnitude / spatial extent / population likely to be affected; (b) nature of impact; (c) transboundary nature; (d) intensity & complexity; (e) probability; (f) expected onset / duration / frequency & reversibility; (g) cumulation with existing and / or approved development; (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ? <i>Include consideration of features or measures to avoid or prevent what might otherwise be significant effects</i>
CRITERION 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENT		
Question 1(a) Size and design of the Development		
Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.)?	The proposal is for the installation of a solar farm with associated equipment and infrastructure, with a generating capacity of up to 46 MW. The site area is approximately 123.3 ha, over 14 field parcels. There will underground cable connections between the parcels and connecting to a High Voltage substation compound, which will connect via overhead lines from an existing pylon to a 132 / 33 kV substation. The land use will change from agricultural and arable fields to host solar arrays and associated infrastructure. The Screening Report (SR) confirms that the development would enable some existing agricultural activities such as livestock grazing to continue during the operational life of the solar farm. The development will seek to retain existing vegetation and trees located within the site. The lifespan of the scheme is 40 years, after which the site would be restored to its former agricultural use. Given these considerations, whilst there would be physical change during the lifetime of the development, I do not consider there to be	Significant effects unlikely .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	significant effects in EIA terms.	
Question 1(b) Cumulation with Existing and/or Approved Development		
Are there any other factors which should be considered such as: • consequential development which could lead to environmental effects? • the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality? • any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project? • transfrontier impacts?	Yes. The SR identifies within 5 km of the site a number of residential schemes which have been approved and / or are under development. Permission has also been granted for an Inpatient Services Unit and associated highway, drainage and landscape infrastructure located at the Grange University Hospital, around 800 m north-west of parcel 9. This could lead to cumulative construction traffic impacts. However, these impacts would be temporary and could be managed via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). I therefore do not consider that significant effects are likely in this respect. Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) highlights other DNS applications such as Pentre Bach solar farm and the Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Llanhilleth wind farms. The LPA notes that given their separation distances from the site it is considered that this project is visibly separable from them. Visual impact on the various developments and any mitigation can be assessed via a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to accompany the planning application. Therefore, although there is the potential for cumulative and future land use impacts, I do not consider these to be significant to warrant EIA, although this will be a consideration for the planning decision maker.	Significant effects unlikely .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
Question 1(c) Use of Natural Resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity		
Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes. The development will use some resources during construction and decommissioning, but nothing which is likely in short supply. However, the panels would occupy Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. LQAS confirms that the Predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) notes that the site contains Grade 2, Subgrade 3a (BMV) and Subgrade 3b agricultural land and that the area of BMV potentially impacted by the proposal is significant. The applicant should note the consultation response from the Welsh Government's Soil Policy and Agricultural Land Use Planning Unit (LQAS) attached at Appendix 1. The SR states that some field surveys have been undertaken, with others due to be completed. The report adds that the ALC Report will be submitted with the planning application and will include the ALC results for all parcels of land. The extent of BMV land affected is potentially significant. Not all field surveys have been completed and some ALC survey is still to be prepared and validated. As such, significant effects on BMV land cannot currently be ruled out. The applicant should also note the advice from LQAS regarding baseline information and a Soil Management Scheme, and consider whether the application documents should include such a Scheme.	Significant effects likely.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes, waste would be produced during construction and eventual decommissioning. The applicant has noted best practice measures will be implemented through a CEMP. This could be secured by condition. Given this and the scale and nature of the proposed development, I do not consider that significant effects are likely in terms of waste generation.	Significant effects unlikely .
Question 1(e) Pollution and Nuisances		
Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	No.	N/A
Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes. Some noise and vibration are likely during construction and decommissioning, which would be localised and time limited and could be controlled via a CEMP. Significant impacts can be mitigated through good traffic management and construction practices. During the operational phase, there would be a minimal amount of noise. The SR states that the planning application will be supported by a Noise and Vibration Assessment to confirm minimal operational noise and provide any details of appropriate mitigation. During the operational phase there is also potential for redirection of light in terms of glint and glare via the reflective surface of the panels. I note that there are a number of nearby sensitive receptors, such as residential and farm properties. The SR does not provide information on the potential glint and glare impact or any potential mitigation in this	Significant effects likely .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	respect. Although the SR states that a Glint and Glare Assessment would likely accompany the application, no evidence has currently been provided to demonstrate impacts on amenity of residents would not be significant. I am therefore unable to conclude at this stage that significant effects from glint and glare are unlikely.	
Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air, or lead to risks of contamination of land or water (including surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea)?	Yes. The SR does not include information relating to the type of solar panels proposed. It is known that some solar panels have the potential to act as sources of leachable quantities of PFAS (per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances) that may enter the environment over time through general wear and tear interaction as PFAS may be used in the manufacture of solar panels. The potential impact could be mitigated against, such as regular monitoring of the site, which could be secured via condition. Dust generation is also possible during the construction phase. The SR states this can be reduced through the implementation of a Dust Monitoring and Management Plan (DMMP) that can be secured by condition. The SR confirms the Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), but the Caerleon High Street AQMA, declared for Nitrogen Dioxide, is located approximately 1.6 km south of parcel 12. The SR confirms a Transport Statement, CTMP and CEMP will be submitted as part of the application. I am satisfied that standard good practice and mitigation measures can be incorporated into these documents, to prevent any significant impacts.	Significant effects unlikely.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	A number of parcels lie adjacent to Candwr Brook, with two unnamed tributaries running through part of the site. The SR states that a Drainage Strategy will also be produced which will ensure surface water is appropriately managed on the site. Pollution prevention measures can be included in the CEMP to prevent significant effects to local watercourses. I am satisfied that standard good practice and mitigation measures to be incorporated into a CTMP, CEMP, DMMP and Drainage Strategy, would prevent any significant impacts.	
Question 1(f) Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge		
Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	Yes. Our records indicate there may be a major pipeline crossing the site. PEDW recommends the applicant liaises with the Health and Safety Executive and the relevant utilities provider on this matter. There is a small risk of accident during construction, operation or decommissioning. Given the scale and nature of the works, alongside construction best practice measures, such risks are unlikely to be significant.	Significant effects unlikely .
Question 1(g) Risks to Human Health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)		
Will there be any risk to human health during the construction and/or operation of the development	Yes. There is potential risk to air quality or contamination during construction, operation and decommissioning. However, best practice guidance and mitigation measures included within a CTMP and CEMP would prevent any significant impacts.	Significant effects unlikely .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
CRITERION 2. LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT		
Question 2(a) Existing and Approved Land Use		
Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No.	N/A
Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location, which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) running through and adjacent to the site parcels. There would inevitably be some visual change for users of these routes, particularly given the size and scale of the scheme. The SR states that the PRoW network will not be directly impacted as a result of the proposed development. However, the SR confirms a number of PRoW located within parcels would have direct views of the solar farm. It adds that existing topography and appropriate landscape mitigation, such as the use of planting and buffers, would soften and screen the views into the site. The SR adds that full consideration of landscape impacts would be made through an LVIA which will support the planning application. This will include a ZTV and address sensitive receptors, including users of the PRoW network and local users of the highway network. However, there is currently insufficient information available with regards to the effect on PRoW and any required mitigation measures. Given the extent of the PRoW network affected and the lack of information currently available, it is not possible to rule out significant effects in that respect.	Significant effects likely .
Are there any transport routes which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) has expressed concern that the proposal will have a negative impact on the immediate local network	Significant effects unlikely .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	and the wider construction traffic network particularly during the construction and decommissioning phases of the development. They note a transport impact assessment would be required. I also note there are a number of nearby residential developments under construction, which could lead to cumulative traffic impacts. The SR states that a Transport Statement and CTMP will be submitted as part of the planning application to fully assess and mitigate transport effects. Some impacts would therefore occur during the construction phase. However, these impacts would be temporary and could be managed via a CEMP and CTMP. I therefore do not consider that significant effects are likely.	
Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes. The site is currently greenfield land in agricultural use, distributed across fourteen fields. TCBC highlights that a number of parcels are within the designated green belt outlined within Future Wales. Whilst the development would result in loss of greenfield land, the nature of the development would be such that the land could be largely restored at the end of the scheme's lifespan. I do not consider effects on greenfield land to be significant in EIA terms, although this will be a consideration for the planning decision maker.	Significant effects unlikely .
Are there any areas on or around the location occupied by land uses which could be affected by the project, particularly sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities?	Yes. The Grange University Hospital is located northwest of the site. The SR also notes permission for the construction of a new Unit at the site. There are also schools in nearby settlements of Ponthir and Caerleon.	Significant effects unlikely .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	Any transport impact during the construction phase on the activities of these sensitive land uses could be managed via a CEMP and CTMP. The only other likely effects on these sensitive receptors are visual. As landscape and visual impacts are dealt with separately below, I conclude that significant effects specific to sensitive land uses are unlikely.	
Question 2(b) Relative Abundance, Availability Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources in the Area and its Underground		
Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. Our records show parts of the site are located within aggregate safeguarding zones. However, the nature and type of development proposed would be such that there would be no permanent sterilisation of those resources. Significant effects in this respect are therefore unlikely. Furthermore, the Environmental Designations Plan shows a number of areas of ancient woodland bordering several field parcels, as well as an area of ancient woodland included within parcel 8. TCBC highlights within the site are various Tree Preservation Orders. The SR states that trees will be retained wherever possible and that a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) would likely accompany the application. Mitigation measures identified as part of the AIA to prevent significant effects to trees, such as ground disturbance buffers and root protection zones, could be conditioned and as such I conclude significant effects in this respect would be unlikely. The SR states the site is within an area identified as High to Medium-High for groundwater	Significant effects likely.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	vulnerability. Potential contaminants during the construction and decommissioning phases can be controlled through a CEMP and I therefore find significant effects in this respect would be unlikely. However, as stated above, LQAS notes that the area of BMV agricultural land potentially impacted by the proposal is significant. Not all field surveys have been completed and further ALC survey is still to be completed. As such, significant effects on BMV land cannot currently be ruled out.	
Question 2(c) Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment		
Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology, or are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The River Usk Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) is located approximately 1.4 km south at the closest point. Brook Cottage SSSI is located approximately 2.5 km north-east of parcel 3. The SR states that the site shares no linking habitat with these designated sites and that due to the distance, significant effects are considered unlikely. No concerns have been raised by NRW in relation to these protected sites. The SR states an Ecological Appraisal Report, including Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Species Assessment, will likely accompany the application. The SR adds that hedgerow vegetation and trees will be retained wherever possible and that appropriate mitigation measures during construction will be implemented. The applicant should note the comments from MCC on the loss of trees. The site is also located 10.5 km from the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and	Significant effects likely.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	RAMSAR site. MCC states that the SPA supports internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory bird species and that the wider wintering waterfowl assemblage is considered to be of international importance. They add that records of qualifying features of the SPA have been returned within close proximity of the application site and that wintering and breeding birds (including Schedule 1 species) could be directly affected by habitat loss and indirect disturbance effects. They add that the Llandegfedd Reservoir SSSI, located 4.5 km to the north of the site, has previously been known to support overwintering features of the Severn Estuary SPA. The SR does not provide information regarding overwintering birds or potential impacts on species associated with the SPA. MCC therefore states there is uncertainty over whether the percentages of features present are likely to classify the site as functionally linked land. NRW notes the lack of survey data and advises there is a potential for impact on Lapwing and Barn Owl. They state that the habitats on site may have the potential to support breeding Lapwing and breeding and foraging Barn Owl. Regarding Barn Owl, NRW highlights that either a species-specific survey is required, or a robust mitigation / enhancement package aimed at retaining and promoting Barn Owls on site. MCC also raises concerns that other protected species including otter, bats, badger and reptiles / amphibians could be impacted by habitat loss, due to the location and scale of the proposals. TCBC also highlights that no clear assessment has been	

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	undertaken upon protected species and their habitat that may be affected by this proposal. Notwithstanding that the Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Species Assessment will inform mitigation measures, given the comments from consultees, I conclude that insufficient information is currently available to rule out significant effects on ecology. The applicant should also note the advice from TCBC regarding using the Stepwise approach in relation to outlining ecological enhancements.	
Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	As indicated above, the River Usk SAC and SSSI is located approximately 1.4 km south at the closest point. However, the SR states the site shares no linking habitat with these designated sites and due to the distance, significant effects are considered unlikely. NRW has also not raised any concerns. As noted above, a number of parcels lie adjacent to Candwr Brook, with two unnamed tributaries running through part of the site. MCC notes the site also includes springs, streams, brooks and associated wet areas that ultimately drain to the Afon Lwyd south of the site. Fields 1, 2 and 11 appear to drain towards the Sor brook to the east. The LPA raises that there is potential for impacts on the watercourses, such as changes in water hydrology and quality through siltation / sedimentation and contamination. I am satisfied that standard good practice, pollution prevention and other mitigation measures, which can be incorporated into a CEMP and Drainage Strategy, would prevent any significant impacts.	Significant effects unlikely.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes. The site is located within the Torfaen South Eastern Lowlands Special Landscape Area (SLA), within National Landscape Character 31 Central Monmouthshire and within the Sor Brook Valley Landscape Character areas. MCC considers that the proposed development will result in a significant adverse impact and change to the landscape character, including significant adverse visual effects as seen from more elevated areas and upload areas. They consider there to be a risk of cumulative impacts on the existing unifying landscape character patterns. The LPA adds that the extent of development may impact on LANDMAP landscape character evaluation. The LPA also raises concerns about the difference in proposed height of the solar panels and the heights of current boundary hedges to fields. Newport City Council (NCC) further highlights the development would result in a major visual change, with TCBC stating the proposal will result in the visual loss of openness from green fields to solar panels. The SR states that the proposed development will incorporate appropriate design and landscape measures, including mitigation planting. The SR also states that landscape impacts will be fully considered through an LVIA which will support the planning application. This would review the key sensitivities of the landscape, including its rural character, nearby sensitive receptors such as residential dwellings, users of the local PRoW network and local users of the highway network.	Significant effects likely.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	However, the information currently available with regards to landscape and visual effects is insufficient to rule out significant effects in that respect. Given this, coupled with comments from consultees, I am not able to conclude that there would be no significant landscape effects in EIA terms.	
Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes. The site is spread across a large area, at elevations and aspects that will be visible from settlements, rural hamlets, rural residences, farms, lanes, roads and PRow. MCC highlights that the secure boundaries using 2.5 m deer fencing to all parcels will change the character over a large area and the cumulative impact will need to be considered and assessed. The SR states that localised views into the site would be possible, with intervisibility varying depending on topography, screening and visual receptors in the surrounding landscape. It adds that undulating topography and appropriate landscape mitigation would soften and screen views into the site would be softened and screened. However, the current information regarding the extent of the visual impacts on sensitive receptors and how these would be mitigated is insufficient. Given these considerations, I cannot rule out significant effects in this respect.	Significant effects likely.
Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. There are a number of settlements in the vicinity, including the city of Newport (5.2 km), Caerleon (1.4 km) and Ponthir (500 m). There may be impacts during construction, however these would be temporary in nature and	Significant effects likely.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	can be controlled through mitigation measures (i.e. CTMP, CEMP). The main impact would be visual and as indicated above, insufficient information is currently available to rule out significant landscape and visual impacts. As such, I am not able to conclude that there would be no significant effects on these built-up areas in EIA terms.	
Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes. There are a number of Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, and listed buildings within 3 km of the site. However, Cadw confirms that in most cases intervening topography, buildings and vegetation block all views between them. Cadw notes that Scheduled Monument Candwr Camp and listed buildings Little Creiggydd, Glanshirhowy Farm and Barn at Pen-Teyn Farm are located inside 200 m of the boundaries of the proposed solar farm, which is likely to be visible from them. The LPAs also highlight effects on the setting of these historic assets. Cadw notes that from two of the listed buildings, parts of the application area were historically farmed. However, whilst this historic association, forms their setting, Cadw considers it likely that once mitigation measures, such as additional planting have been implemented, the effect of the proposed development on their settings will not be significant. The SR states that appropriate landscape buffers will be embedded into the design, providing	Significant effects unlikely.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	screening of the panels. It adds that a Heritage Statement will support the planning application, considering any effects on heritage assets and providing mitigation where appropriate. Cadw also states that currently there is no evidence that significant archaeological sites are located inside the application area. The SR states that a Geophysical Survey report will be submitted to consider the archaeological resource on site. Cadw concludes that the proposal is unlikely to have a significant effect on the historic environment. Whilst this will be a consideration for the decision maker, given the proposed further assessment and mitigation, I am content that EIA is not warranted on historic environment grounds.	
Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. As noted above, the SR confirms the Caerleon High Street AQMA, declared for Nitrogen Dioxide, is located approximately 1.6 km south of parcel 12. The SR confirms a Transport Statement, CTMP and CEMP will be submitted as part of the application. I am satisfied that standard good practice and mitigation measures can be incorporated into these documents, to prevent any significant impacts.	Significant effects unlikely .
Is the project location susceptible to subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	Yes. NRW confirms that the Flood Map for Planning identifies part of the application site to be at risk of flooding and within Flood Zone 2 and / or 3. The LPAs have raised concerns about uncertainty around development in the undefended floodplain, which could possibly be significant.	Significant effects unlikely .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	The SR confirms no built form is proposed within the higher risk flood zone areas. It also confirms a Flood Consequence Assessment and Drainage Strategy support the planning application, which will provide details on any proposed mitigation. NRW states that given the nature of the development (low vulnerability) they do not consider effects from the development to be significant. Given these considerations, coupled with the ability for conditions to be attached to a decision that will appropriately mitigate any potential impacts, I do not consider that significant effects are likely in this respect.	
Has there already been a failure to meet environmental quality standards that is relevant to the project?	No	N/A

Statement of reasons – insert into Screening Direction

The proposal is seeking to install a solar farm with a generating capacity of up to 46 MW, and associated infrastructure, over 14 field parcels (approximately 123.3 ha).

Given the appropriate conditions and mitigation, significant effects on water resources and ancient woodland are unlikely. The implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan secured by condition could mitigate against the potential risk of pollution, noise and disturbance. The impact on the historic environment and archaeological assets is not considered to be likely to be significant.

However, concerns have been raised by consultees about the potential effects of the proposed development in relation to landscape and visual impacts, residential amenity, Public Rights of Way, Best and Most Versatile agricultural land, and ecology. It is proposed to provide further detail on the assessment of these effects as part of the planning application. However, due the lack of information currently available in relation to these effects and any mitigation measures, it is not possible to rule out significant effects at this stage. I therefore consider that significant effects in relation to these matters are likely. The proposal is therefore EIA development.

6		Outcome of assessment		
(ii)	If a SO/SD has been provided do you agree with it?	N/A		
(iii)	Is EIA required?	Yes		
Outcome		Action		✓
Schedule 2 development – threshold exceeded/ criterion met or Sensitive Area and likely to have significant effects		Issue direction stating EIA Required (Letter 2)		✓
Name and Job Title of Assessor		Marloes Holtkamp MSc Planning Officer		
Date of Assessment		10/06/2025		

Appendix 1: Consultation Responses

EIA Screening by Newport City Council

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING CHECKLIST
TO BE COMPLETED FOR ALL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS THAT REQUIRE SCREENING**

Application Number:	25/0278
Proposal:	EIA SCREENING OPINION FOR A DNS SCHEME: INSTALLATION AND OPERATION OF GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAYS WITH ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS, EQUIPMENT AND NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE
Site:	Land East Of Star Trading Estate Star Trading Estate Caerleon Newport South Wales
Application Type:	Env Impact Screening
Applicant:	Bluestone Court Farm 1 Ltd
Date Application Valid:	Env Impact Screening

SECTION A

1. Is there sufficient information to determine if the project is EIA development? - Plan sufficient to identify the land - Brief description of nature and purpose of proposal - Brief description of possible effects on the environment	YES	☒	Go to Question 2
	NO	☐	Request Info and Time Extension Date Info Requested: Date Info Received: (go to question 2 when info received)
2. Is the development of a description mentioned in Schedule 1 of the EIA regs?	YES	☐	EIA development: ES Required Request ES and place Screening decision with reasons on Planning register and EIA register. When ES received: Proceed as per EIA Application - Check content of ES against schedule 4 of regs.

			- Publicise receipt of ES application in press. - Submit one electronic copy to Welsh Ministers - Co-ordinate Habs Regs Assessment if relevant - Inform WG, consultees and the general public (by press advert) of Council's decision on EIA application
	NO	☒	Go to Question 3
3. Is the development of the description mentioned in Schedule 2 (column 1) of the EIA regs?	YES	☒	Which part of Schedule 2? 3a – Energy Industry Go to Question 4
	NO	☐	Not EIA development. Proceed to determine application. Record decision on Planning Register
4. Is any part of the development to be carried out within a "sensitive area" as defined in Regulation 2(1)? (SAC,SPA,SSSI,Scheduled Ancient Monument)	YES	☐	Which Sensitive Area? Go to Question 6
	NO	☒	Go to Question 5
5. Does the development meet or exceed the threshold in Schedule 2 (column 2)?	YES	☒	Go to Question 6 More than 0.5Ha
	NO	☐	Not EIA development. Proceed to determine application. Record Screening decision and reasons on Planning Register and EIA Register
6. Is the development likely to have significant environmental effects having regard to Schedule 3 of the EIA Regs? To answer this question you need to complete Section B.	YES	☒	EIA development: ES Required Request ES and place Screening decision with reasons on Planning register and EIA register. When ES received:

			Proceed as per EIA Application - Check content of ES against schedule 4 of regs. - Publicise receipts of ES application in press. - Submit one electronic copy to Welsh Ministers - Co-ordinate Habs Regs Assessment if relevant - Inform WG, consultees and the general public (by press advert) of Council's decision on EIA application
	NO	☐	Not EIA development. Proceed to determine application. Record Screening decision and reasons on Planning Register and EIA Register

REASONS FOR DECISION:

The proposal is capable of having significant environmental effects and is EIA development: • Primarily through visual and landscape impacts • Impact on setting of Scheduled Monument • Impact on recreational routes • Potential flood zone issues
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Signed: Geraint Roberts Date: 24th April 2025

Case Officer: Geraint Roberts

On behalf of Head of Regeneration, Investment and Housing

SECTION B

When answering the questions below regard should be had to the following issues:

- 1 Will there be a large change in environmental conditions?
- 2 Will new features be out-of-scale with the existing environment?
- 3 Will the effect be unusual in the area or particularly complex?
- 4 Will the effect extend over a large area?
- 5 Will there be any potential for transfrontier impact?
- 6 Will many people be affected?
- 7 Will many receptors of other types (fauna and flora, businesses, facilities) be affected?
- 8 Will valuable or scarce features or resources be affected?
- 9 Is there a risk that environmental standards will be breached?
- 10 Is there a risk that protected sites, areas, features will be affected?
- 11 Is there a high probability of the effect occurring?
- 12 Will the effect continue for a long time?
- 13 Will the effect be permanent rather than temporary?
- 14 Will the impact be continuous rather than intermittent?
- 15 If it is intermittent will it be frequent rather than rare?
- 16 Will the impact be irreversible?
- 17 Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effect?

A YES answer to the above questions will generally point to the proposal being EIA development and a NO answer would generally point to the proposal not being EIA development.

SECTION B

Questions to be Considered when screening the application.	Yes / No / ? . Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
1. Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the development project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc)?	No	
2. Will construction or operation of the development project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	No - temporary loss of agricultural land	
3. Will the development project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	No	
4. Will the development project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes	No – normal waste with some reuse potential
5. Will the development project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	No	
6. Will the development project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes – operational plant noise	No – unlikely to be environmentally significant
7. Will the development project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	No - some risk on construction / decommissioning but controllable.	
8. Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the development project which could affect human health or the environment?	Yes – normal accident risk	No
9. Will the development project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No	

10. Are there any other factors which should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	Yes – potential impact of grid connection	Not known
11. Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the development project?	No - no obvious designations are directly affected.	
12. Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the development project?	No	
13. Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the development project?	No	
14. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the development project?	No	
15. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the development project?	Yes – SLA South Eastern Lowlands Policy C2/2 - Torfaen	Yes – major visual change
16. Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the development project?	Yes	Yes – significant impact on PROWs
17. Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the development project?	No	

18. Is the development project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes – widely visible	Yes – likely significant change in visual environment
19. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the development project?	Yes - setting of MM135, Candwr Camp	Yes – significant change in visual envelope
20. Is the development project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes	Yes – still significant even if temporary
21. Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the development project?	Yes - agriculture	Yes – loss of agricultural potential for a significant period
22. Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the development project?	Not known	
23. Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the development project?	Yes – significant settlements in vicinity	Yes – significant change in visual envelope
24. Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the development project?	Not known	
25. Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the development project?	No	
26. Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the development project?	Yes	No - potential impact on Caerleon Air Management Area but controllable through Traffic Management Plan.

27. Is the development project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the development project to present environmental problems?	Yes – part of the site in Flood Zone 3 of the Afon Llwyd	Unclear what part of the development is in the undefended floodplain – possibly significant
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EIA CHECKLIST 1

TO BE COMPLETED FOR ALL APPLICATIONS

Application Number:	DM/2025/00467
Proposal:	NOTE: Representations on this are not invited as its not a Planning Application, simply a technical opinion from the local authority. The application will be dealt with at a later stage as a Development of National Significance. Screening Direction from the Welsh Ministers under Regulation 31 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (the EIA regulations) to determine whether there is a requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to accompany a planning application for development at the above location. This request is made in relation to a Development of National Significance for the purposes of section 62D of the 1990 Act.
Site:	Land At Court Farm Ponthir Monmouthshire
Application Type:	SCREEN
Date Application Valid:	8 April 2025

SECTION A

1. Is there sufficient information to determine if the project is EIA development? - Plan sufficient to identify the land - Brief description of nature and purpose of proposal - Brief description of possible effects on the environment	YES	☒	Go to Question 2
	NO	☐	Request Info and Time Extension Date Info Requested: Date Info Received: (go to question 2 when info received)
2. Is the development of a description mentioned in Schedule 1 of the EIA regs?	YES	☐	EIA development: ES Required

			Request ES and place Screening decision with reasons on Planning register and EIA register. When ES received: Proceed as per EIA Application - Check content of ES against schedule 4 of regs. - Publicise receipt of ES application in press. - Submit one electronic copy to Welsh Ministers - Co-ordinate Habs Regs Assessment if relevant - Inform WG, consultees and the general public (by press advert) of Council's decision on EIA application
	NO	☒	Go to Question 3
3. Is the development of the description mentioned in Schedule 2 (column 1) of the EIA regs?	YES	☒	Which part of Schedule 2? 3. ENERGY INDUSTRY Column 1(a) industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam, and hot water (unless included in schedule 1) Column 2: The area of development exceeds 0.5ha Go to Question 4
	NO	☐	Not EIA development. Proceed to determine application. Record decision on Planning Register
4. Is any part of the development to be carried out within a "sensitive area" as defined in Regulation 2(1)? (SAC,SPA,SSSI,Scheduled Ancient Monument)	YES	☒	Which Sensitive Area? A scheduled monument within the meaning of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979(4) . CANDWR camp SAM 135

			Go to Question 6
	NO	☐	Go to Question 5
5. Does the development meet or exceed the threshold in Schedule 2 (column 2)?	YES	☒	Go to Question 6 The area of development exceeds 0.5ha
	NO	☐	Not EIA development. Proceed to determine application. Record Screening decision and reasons on Planning Register and EIA Register
6. Is the development likely to have significant environmental effects having regard to Schedule 3 of the EIA Regs? To answer this question you need to complete Section B.	YES	☒	EIA development: ES Required Request ES and place Screening decision with reasons on Planning register and EIA register. When ES received: Proceed as per EIA Application - Check content of ES against schedule 4 of regs. - Publicise receipts of ES application in press. - Submit one electronic copy to Welsh Ministers - Co-ordinate Habs Regs Assessment if relevant - Inform WG, consultees and the general public (by press advert) of Council's decision on EIA application
	NO	☐	Not EIA development. Proceed to determine application. Record Screening decision and reasons on Planning Register and EIA Register

REASONS FOR DECISION:

In compliance with the Town and Country planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) regulations 2017 and in response to the EIA screening opinion application ref: DM/2025/00467 (DNS DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8) . It is considered with reference to and in compliance with Regulation 6 (1); of the regulations that the applicant is not submitting sufficient information, plans and descriptions for the local authority to be able to assess the full and cumulative landscape and environmental impacts on landscape character and visual amenity, designated areas, PROW, residencies, cumulative impacts and land use.

The request for an EIA screening opinion relates to a proposed installation of:-

Development over 123.8ha

- Photovoltaic (PV) panels maximum of 4 meters to a minimum of 0.5 meters in height
- Up to 25 central inverters would be placed in prefabricated containers, each within

a maximum footprint of 6.1m long, 2.4m wide, and 3.5m tall

- Up to 204 string inverters would be installed on the fixed solar module structures, and 19 LV/MV transformers, each with a maximum footprint of 3m long, 2.4m wide, and 3.5m tall.

- An HV substation compound with a main power transformer, primary switchgear room,

control room, reactive power compensator, earthing transformer, DC system backup (battery or diesel generator room), fire detection and suppression systems, lightning and perimeter security with an estimated footprint of 60m long, 30m wide and height at maximum point of 8m. Communication mast up to 15m

- 132kV overhead wires coming from the existing electricity pylon
- Perimeter fencing (deer proof) with a maximum total perimeter of 15.2km and access gates
- Infrared CCTV system, either pole or fence-mounted, located at strategic points around the

Site, maximum height of 6m

- Access tracks within the Site
- Relevant communications and monitoring equipment
- Temporary construction compounds;
- Underground cable connection
- Proposed mitigation measures and dedicated biodiversity enhancement areas
- Access points from the Highway

The applicant has provided the following information to support the screening opinion application:-

- Request for Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Direction. Land at Court Farm, Ponthir, Monmouthshire. Date: 07/04/2025 | Pegasus Ref: P22-1370
- Response to schedule 3 and highlighting supporting documentation proposed to form an application which will include ecological impact assessment, Arboricultural impact assessment, LVIA, lighting assessment, FRA and drainage strategy a ground site investigation

The proposed development does not fall within Schedule 1 of the EIA regs. The project does fall within the Schedule 2 of the EIA regs and is classed as being:-

3. ENERGY INDUSTRY

Column 1(a) industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam, and hot water (unless included in schedule 1)

Column 2: The area of development exceeds 0.5ha

It is in our opinion from a Landscape and GI perspective that should the application progress and to ensure that potential cumulative landscape and visual effects on Monmouthshire's valued landscape and its character are fully and adequately assessed a full environmental impact assessment (EIA) will be required in this instance to inform and support a future application and any subsequent delivery, operation, management and decommission. The application does constitute EIA development and an Environmental Statement will be required as per the regulations.

Key areas of concern are that an appropriately informed ES will be able to address are:-

- The area is extensive, cross boundary and is set to extend across an undulating landform from settlement fringe to rural landscape at various levels above AOD, on varying gradients, with a risk of cumulative impacts on the existing unifying landscape character patterns.
- The extent of development may impact on LANDMAP landscape character evaluation
- Cumulative landscape visual impact needs to be considered in terms of a renewable energy development in Future Wales 2040 Green Belt and nearby larger scale development along the M4 corridor, Gwent levels and any potential settlement expansion inc outside of Monmouthshire.

Signed: Andrew Jones Date: 9TH May 2025

On behalf of Chief Officer - Place

SECTION B

When answering the questions below regard should be had to the following issues:

- 1 Will there be a large change in environmental conditions?
- 2 Will new features be out-of-scale with the existing environment?
- 3 Will the effect be unusual in the area or particularly complex?
- 4 Will the effect extend over a large area?
- 5 Will there be any potential for transfrontier impact?
- 6 Will many people be affected?
- 7 Will many receptors of other types (fauna and flora, businesses, facilities) be affected?
- 8 Will valuable or scarce features or resources be affected?
- 9 Is there a risk that environmental standards will be breached?
- 10 Is there a risk that protected sites, areas, features will be affected?
- 11 Is there a high probability of the effect occurring?
- 12 Will the effect continue for a long time?
- 13 Will the effect be permanent rather than temporary?
- 14 Will the impact be continuous rather than intermittent?
- 15 If it is intermittent will it be frequent rather than rare?
- 16 Will the impact be irreversible?
- 17 Will it be difficult to avoid, or reduce or repair or compensate for the effect?

A YES answer to the above questions will generally point to the proposal being EIA development and a NO answer would generally point to the proposal not being EIA development.

SECTION B

Questions to be Considered when screening the application.	Yes / No / ? . Briefly describe	Is this likely to result in a significant effect? Yes/No/? – Why?
1. Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the development project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc)?	Currently unknown. The information provided to date does not fully explain the impacts of the proposed development on topography	
2. Will construction or operation of the development project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	No - temporary loss of agricultural land	
3. Will the development project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	During the construction periods of 24 months, there is going to be noise, dust and pollution from construction and construction traffic, however the EIA Screening Request does not provide details regarding how much traffic and dust will be generated, nor how congested local roads are likely to become, nor distance to sensitive receptors such as houses, schools etc.	Managed via appropriate condition.
4. Will the development project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes. Excavated materials to form base for development .	The impact may not be significant in terms of impact on landscape however it is not clear if areas of development will be on steep gradients requiring terracing. Further clarification is required.
5. Will the development project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air?	During the construction periods of 24 months, there is going to be noise, dust and pollution from construction and construction traffic, however the EIA Screening	This could be managed via a CEMP condition.

	Request does not provide details regarding how much traffic and dust will be generated, nor how congested local roads are likely to become, nor distance to sensitive receptors such as houses, schools etc.	
6. Will the development project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes – operational plant noise. Noise will be created during the construction phase in terms of vehicle movements, excavations for tracks, drills used for assembling the panels and frames. The extent of impact is it defined.	No – unlikely to be environmentally significant
7. Will the development project lead to risks of contamination of land or water from releases of pollutants onto the ground or into surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea?	Unknown – potentially through construction / decommissioning.	The management via CEMP and SAB should mitigate for any localised impact. Further clarity will be required.
8. Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the development project which could affect human health or the environment?	Yes – normal accident risk	No
9. Will the development project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No	
10. Are there any other factors which should be considered such as consequential development which could lead to environmental effects or the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?	Yes – potential impact of grid connection	Not known
11. Are there any areas on or around the location which are protected under international or national or local legislation for their ecological, landscape, cultural or other value, which could be affected by the development project?	No - no obvious designations are directly affected.	

12. Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology e.g. wetlands, watercourses or other waterbodies, the coastal zone, mountains, forests or woodlands, which could be affected by the development project?	See Q13 below.	
13. Are there any areas on or around the location which are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora e.g. for breeding, nesting, foraging, resting, overwintering, migration, which could be affected by the development project?	Yes The site is 10.5km from the Severn Estuary Special Protection Areas (SPA) and RAMSAR site. The SPA supports a number of internationally important populations of regularly occurring migratory bird species including European white-fronted geese, dunlin, redshank, shelduck and gadwall. Furthermore, the wider wintering waterfowl assemblage is considered to be of international importance. No wintering bird surveys have been undertaken to inform the screening opinion but a number of records of qualifying features have been returned from within close proximity of the application site. Wintering and breeding birds (including Schedule 1 species) could be directly affected by habitat loss and indirect disturbance effects. Other protected species including otter, bats, badger and reptiles/amphibians could be impacted by habitat loss. Development works could result in a number of disturbance impacts on the surrounding environment such as dust, noise, vibration, lighting. There is also	Yes Impacts on the availability of functionally linked land could impact overwintering bird assemblage. The size and scale of the proposals means that protected fauna and flora is likely to be significantly impacted. There is a risk of adverse effect on the environment through development of the site, the design and detail of the development would need to be guided through detailed assessments and mitigating measures for the potential localised and cumulative impacts described. The development both during construction and operation has potential to impact on protected species that are using the site and surrounding landscape. The impacts could be caused by development and reduced natural landscape. However proposed ecological survey , Arb survey , CEMP ,

	potential for impacts on the watercourses during works such as changes in water hydrology and quality through siltation/sedimentation and toxic contamination, spread of invasive species. Policy NE1 and Policy GI1 require the protection of natural features which may have ecological value, and which are part of the Monmouthshire GI network. There are some trees located along the boundaries of the sites and within the development site boundary. None of the trees are protected by Tree Preservation Order, however, they may have visual and landscape amenity value within the wider landscape and/or biodiversity value. Loss of trees would not be viewed positively and would be irreversible (albeit they are not statutorily protected), and it is expected that the development would avoid tree loss. If tree loss if proposed, a tree survey would be required and only if the tree to be removed is of a low quality and there is an arboricultural reason for its removal would its loss potentially be considered as having a neutral impact. Any trees to be lost would also need to be assessed for potential ecological value, i.e. bat roosts, to assess whether there is a statutory protected feature which need to be retained. Should trees be proposed for removal, appropriate replacement planting is required to be included within GI scheme and comply with	mitigation enhancements as indicated and subsequent management via GIMP could provide a net benefit for some species. The Biodiversity/Ornithology chapters of the EIA will need to consider the likelihood of potential impacts of the proposals on species associated with the Severn Estuary Marine Site. Records of qualifying features of the SPA are noted to have been returned from close proximity to the proposed solar installations – notably white-fronted geese, shelduck, tufted duck, teal and curlew. No information has been submitted to date regarding overwintering birds and therefore there is uncertainty over whether the percentages of features present are likely to classify the site as functionally linked land. It is recommended that wintering bird surveys are undertaken to inform the relevant chapter of the EIA as the loss of functionally linked land associated with the Severn Estuary SPA would constitute a likely significant effect on these protected sites and would
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	PPW 12 with regards to replacement ratios.	this merit an EIA. It should be noted that the Llandegfedd Reservoir SSSI, located 4.5km to the north of the site, has previously been known to support overwintering features of the Severn Estuary SPA. The location and scale of the proposals means that the EIA chapters will need to consider the impacts of the proposals on the presence of protected species and habitats including breeding/wintering birds, Schedule 1 breeding birds (e.g. barn owl), bats, badger, otter, reptiles/amphibians. A significant effect on these populations is considered likely due to the proximity and scale of development.
14. Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the development project?	No	
15. Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the development project?	Yes National Future Wales 2040 Strategic Development Plan Policy 34 Green belts and the South east Green Belt (Area for consideration). Contrary to P24 of the screening direction request report the site is indicated as being within the Green Belt according to MCC Mon Maps GIS data base National Landscape Character area:- 31 Central Monmouthshire Landscape character:-	Yes It is considered that there will be a significant adverse impact and change to landscape character and value as a result of the proposal. The site is within a highly valued landscape character in Monmouthshire in terms of its status, landform, scenic quality, biodiversity, GI and wide ranging historic and cultural links. The site is spread across a large swathe of the landscape at

	MNMTHVS036 Sor Brook Valley. High visual sensory value due to the area's gentle scenic quality and unspoilt character MNMTHCLS040 Sor Brook Valley. High cultural value due to the area's gentle scenic quality and unspoilt character MCC landscape SPG (Draft) A strongly undulating landscape, reflecting the complex pattern of geology; producing a mosaic of small hills and valleys, drained by a number of streams and tributaries. Characterised by deep wooded valleys and mixed pasture, with larger fields of arable crops, enclosed by a strong network of traditional field boundaries and hedgerow trees, this LCA contains the Main Village of Llangybi and the Minor Villages of Coed y Paen, Llandegveth and Tredunnock. An undulating area of agricultural landscape characterised by a series of hills and small, often wooded valleys. High scenic quality combining attractive topography in the deep undulating valleys (of older Silurian sedimentary rocks heavily folded and faulted) and heavily wooded hills. Unspoilt by inharmonious development and retaining its integrity Special Landscape Areas The Designation of Special Landscape Areas Study (July 2010) to inform the current MCC LDP identified five areas which justify designation as SLAs – these effectively cover the majority of	elevations and aspects that will be visible from settlement, rural residential, small holdings, farms, lanes and PROW. The solar panels are indicated as being no more than 4m in height (P24 of the screening direction request report). However there is no current indication as to the average heights of the proposed panels, how many and where the 4m high and up to 4m high panels will be distributed. This is a considerable difference to the heights of current boundary hedges to fields. It is understood that the average height of solar farm panels is circa 2.5m-3m. A cumulative LVIA of the proposed layout based on panel sizes and respective receptors will also need to be considered. The extent of the proposed development is likely to have a significant adverse visual effect and impact on landscape character as seen from more elevated areas of the county and upland areas to the west looking east. The area is extensive, cross boundary and is set to extend across an undulating landform from settlement fringe to rural landscape at various levels above AOD, on varying gradients, with a risk of cumulative impacts on
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	Monmouthshire outside those areas within the Brecon Beacons National Park and Wye Valley AONB. The only area not included is the area to the west of Chepstow Park Wood, including Shirenewton running up to the Newport boundary. The potential designation of the large majority of the County as SLA's reflects the inherent quality of Monmouthshire's landscape. MCC has adopted a policy approach to landscape protection and management based upon landscape characterisation, as defined by LANDMAP Landscape Character Assessment.	the existing unifying landscape character patterns The aim of an Environmental Impact Assessment is to protect the environment by ensuring that a local planning authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a project, which is likely to have significant effects on the environment, does so in the full knowledge of the likely significant effects, and takes this into account in the decision-making process. Consideration should also be given to the cumulative impact of the proposal on Monmouthshire's landscape, the rural character of the area and values placed on that character. Policy LC5 Protection and Enhancement of landscape character highlights that proposals must demonstrate through a landscape assessment how landscape character has influenced their design, scale, nature and site selection. Consideration should be given to the effects of the proposal on the Landscape Character Areas, views from the highway and the impact on GI connectivity. Local development Plans and development management decisions should not permit major
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		development in the areas shown for consideration for green belts, except in very exceptional circumstances, until the need for green belts and their boundaries has been established by an adopted Strategic Development Plan The applicant proposes that an LVIA accompany application along with landscape proposals and subsequent management. The LVIA needs to consider cumulative impacts both visually, from a colour perspective, infrastructure proposed as well as the varying heights of panels and infrastructure on skylines.
16. Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the development project?	Yes The proposed scheme is very large extending to approximately 96.73 HA` s with a fenced perimeter of 15. Km utilising a cat number of fields that are bisected by several public highways. The development is planned to be accessed using existing field access`s and the construction of new and is proposed to take approximately 24 months to construct and be operational for forty years before decommissioning. The proposal will have a negative impact on the immediate local network and the wider construction traffic	Unknown

	network particularly during the construction and decommissioning phases of the development. An EIA is required and will need to be supported with a robust transport assessment and Construction Traffic Management Plan that consider and address the impact of the proposal on the local and wider highway network. The applicant has outlined this requirement in the submission, Request for Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Direction, Dated 07/04/2025 Ref: P22-1370 Transport. The site will also impact the local highway network that falls under the control and jurisdiction of Torfaen County Borough Council, see below an extract of the MCC roads affected A transport impact assessment should be undertaken.	
17. Are there any transport routes on or around the location which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the development project?	As above (Q16).	
18. Is the development project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Yes The key settlement areas <u>within</u> Monmouthshire that the development will be visible from are likely to be :- Settlement	Yes An appropriately scaled impact assessment will still need to be undertaken to accompany a planning application in the form of a LVIA

	Llanhennock 1.28km due east of the site. Elevated settlement location circa 90mAOD with panoramic views to the west. Rural hamlets, residential and farmsteads Criegydd farm, Candwr farm, Shaftesbury farm immediately impacted. Cluster of rural residential of Roughton Outside of Monmouthshire but looking onto the site and rural landscape character. Ponthir 10m to north Higher elevations of Cwmbran to the west eg Henllys, Lanes and roads The change from rural landscape of field, hedge and trees will be impacted for those users passing through the landscape. Key routes are:- Ponthir road C205.3 Court farm reservoir to Caerleon boundary C205.2 Candwr road R105 Impacts on local lanes through the site areas due to development, boundaries and impacts on entrances and splays to improve access. Secure boundaries using 2.5m deer fencing to all development sites will change character over a large area, the cumulative impact will need to be considered and assessed	to assess the cumulative visual impacts of the development and lighting. The LVIA should form part of an ES. Reference to • Future Wales • Future Wales Green Belt policy 34 • PPW Edition 12 Consideration needs to also be undertaken in the context of the following current LDP policy • LDP S1 Strategic policy • LDP S13 Policy Landscape, Green Infrastructure and the Natural Environment • LDP Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure • LDP policy LC1 New development in the Countryside • LDP LC5 – Protection and enhancement of Landscape character • LDP SDI – Renewable Energy • MCC Green Infrastructure SPG 2015
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		• LDP DES1 General Design Considerations • EP3 Lighting Consideration of the MCC emerging RLDP in particular policies:- Policy OC1 New built development in the open countryside Policy CC2 Renewable energy allocation Strategic policy S5 and supporting DM policy GI1, GI2, LC1, NR1, NR3 and PROW1
19. Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the development project?	Parcels 1,2,3,4,5,10,11 are within MCC, 8 and 12 shared with Newport and Torfaen. Parcels 3 and 10 are within close proximity to designated heritage assets, parcel 3 LB 2674 Little Creiggydd and Parcel 10 SAM 135 Candwr Camp.	Yes The development has significant potential (parcel3) to have an adverse effect on the setting of the listed building. Further comments should be sought from Cadw in relation to the setting of the SAM. Further designations are identified on the plans submitted and also require thorough assessment to consider the effects of the development. A full LVIA is required as well as a HIA.
20. Is the development project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes	Yes – still significant even if temporary
21. Are there existing land uses on or around the location e.g. homes, gardens, other private property, industry, commerce, recreation, public open space, community facilities, agriculture, forestry, tourism, mining or quarrying which could be affected by the development project?	Yes. 123.8ha of agricultural land will be developed for solar panel and energy production use. During operation the applicant indicates that some grazing will be able	Yes – loss of agricultural potential for a significant period

	to be undertaken and some agricultural land will be enhanced through the change from agricultural grazing to solar panels able to naturally renew (p24 report)	
22. Are there any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the development project?	Not known	
23. Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the development project?	Yes – significant settlements in vicinity	Yes – significant change in visual envelope
24. Are there any areas on or around the location which are occupied by sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities, which could be affected by the development project?	Not known. Schools in Ponthir, Caerleon and Hospital in Llafrecnfa. Any impact during construction phase and impact on transport infrastructure.	Managed via CTMP.
25. Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the development project?	Yes. The site extends over 123ha and includes springs, streams, brooks and associated wet areas that drain ultimately to the Afon Lwyd the south of the site. Fields 1,2 and 11 appear to drain towards the Sor brook the east of the development area.	It is not clear what cumulative impact development will have on underlying water courses and habitats. Appropriate ecological surveys, CEMP and construction methodology and management could mitigate for risks. Surface water run off from new hard surfaces will need to be managed through a SAB application process.
26. Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the development project?	Yes (Noted in Newport)	No - potential impact on Caerleon Air Management Area but controllable through CTMP.

27. Is the development project location susceptible to earthquakes, subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions e.g. temperature inversions, fogs, severe winds, which could cause the development project to present environmental problems?	Yes – Part of the wider site is in Flood Zone 3 of the Afon Llwyd	Unclear what part of the development is in the undefended floodplain – potentially significant.
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SCREENING OPINION

Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017

Application Number: **25/P/0238/SCREEN**

Development description: **Installation and operation of ground mounted solar photovoltaic arrays with all associated works, equipment and necessary infrastructure on land at Court Farm, Ponthir, Monmouthshire**

Location: **Land At Court Farm Ponthir Monmouthshire**

Case Officer: **Mr Justin Jones**

- Q1.** Does the development fall within a relevant description in Schedule 1?
(If YES, EIA is mandatory; if NO, go to Q2) **NO**
- Q2.** Does the development fall within a relevant description in Column 1 of Schedule 2?
(If YES, go to Q3; if NO, further action not required) **YES**
- Q3.** Does the development meet the criteria/threshold in Column 2 of Schedule 2?
(If YES, '**screening opinion**' required below; if NO, go to Q4) **YES**
- Q4.** Is the development located in a 'sensitive area', as defined in Regulation 2(1)?
(If YES, '**screening opinion**' required below; if NO, further action not required) **/NO**

SCREENING OPINION (refer to Schedule 3 of the Regulations)

Characteristics of the Development:

The submitted Environmental Statement, reference P22-1370 (ES) that has been undertaken by Pegasus group (dated 07/04/2025) defines the project as a solar power farm with a capacity of up to 46MW of electricity generation capacity covering circa 123.28 ha of 3b and 2 grade agricultural green fields. The ES expands upon this in greater detail with the Proposed Development likely to consist of the following:

- Photovoltaic (PV) panels are mounted on a simple metal framework, referred to as a 'table,' to form an array that is pile-driven into the ground, eliminating the need for substantial foundations. These arrays, utilizing bifacial technology, may operate either with a fixed tilt facing south or on single axis tracking tables, chosen based on the optimal solution for efficient utilization of solar energy. The height of the tables above ground level can range from a maximum of 4 meters to a minimum of 0.5 meters when using fixed

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structures with a configuration of two vertical panels and a table tilt angle of 30°. Additionally, the tables will be spaced at a minimum distance of 7 meters from each other.

- The type of inverters and medium voltage power stations will be determined between string and central technologies based on the most cost-effective solution for the project. o Up to 25 central inverters would be placed in prefabricated containers, each within a maximum footprint of 6.1m long, 2.4m wide, and 3.5m tall. Up to 204 string inverters would be installed on the fixed solar module structures, and 19 LV/MV transformers, each with a maximum footprint of 3m long, 2.4m wide, and 3.5m tall. The inverters and power stations will be placed at various locations around the arrays.
- An HV substation compound with a main power transformer, primary switchgear room, control room, reactive power compensator, earthing transformer, DC system backup (battery or diesel generator room), fire detection and suppression systems, lightning and perimeter security with an estimated footprint of 60m long, 30m wide and height at maximum point of 8m. There will be a need for a communication mast to be installed at this location which would have a maximum height of 15m. This will be located on land owned by Welsh Water within the water treatment plant near to the Site.
- 132kV overhead wires coming from the existing electricity pylon (owned by National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED)) to the 132/33kV substation. Further underground cabling will be required between the land parcels to connect the inverters/transformers to the 132/33kV substation.
- Perimeter fencing (deer proof) with a maximum total perimeter of 15.2km and access gates, enclosing the separate parcels of solar PV arrays proposed, maximum height of 2.5m above ground level with a small gap at the bottom to allow passage for small animals;
- Infrared CCTV system, either pole or fence-mounted, located at strategic points around the Site, maximum height of 6m to ensure optimal coverage while minimizing visual or shadow impact over the solar modules;
- Access tracks within the Site linking the access points with the inverters / transformers (temporary for the duration of the scheme and constructed from permeable materials);
- Relevant communications and monitoring equipment;
- Temporary construction compounds;
- Underground cable connection between the parcels and to the national grid point of connection at the Court Farm Water Treatment Works. The underground cabling will be laid via surface dug trenches of approximately 1m deep and 50cm wide, and backfilled;

The development is proposed to have a lifespan of 40 years

Location of Development:

The ES has characterised the site by splitting the site into 12 parcels of land and makes a description of these areas but, in summary The site is undulating agricultural fields across the site are a number of public rights of way (land parcel 1- footpath 367/40/1, land parcel 3 footpaths 366 115/1 & 367/ 46/1 land parcel

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4- footpath 367 49/1 land parcel 5 367/ 47/1 (these are all within Monmouthshire area), land parcel 7 42-34/1, land parcel 9 footpath 367 50/1, land parcel 10 footpath 367/ 29/1).

The site is split with various hedgerows within the site are various Tree preservation orders.

Access to the fields is via the existing rural land with the main access via Caerleon Road

Important features that are of consideration are outlined below:

The River Usk which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (European designation) and a Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) (national designation) located c. 1.4km south at the closest point (land parcel 12). The watercourse is designated as a SAC for the presence of sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*), European river lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*), Brook Lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*), Allis shad (*Alosa alosa*), Twait shad (*Alosa fallax*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), European bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) and Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*); and Brook Cottage SSSI c. 2.5km north-east of land parcel 3.

There are no designated heritage assets located within the Site, within the area surrounding the Site there are the following Scheduled Monuments:

- Scheduled Monument Candwr Camp immediately south of land parcel 10 (reference: MM135);
- Penrhos Camp (civil war earthworks) Scheduled Monument (reference: MM011) c. 500m south-east of land parcel 12;
- Lodge Wood Camp Scheduled Monument (reference: MM023) is c 1.3km south-west of land parcel 12; and
- Cae Camp Scheduled Monument (reference: MM079) c. 1.3km east land parcel 2.

The closest Conservation Areas are located within the settlements of Llanhennock (c.1.2km south-east of parcel 11) and Llantarnam (c.2.7km west of parcel 8).

.

The following Listed Buildings have been identified within 1km of the Site boundary:

- Grade II Listed Barn at Pen-Twyn Farm (reference: 26129) adjacent south-east of parcel 12;
- Grade II Listed Little Creiggydd (reference: 2674) c. 35m north-east of land parcel 3; and
- Grade II Listed Glansirhowy Farm (reference: 3141) c. 140m south of land parcel 7.

Several Listed Buildings are located within the wider area, largely associated with the following settlements Ponthir, Llantarnam, LLanfrechfa, LLandegveth and Llanddewi Fach

Parcels 6, 7, 8, 9 and 12 are located within the Torfaen Special Landscape Area within Landscape Unit (LAU) 59, Countryside East of Cwmbran as defined by the 2021 Sensitivity Capacity Study for Renewable Energy Development. These areas are also within the designated Green belt outlined within Future Wales.

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The Welsh Government Development Advice Map ("DAMs") shows the majority of the Site is located within Flood Zone A; the area is considered to have the lowest probability of flooding. A small area is located within Zone B and Zone C2 which lies adjacent to Candwr Brook. Zone B is classed as an area which is known to have flooded in the past and Zone C2 is an area without significant flood defence infrastructure.

The Site is not located within an Air Quality Management Area ("AQMA") the closest to the Site is the Caerleon High Street AQMA declared for Nitrogen dioxide located c. 1.6km south of parcel 12. Nature and purpose of the Proposed Development

Characteristics of the Potential Impact:

(a) the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact (for example geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);

The visual impact would be localised to the 4 Local authorities but the greatest impact would be to the main population centre of the village of Ponthir (population circa 1,482 people) but given the site area and spread of the solar panels the visual impact would be noticeable to a wider area.

(b) the nature of the impact;

The proposal will result in a visual intrusion within the green belt and would result in the visual loss of openness from green fields to solar panels.

Consideration to the loss of best and most versatile land; and

The proposed impact upon surface water drainage and how this would affect the hydrology and ecology of the area.

No clear assessment has been undertaken upon protected species and their habitat that may be affected by this proposal.

The panels would occupy best and most versatile agricultural land

(c) the transboundary nature of the impact;

There are considered to be no transnational boundary

(d) the intensity and complexity of the impact;

The intensity is high and complexity is also high, given the complex nature in interchangeable characteristics upon the existing ecological setting

(e) the probability of the impact;

The probability of the impact is certain

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(f)the expected onset, duration, frequency and reversibility of the impact;

The impact would be during construction and permanent for a 40 years period but the visual impact can be reversed through mitigation.

(g)the cumulation of the impact with the impact of other existing and/or approved development;

The proposal would need to be considered in the context of the adjoining built hospital (The Grange) and other DNS applications, most notably the solar farm at Pant bach Farm, and the wind farm developments at Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Llanhilleth But given the separation distances of these proposals from the site it is considered that this project is visibly separable from them. However, there maybe development within the neighbouring authorities of Monmouthshire and Newport which may have an affect upon this proposal.

(h)the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

The submitted ES outlines ecological enhancement but rather using the WG Stepwise approach has used the English Bio diversity net gain matrix to demonstrate a 10% increase. Whilst this maybe acceptable, there is the potential that the proposed biodiversity could be enhanced prevention, through the 'Stepwise' approach, could result in a different impact.

The proposal

Opinion:

The project, as described above, falls within the description at paragraph 3(a) in column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 to the Regulations.

As the proposal is a potential Development of National Significance (DNS) application, the attached screening assessment identifies the key areas which have been considered.

Having taken into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3 to the Regulations and the advice in Welsh Office Circular 11/99: Environmental Impact Assessment on establishing whether EIA is required, the assessment concludes that:

The proposed development of a circa 46MW solar farm with associated infrastructure would inevitably result in a number of effects, most notably in terms of the physical change to the site itself, landscape and visual impact and effects on the historic environment to such an extent that, based upon the submitted information, significant environmental effects are likely. Therefore, in the view of Torfaen County Borough Council, is that EIA is required in this instance. In forming this view regard has been had to the screen opinions of Newport City Council and Monmouthshire County Borough Council who take a similar view.

Approved By:	Huw Roberts
Name and Designation:	Group Leader Development Management
Date:	12/05/2025

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Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-278373-L5L9
Eich cyf/Your ref: CAS-02366-F2C3K8

Dyddiad/Date: 16 April 2025

Annwyl Syr/Madam/Dear Sir/Madam,

BWRIAD/PROPOSAL: INSTALLATION AND OPERATION OF A GROUND MOUNTED SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAY TOGETHER WITH ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS, EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

LLEOLIAD/LOCATION: COURT FARM SOLAR, PONTNIR, MONMOUTHSHIRE, NP18 1HU.

Thank you for your letter dated [insert date] requesting Natural Resources Wales's (NRW) views on whether the above proposed development is likely to have a significant environmental effect.

From the information provided (request for Environmental Impact Assessment: Screening Direction, Land at Court Farm, Pontnir, Monmouthshire, NP18 1HU, Prepared by Pegasus group, dated 7 April 2025, reference: P22-1370) we consider that the proposed development is unlikely to have a significant environmental effect.

Reasons

Our view on the likelihood of significant effect on each of the environmental interests identified by you in your consultation letter is set out below:

Flood Risk

Flood Map for Planning identifies part of the application site to be at risk of flooding and within Flood Zone 2 and /or 3. However given the nature of the development (low vulnerability) we do not consider an effect from the development to be significant.

Biodiversity and Protected Species

We have limited records of protected species on the application site, however we do not hold up to date information. Given the Phase 1 habitat survey (and subsequent surveys) will inform enhancement and mitigation measures proposed development is unlikely to have a significant effects on biodiversity and protected species.

Protected Sites

The site does not appear to be located within proximity to any designated sites. We can therefore rule out any significant effects on protected sites.

Landscape

The site is not located in or near a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Therefore, the proposed development would cause no likely significant effects on landscape

We have considered the likelihood of significant effects from the scheme on environmental interests listed on our consultation topic list: Natural Resources Wales and Planning Consultations (September 2018) [DPAS consultation checklist DRAFT March 2018](#)

Our advice does not rule out the potential for the proposed development to affect other interests, including environmental interests of local importance, or human health. You may wish to consult other bodies for their expert advice on those effects.

Our advice is made without prejudice to comments we may subsequently wish to make when consulted on any planning application, any environmental permit, the submission of more detailed information, or an Environmental Statement.

If you have any queries on the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully,

Rhian Isaac

Cynghorydd - Cynllunio Datblygu/Advisor - Development Planning
Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales

E-bost/E-mail: southeastplanning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg, heb i hynny arwain at oedi./Correspondence in Welsh is welcomed, and we will respond in Welsh without it leading to a delay.

From: South East Planning <southeastplanning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk>

Sent: 09 June 2025 13:22

To: PEDW – Seilwaith / Infrastructure <PEDW.Infrastructure@gov.wales>; South East Planning <southeastplanning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8 - Court Farm Solar (Screening) (EIA) (DNS) - NRW Response NRW:01294727

Hi

Apologies for the delay. We have spoken with our Ornithologist and the advice is a potential impact over Lapwing and Barn Owl. However without any survey data it is difficult to advise, but I have been provided with the following:

Lapwing

The habitats on site may have the potential to support breeding lapwing. Lapwing is a species of high conservation concern; owing to severe short-term and long-term decline of the breeding population Lapwing is listed under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and Red-listed in Wales ([BoCCW4](#)). There were estimated to be fewer than 1000 breeding pairs of Lapwing in Wales (Pritchard et al. 2021).

Barn Owl

The habitats on site may have the potential to support breeding and foraging barn owl. We therefore recommend either:

- a. A species-specific survey for barn owls during the breeding season to assess the impacts on the scheme on foraging barn owls and identify the potential for breeding barn owls. Such as survey Surveys for barn owls [Barn Owl Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessment | CIEEM](#), or
- b. In lieu of additional surveys, a robust mitigation/enhancement package aimed at retaining and promoting barn owls on site. This should include how appropriate habitat will be retained and managed for the life time of the scheme, and the provision of suitable nest boxes.

I hope this helps

Regards

Rhian Isaac

From: Holtkamp, Marloes (CSI - Planning & Environment Decisions Wales) **On Behalf Of** PEDW – Seilwaith / Infrastructure

Sent: 20 May 2025 15:04

To: southeastplanning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

Subject: FW: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8 - Court Farm Solar (Screening) (EIA) (DNS) - NRW Response NRW:01294727

Good afternoon Rhian,

Thank you again for providing your EIA Screening consultation response. We also consulted Monmouthshire County Council and their response includes ecology concerns, in particular in relation to the Severn Estuary SPA and RAMSAR site. Please find their response attached. The concerns are raised at question 13 of section B of the EIA checklist (page 9 onwards).

I would be grateful if you could provide comment on the concerns raised by the LPA. If you could provide your response by Friday 06 June 2025, that would be much appreciated. If you have any concerns regarding this date, please let me know.

Thank you,

Marloes

Marloes Holtkamp

[hi | she / her]

Swyddog Cynllunio | Planning Officer

Penderfyniadau Cynllunio ac Amgylchedd Cymru | Planning and Environment Decisions Wales

Llywodraeth Cymru | Welsh Government

Llinell Uniongyrchol | Direct Line:

PCAC Ymholiadau Cyffredinol Ffôn | PEDW General Enquiries Tel: 0300 123 1590

<https://llyw.cymru/penderfyniadau-cynllunio-ac-amgylchedd-cymru> |
<https://gov.wales/planning-and-environment-decisions-wales>

Planning and Environment Decisions Wales

Eich cyfeirnod
Your reference**DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8**

Sent by email

Ein cyfeirnod
Our reference

PEDW.Infrastructure@gov.wales

Dyddiad
Date

15 April 2025

Llinell uniongyrchol
Direct lineEbost
Email:

Cadwplanning@gov.wales

Dear Sir / Madam,

EIA Screening Consultation - Court Farm Solar, Land at Court Farm, Ponthir, Monmouthshire REF: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8

Thank you for your letter asking for Cadw's view on the above.

Cadw, as the Welsh Government's historic environment service, has assessed the characteristics of this proposed development and its location within the historic environment. In particular, the likely impact on designated or registered historic assets of national importance. In assessing if the likely impact of the development is significant Cadw has considered the extent to which the proposals affect those nationally important historic assets that form the historic environment, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered historic parks, gardens and landscapes.

These views are provided without prejudice to the Welsh Government's consideration of the matter, should it come before it formally for determination.

Advice

This advice is given in response to a request for a screening opinion as to the need or not for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be prepared for the Court Farm Solar.

The designated historic assets listed on Annex A are located inside 3km of the proposed development, but in most cases intervening topography, buildings and vegetation block all views between them. Consequently, the proposed development will have no impact on the settings of these designated historic assets: However, scheduled monument MM135 Candwr Camp and listed buildings LB2674 Little Creiggydd; LB3141 Glanshirhowy Farm and LB26129 Barn at Pen-Teyn Farm are located inside 200m of the boundaries of the proposed solar farm, which is likely to be visible from them. In the cases of LB3141 and LB26129 the tithe plans show that parts of the application area were historically farmed from these landholdings. However,

whilst there are historic associations between these designated historic assets and parts of the application area, which forms their settings, it is likely that once mitigation measures, such as additional planting have been implemented, the effect of the proposed development on their settings will not be significant.

The Historic Environment Record curated by Heneb: The Trust for Welsh Archaeology does not have any records of archaeological sites located inside the application area. This probably represents a lack of archaeological investigation in the area but currently there is no evidence that significant archaeological sites are located inside the application area.

The information given above is sufficient for us to conclude that the proposed solar farm is unlikely to have a significant effect on the historic environment and therefore an EIA is not required.

It is noted that in their letter requesting the screening opinion the applicant proposes to produce a heritage statement along with the results of a geophysical survey for submission with the application. We concur that this information should be submitted with any application for the proposed solar farm.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Smith
Historic Environment Branch

Annex A

Scheduled Monuments

MM011 Penrhos Camp (civil war earthworks)
MM014 Caerleon Castle Mound
MM023 Lodge Wood Camp
MM037 Medieval Tower at Hanbury Arms
MM049 Priory Wood Camp
MM079 Cae Camp
MM087 Castle Mound E of Graig Wood
MM135 Candwr Camp
MM136 Churchyard Cross
MM137 Llantarnam Abbey Tithe Barn
MM176 Great Bulmore Roman settlement
MM230 Caerleon Legionary Fortress
MM231 Caerleon Civil Settlement
MM232 Caerleon Roman Amphitheatre
MM233 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Goldcroft Common
MM234 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: School Fields
MM235 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Grounds of St Cadoc's Home
MM236 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Area between Priory Hotel and Priory Lodge
MM237 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Field SE of Broadway
MM238 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Grounds of Museum
MM239 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Back Garden of No 4 Museum Street
MM240 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Area behind Caerleon House
MM241 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Town Hall Park, High Street
MM242 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Area of Myrtle Cottage Barracks
MM243 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Area off White Hart Lane
MM244 Caerleon Civil Settlement: Site of Roman Building SE of Castle Street
MM245 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Grounds of Health Clinic
MM246 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Grounds of the Croft Nursing Home
MM247 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Old Vicarage Garden
MM248 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Former Garden of The Firs
MM252 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Car Park and Garden of Endowed School, North of Broadway
MM254 Caerleon Civil Settlement: Area under Broadway Playing Fields
MM262 Caerleon Legionary Fortress: Former Ambulance Station Field

Registered Parks and Gardens

PGW(Gt)20(NPT) Bryn Glas
PGW(Gt)25(TOR) Llantarnam Abbey
PGW(Gt)36(MON) Glen Usk

Listed Buildings:

2658	Lower Cefn Carnau	II
2660	Celynen	II
2661	Cefn Tila Bach	II
2664	Craigwith House	II
2665	Court Perrot Farmhouse	II
2666	Croeswen Farmhouse	II

2668	Cwrt Bleddyn	II
2670	Former Church of St David	II
2671	Tombstone of Margret Morgan at Church of St David	II
	Tombstone of John Phillip to south west of the Church of St	
2672	David	II
2674	Little Creiggydd	II
2676	Llanddewi Court	II*
2677	Oxhouse at Llanddewi Court	II
2678	Barn at Llanddewi Court	II
2679	Lansor	II
2684	Pen-y-parc Farmhouse	II
2685	Church of St Tegfedd	II
2686	Ton Farmhouse	II*
2691	Berllan-deg	II*
2692	Cefn Henllan Farmhouse	II
2693	Dovecote to east of Cefn Henllan Farmhouse	II
	Coed-y-fon Farmhouse, including attached Granary and	
2694	Cartshed	II
2696	Garn Fawr (or Upper Garn)	II
2697	Glen Usk	II*
2698	Temple at Glen Usk	II
2699	Gate piers to road, NE of Glen Usk	II
2701	Combination Farmbuilding to north of Great House	II
2702	Church of St. John the Baptist	II
2703	Llansor Fawr (Great Llansor)	II
	Telephone Call-box on east side of road close to Old	
2841	Mackworth Arms	II
2947	Garden Wall of The Mynde	II
2948	Church of St. Cadoc	II*
2949	Lamppost in Churchyard of the Church of St Cadoc	II
2950	,5,Backhall Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2951	,6&7,Backhall Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2955	The Hall	II
2956	Garden Railings and Gate to The Hall	II
2957	,27,Backhall Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2958	The Red Lion PH	II
2960	King's House	II
2961	,1,Cross Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2962	,2,Cross Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2963	,3,Cross Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2965	,20&21,Cross Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2966	The Firs with attached railings	II
2967	The Olde Bull Inn PH	II
2968	,9,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2969	,10,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2970	,15,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2971	Porth-y-mynde, wall and entrance gates of Caer Cottage	II
2972	,23,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2973	,24,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2975	,27,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II

2976	,29,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2977	No 30 including attached railings	II
2978	The Post Office	II
2979	No 32 including attached railings	II
2980	,33,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2981	The Priory Hotel	II
2982	Boundary Wall between The Priory Hotel and No 35	II
2983	Priory House	II
2984	The Endowed School	II*
2989	,98,Mill Street,Caerleon,Newport,GWENT,	II
2990	Ashlar Doric portico at The Roman Legionary Museum	II
2991	The Old Toll House	II
2992	White Lion House	II
2993	Isca Grange, including attached forecourt railings and gate	II
2994	The Bell Inn PH	II
2995	The Hanbury Arms PH	II
	Tower to the south west of, and attached to, The Hanbury	
2996	Arms	II*
3063	Little Bulmore	II
3069	The Bulmore	II
3079	Wall of Nos. 14 and 15A	II
3088	Penrhos Farmhouse	II
3094	Telephone Call-box outside the Post Office	II
3095	Telephone Call-box near The Goldcroft PH	II
3096	Telephone Call-box at the junction with Bulmore Road	II
3121	Church of St Michael and All Angels	II*
	Churchyard cross at the Church of Saint Michael and All	
3122	Angels	II
3123	The Greenhouse Public House	II
3125	Pontrhydyrun Baptist Church	II
3128	Ruins of barn at Llantarnam Abbey	II
3137	Ty-coch Farmhouse	II
3138	Cwm Aaron and attached barn	II
3139	Waun-y-pwll	II
3140	Llanyrafon	II*
3141	Glansirhowy Farm	II
3142	Church of All Saints	II*
3143	Zion Baptist Chapel	II
3144	Ponthir House Inn	II
20525	Woodlands House	II
20740	Elim United Reformed Church and attached Schoolroom	II
21923	,6,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,,NP6 1AE	II
22083	Lodge Farmhouse with attached granary and cartshed	II
22084	Derelict Cottage at Lodge Farm	II
22574	Great House and Heron House	II
25494	Llanfrechfa Grange	II
26082	Brook House and railings	II
26107	,19,Cross Street,Caerleon,Newport,,	II
26108	,96,Mill Street,Caerleon,Newport,,	II
26109	,28,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,,	II

26110	Lodge Farm Evangelical Church	II
26111	Garden Wall of The Priest's House	II
26112	Garden Wall of The Mynde	II
26113	Garden Wall of Castle Acre	II
26114	Garden Wall of Castle Acre	II
26115	Garden Wall of Pen-y-mynde	II
26116	Garden Wall of Pen-y-mynde	II
26117	Lych Gate of the Church of St Cadoc	II
	Monument of James Rennie in the Churchyard of the	
26118	Church of the Holy Trinity	II
26120	Caerleon Bridge	II
26121	Church of the Holy Spirit	II
26122	,35,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,,	II
26123	War Memorial Drinking Fountain in Town Hall Park	II
26124	Church of Ss David, Julian and Aaron	II
26125	The Priest's House with attached wall and gates	II
26126	The Malt House Hotel	II
26127	Quay Wall and Slip at the Hanbury Arms	II
26128	Pendragon House	II
26129	Barn at Pen-twyn Farm	II
26130	,25,High Street,Caerleon,Newport,,	II
26133	Entrance gates and railings of The Endowed School	II
26134	Letter Box outside the Post Office	II
26135	Entrance gates and railings of Priory House	II
27026	Llanyrafon Mill	II
	Enclosure railings, walls, gatepiers and Memorials at the	
81749	Conway Burial Yard	II
81750	War Memorial in front of Pontrhydyrun Baptist Church	II
	Aqueduct over Dowlais Brook on Monmouthshire and	
	Brecon Canal, partly in Cwmbran Central Community	
81859		II
81860	Bridge on drive at Llantarnam Abbey	II
	Canal bridge at Drapers Lock on Monmouthshire and	
81861	Brecon Canal	II
	Canal bridge at Rachels Lock on Monmouthshire and	
81862	Brecon Canal	II
	Canal bridge at Shop Lock on Monmouthshire and Brecon	
81863	Canal	II
	Canal bridge at Top Lock on Monmouthshire and Brecon	
81864	Canal	II
	Canal bridge at Tredegar Lock on Monmouthshire and	
81865	Brecon Canal	II
81867	Forecourt walls and gates at Llantarnam Abbey	II
81868	Garden walls and gates at Llantarnam Abbey	II
	Memorial to T. Leadbetter in churchyard of Church of St	
81870	Michael and All Angels	II
	Porth Mawr gateway, lodge, walls and railings at Llantarnam	
81871	Abbey	II
	The Cottage and attached walls of walled garden at	
81872	Llantarnam Abbey	II

81873	The Monks Cell at Llantarnam Abbey	II
81874	Two statues in garden to E of Llantarnam Abbey	II
81935	Churchyard cross at Church of All Saints	II
81936	The Vicarage	II
	Aqueduct over Dowlais Brook on Monmouthshire and	
82035	Brecon Canal (partly in the Llantarnam community)	II
84370	Garden walls, steps and terracing at Glen Usk	II
84371	Pergola surrounding tennis court at Glen Usk	II
84372	Stable Court at Glen Usk, including fountain to south-west	II
85246	Llantarnam Abbey	II*
87122	Colomendy Wood including attached Garage and Stabling	II
87124	Cross in Churchyard of Church of St. John the Baptist	II
87125	Double Limekiln	II
87127	Llansor Mill Cottage	II
87129	Oaklands	II
	Principal's Residence at the University of South Wales,	
87726	Caerleon Campus	II
	Caretaker's / Gardener's Lodge at the University of South	
87727	Wales, Caerleon Campus	II
	Gate Piers at the University of South Wales, Caerleon	
87728	Campus	II
87729	Former Caerleon Teacher Training College Building	II
87770	Court Road Industrial Estate Sign	II
87806	2 Jim Crow Square	II



Ref: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8

Marloes Holtkamp
Planning Officer
Planning and Environment Decisions Wales
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

By Email: PEDW.Infrastructure@gov.wales

2nd of May 2025.

Dear Marloes Holtkamp,

Re: Scoping Direction Consultation Response – DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8 – Proposed Court Farm Solar, Ponthir, Monmouthshire, NP18 1HU.

In reference to the recent e-mail from PEDW consulting the Department on the above Screening Consultation, the Department offers the following response for your consideration.

The Department considers there is likely to be significant environmental effects from the proposal, and that an Environmental Statement should be produced to assess the impacts. From the Departments' perspective, the key issues likely to be significantly affected by the development are:

- Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.
- Maintaining soil services and functions.

1. Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) – Information and Advice:

The Department can confirm that we do not hold any previous ALC field survey information for the proposed sites, however, there have been ALC surveys undertaken to the immediate west of the proposed site which note the presence of ALC Subgrade 3a and 3b agricultural land. The Predictive ALC Map¹ notes that the site contains Grade 2, Subgrade 3a (BMV) and Subgrade 3b agricultural land within the proposed red-line boundary. The area of BMV potentially impacted by the proposal is significant.

¹ <https://www.gov.wales/agricultural-land-classification-predictive-map>

As per published Departmental Guidance², if BMV is identified on the Predictive Map, a detailed ALC field survey is required to confirm the grades and their distribution. The Department notes in the Scoping Report that an ALC survey will be undertaken of the proposed site to support the application. The ALC survey should be undertaken and form part of the Environmental Statement assessment process.

The Department would be available to provide survey advice to the applicant on request. The Department would also be available to validate an ALC survey report for the applicant or PEDW if requested. If the ALC survey report, including full auger boring schedule and soil pit descriptions, could be sent to LQAS@gov.wales, the Department would aim to validate within 8 weeks.

Should any party refuse or neglect to commission an ALC survey, **or** the survey is not accepted by the Welsh Government, the Predictive ALC Map Grade should be accepted by the determining authority as the best available information.

2. Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land policy.

BMV agricultural land is highly likely to be a matter for consideration in this development, and policy will apply. The Department expects the applicant to provide clear evidence of how PPW paragraph 3.58 and 3.59 has been addressed in:

- i. how ‘*considerable weight*’ is given to protecting BMV land from development.
- ii. demonstrating an ‘*overriding need*’ if BMV land needs to be developed, and
- iii. clear application of the sequential test approach.

The Department would also highlight the policy clarification in the DCPO letter of 1st March 2022 regarding ‘*BMV agricultural land and solar PV arrays*’.

It is highly probable that site will contain a significant area of BMV agricultural land. The ALC survey should be validated to confirm the grades, areas and distribution of grades in order to inform and be considered as part of the EIA assessment.

BMV agricultural land must be scoped into the assessment.

3. Policy Context:

The Department considers the policies and guidance below are also applicable to this development: -

- Technical Advice Note (TAN)6³
- Paragraph 3.58 and 3.59 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW)⁴.
- Policy 9 of the National Development Framework (NDF) – Future Wales⁵

² <https://www.gov.wales/agricultural-land-classification-predictive-map-guidance>

³ <https://www.gov.wales/technical-advice-note-tan-6-planning-sustainable-rural-communities>

⁴ <https://www.gov.wales/planning-policy-wales>

⁵ <https://www.gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040-0>

- Policy 17 of NDF Future Wales - states '*all proposals should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment*'.
- Policy 18(11) of NDF Future Wales – sets out the requirement for '*...acceptable provisions relating to the decommissioning of the development at the end of its lifetime, including the removal of infrastructure and effective restoration*'.
- Dear CPO letter – '*BMV agricultural land and solar PV arrays*' – 1st March 2022⁶
- IEMA 'A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment' (2022). For clarification, the IEMA guidance notes **all** BMV agricultural land (ALC Grades 1,2 **and** 3a) in Wales is considered '**Very High**' sensitivity – see copy of Table 2 of IEMA guidance in Annex 1.

4. Baseline information:

The location and extent of soils on site and their physical characteristics would be beneficial to assess potential impacts and inform decisions on infrastructure siting and decommissioning, restoration and beneficial after use of the site. The volumes of soil units that will be excavated for any on site infrastructure should be clear and based on survey evidence (this may be derived from the ALC survey information in part).

5. Infrastructure and potential impacts on soil functions (installation and decommissioning).

The type, location and level of infrastructure proposed as part of the development will need to be fully detailed for the assessment. The Assessment should include detailed information on the total number, depth and spacing of piles installed; the extent of cable trenching and if any imported fill materials used (e.g. cement bound sand), track extent type and location, inverter pads number and locations and areas for construction compounds, etc.

The assessment will need to provide detailed information on the methodology for the installation and decommissioning of the infrastructure and, considering the soils on site, how any likely impacts have been assessed and avoided.

6. Soil Management Scheme (SMS).

Mineral, organo-mineral and peat soils are finite and provide crucial ecosystem services and functions to Wales such as food production, water regulation, carbon storage, and biological functioning. The proposal is likely to have significant impacts upon these important services and functions and therefore assessed.

A soil management scheme should be prepared by the applicant, informed by the baseline ALC report and soil resources and physical characteristics, and be considered as part of the ES process.

The SMS should be a clear scheme and programme setting out how all soils and their function will be conserved and reinstated and that can be confidently conditioned against.

⁶ <https://www.gov.wales/best-and-most-versatile-agricultural-land-and-solar-pv-arrays>

The SMS should be presented in sufficient detail for the determining authority and statutory consultees to form a judgement as to its feasibility, and should include: -

- Soil stripping programme – including volumes and types of soils affected.
- Soil handling techniques and procedure.
- Size, location, construction, management, and period of soil storage dumps.
- Proposed after use and restoration programme, including techniques and aftercare programme.

The Department considers that soils, soil functions and land should be scoped into an assessment.

The advice expressed does not bind any other part of Welsh Government commenting on the proposal. I trust the above comments are clear and unambiguous.

Yours sincerely

Arwel Williams
Soil, Peatland & Agricultural Land Use Planning
Welsh Government
Department for Climate Change & Rural Affairs
Landscapes, Nature & Forestry Division
LQAS@gov.wales

Annex 1.

Extract of Table 2 from IEMA Guide: A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment (2022)⁷ [Emphasis added].

Table 2: Guidance on Proposed Receptor Sensitivity and Typical Soil Resource/Functions Descriptions (Developed from Table 3.11 in DMRB LA109)

Receptor Sensitivity (in-situ soils)	Soil Resource and Soil Functions
Very High	Biomass production: ALC Grades 1 & 2 or LCA Classes 1 & 2 (for Wales all BMV (Grade 1, 2 and 3a) is considered Very High*) Ecological habitat, soil biodiversity and platform for landscape: Soils supporting protected features within a European site (e.g., SAC, SPA, Ramsar); Peat soils; Soils supporting a National Park, or Ancient Woodland Soil carbon: Peat soils Soils with potential for ecological/landscape restoration Soil hydrology: Very important catchment pathway** for water flows and flood risk management Archaeology, Cultural heritage, Community benefits and Geodiversity: SAMs and adjacent areas; World Heritage and European designated sites; Soils with known archaeological interest; Soils supporting community/recreational/educational access to land covered by National Park designation Source of materials: Important surface mineral reserves that would be sterilised (i.e., without future access)
High	Biomass production: ALC Grade 3a (for Wales all BMV is considered as Very high*), or LCA Grade 3.1 Ecological habitat, soil biodiversity and platform for landscape: Soils supporting protected features within a UK designated site (e.g., UNESCO Geoparks, SSSI or AONB, Special Landscape Area, and Geological Conservation Review sites); Native Forest and woodland soils; Unaltered soils supporting semi-natural vegetation (including UKBAP Priority habitats or Section 6 habitats in Wales) Soil carbon: Organo-mineral soils (e.g., peaty soils) Soil hydrology: Important catchment pathway** for water flows and flood risk management Archaeology, Cultural heritage, Community benefits and Geodiversity: Soils with probable but as yet unproven (prior to being revealed by construction) archaeological interest; Historic parks and gardens; RIGS; Soils supporting community/recreational/educational access to RIGS and AONBs Source of materials: Surface mineral reserves that would be sterilised (i.e. without future access)
Medium	Biomass production: ALC Grade 3b or LCA Grade 3.2 Ecological habitat, soil biodiversity and platform for landscape: Soils supporting protected or valued features within non-statutory designated sites (e.g. Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Local Geological Sites (LGSs), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), Special Landscape Areas; Non-Native Forest and woodland soils Soil carbon: Mineral soils Soil hydrology: Important minor catchment pathway** for water flows and flood risk management Archaeology, Cultural heritage, Community benefits and Geodiversity: Soils with possible but as yet unproven (prior to being revealed by construction) archaeological interest; Soils supporting community/recreational/educational access to land Source of materials: surface mineral reserves that would remain accessible for extraction

⁷ https://www.iema.net/media/3xejdu0u/2022-iema_land_and_soils_guidance.pdf

25/0278

From: Ross, Marina [REDACTED]
Sent: 08 May 2025 15:37
To: NCC - Planning <Planning@newport.gov.uk>
Cc: Timothy Bishop [REDACTED]; Marina Ross [REDACTED]
Subject: objection of Planning Application for Solar Panel Farm Reference: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8 - Court Farm Solar.
Importance: High

Dear Planning at Newport.gov.uk,

I am writing to express objections against proposed development of Planning Application for Solar Panel Farm Reference: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8 - Court Farm Solar, as seen on Welsh Government website [Reference: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8 - Court Farm Solar Planning Casework](#)

As residents [REDACTED] who will be directly impacted by this proposed development we are very concerned about the impact of this development and would like to submit official response to your department in the form of attached letter of objections.

If you would like to get in touch with us or discuss our views, use emails and contact phone numbers provided at your convenience.

Our Contact details:

Mr. Timothy Sean Bishop and Dr. Marina Ross



Mr. Timothy Sean Bishop and Dr. Marina Ross

08 May 2025

Dear Planning at Newport.gov.uk,

Subject: Objection of Planning Application for Solar Panel Farm Reference: DNS CAS-02366-F2C3K8 - Court Farm Solar.

I am writing to formally object to the planning application for the proposed solar panel farm at – on land at Court Farm, Ponthir, Monmouthshire. While I appreciate the importance of renewable energy and the benefits it brings, I have significant concerns regarding the impact of this development on our community and environment, and impact on the character and appearance of the area. My House is situated in the land parcel (see original image of proposed solar farm map) [REDACTED]. The Welsh Government Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map identifies this parcel as mixture of ALC Grade 2 and 3b.

Reason for Objection:

- Size of development totally inappropriate for a site so close to residential properties in the rural village of Ponthir. The visual impact of such a huge industrial solar farm would fundamentally change the tranquil character of the area. We consider solar farms should be appropriately located on already industrialised land, on roof tops or adjacent to motorways, not on productive agricultural land, or in an area which will cause significant visual impact to the residents and those further afield who visit the area.
- Significant negative visual impact for residents living adjacent to the site boundary. There are a number of residential properties located close to the site boundary at Candwr road. The development will have a significant adverse visual impact to these properties, especially from first floor windows. We consider the proposed development to be designed to ensure that they will not result in significant adverse impacts on the amenity of occupiers and neighbours.
- Negative visual impact for users of the footpath and which cross the proposed development, including walkers, cyclists, local residents and those travelling from further afield. The site is crossed by two Public Rights of Way, a footpath running between land parcel 3, 5, 6, 9. Adjacent to the northern and western boundaries are two footpaths, Footpath 366 115/1 to the north and Footpath 367 46/1 to the west. Currently there are extensive open views of green fields and agricultural farmland. The development would create significant adverse visual impact along the footpath and bridleway, with arrays of 4 m high dark coloured solar panels which would tower above walkers blocking those views. The solar panels and fencing would destroy the wide, open views and create an unpleasant tunnel along the footpath and bridleway, degrading the amenity value.

- Huge detrimental impact on Landscape Character, turning an expansive, tranquil landscape into a semi-industrial, utility-grade power complex. The solar farm would significantly adversely impact the character and appearance of the landscape. The expansive tranquil landscape of open green fields with far reaching views would turn into a semi-industrial, utility-grade power complex, with fields of 4m high dark solar panels, shipping containers containing electrical equipment and security fencing.
- Loss of arable land and agricultural productivity at a time of economic uncertainty. It is very important to prevent good quality land being lost to development to allow food to be grown in the UK and to reduce the reliance on imported food. Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is a system used in England and Wales to grade the quality of land for agricultural use. It is used to inform planning decisions affecting greenfield sites, to protect good quality land from development. To our knowledge, the proposed land parcels 3, 4, 5 are used for agricultural crops therefore should be protected for agricultural use only.
- Extensive transport impacts on an already overburdened local road network during construction. the delivery of solar panels and mounting infrastructure, as well as shipping containers containing electrical equipment via articulated lorries, HGV's, and vans. The villages are popular with walkers, cyclist, pedestrians, and horse riders and are already overburdened and totally unsuitable for large vehicles.
- Anticipated negative impacts on local wildlife habitats. Residents of Candwr road observed that the land parcel 3 is being used by migrating geese twice a year as feeding field (September-December, and February), the solar panel farm will negatively impact on the migratory birds such as geese and their Impressive long-distance journeys across continents, and on the Worlds ecosystem as whole.
- Concerning serious noise and vibration impact. The construction stage will involve articulated lorries, HGV's and vans transporting materials to site. The access route to the site hasn't been confirmed, but the roads through the village of Ponthir are extremely narrow and have houses directly on either side of the road which will be significantly impacted by the noise and vibration caused by the very large increase in HGV traffic during the construction phase.
- The development is not temporary. The proposed lease of the site would be for a period of 40 years which is a considerable period of time. The construction of a

solar farm using 123.3 hectares across 12 land parcels, the size of the proposed Court Farm Solar development at millions of pounds and it is very unlikely that the site will ever be returned to its current agricultural use, therefore there is no weight to any claims that the development is temporary and can be reversed.

I urge you to reconsider the location of this project and explore alternative sites that may be more suitable for such developments without compromising the ecological and community values of our area.

Thank you for considering my objection. I hope that the planning committee will take these concerns into account when making their decision. If you require any further information or wish to discuss this matter, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mr Timothy Sean Bishop and Dr. Marina Ross

Mr. Timothy Sean Bishop and Dr. Marina Ross

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

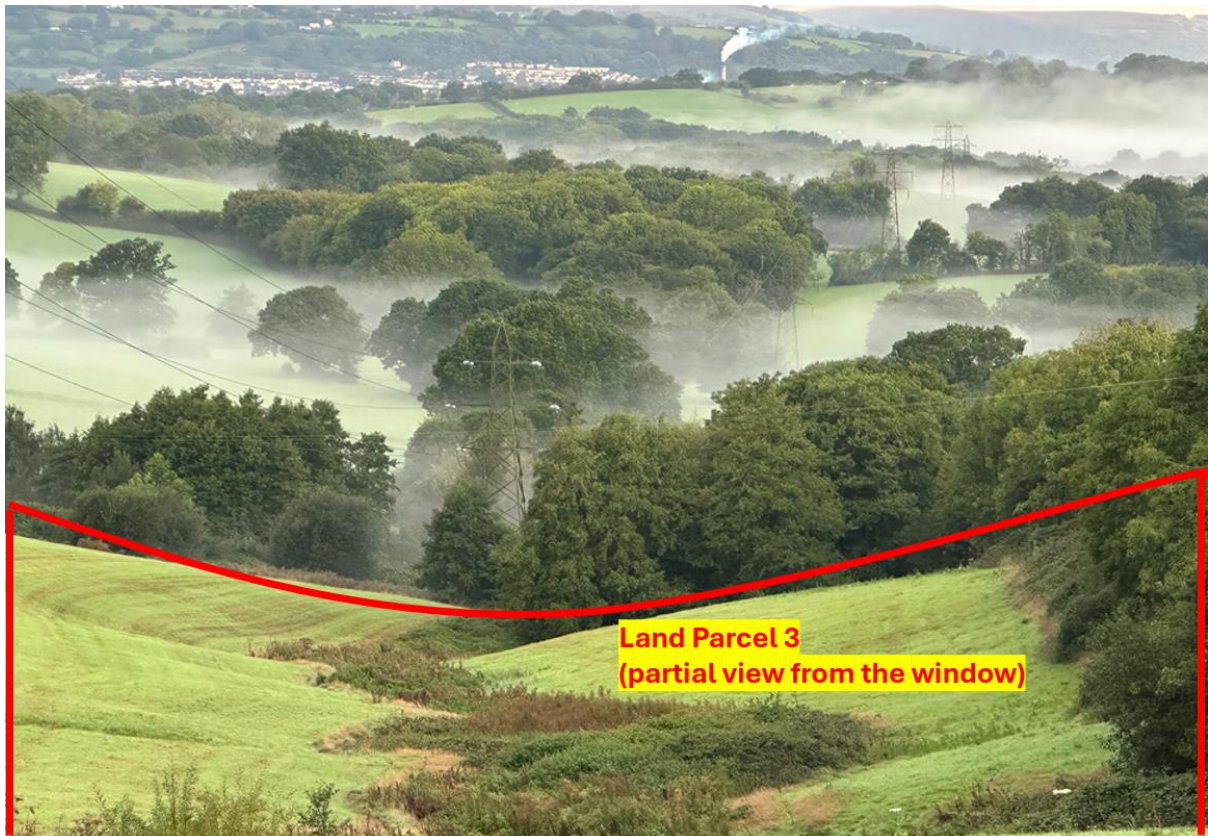
Email: [REDACTED]

Mr. T.S.Bishop Mob: [REDACTED]

Dr. M.Ross Mob: [REDACTED]



The actual images of current land parcel 3:



The alternative non desirable view that we will have if the planning of solar panel farm going to be approved, with impact on the character and appearance of the area and Impact on the environment:

To this industrial power complex



Candwr Road: The proposed development will create significant transport impacts on the local road network during development.



Nathan J Hennah



24th April 2025

Re: Planning Application – 25/0278 Solar Farm on land surrounding Celebration Cottage, Candwr Road, Newport

Introduction & Background

I write to object in the strongest terms to the above proposed solar farm development, which would surround my home [REDACTED] with solar infrastructure. I am the owner and resident of [REDACTED] a private dwelling that lies just over the Newport–Monmouthshire boundary.

Despite being outside Newport’s jurisdiction, my property is effectively an “island” within the application site. I was not formally notified or consulted about this proposal – an alarming oversight given the extreme proximity and encirclement of my residence. This letter sets out detailed planning policy grounds for objection, focusing on the ecological, visual, and environmental harm the development would cause, as well as procedural failures in consultation.

Ecological and Biodiversity Impacts

The application site is currently undeveloped greenfield land that supports rich local wildlife. Over years of living here, I have observed a variety of species – from bats and owls to butterflies and badgers – using the fields and hedgerows around my home. Replacing this habitat with an industrial-scale solar array would inevitably damage local biodiversity, contrary to both legislative duties and planning policy. Notably, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced a Section 6 biodiversity duty on public authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity as an essential component of ecosystem resilience. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) reinforces this, requiring that development not only avoids biodiversity loss but actively enhances ecosystem resilience in line with sustainable development principles.

Newport’s own Local Development Plan (LDP) policies echo these requirements. Policy GP5: General Development Principles – Natural Environment permits development only where proposals are designed to encourage biodiversity and safeguard environmental quality, including water and landscape quality Strategic Policy SP5: Countryside likewise demands that development in the countryside “respects the landscape character and biodiversity of the immediate and surrounding area”. By blanketing greenfield with panels and fencing, the proposal fails these tests. It would fragment wildlife corridors, displace protected species, and

remove for decades the grassland and hedgerow habitats that are integral to local ecology. Claims that the scheme could *enhance* biodiversity (e.g. through sheep grazing or wildflower planting between panels) are unconvincing; as noted in a similar Welsh case, converting 160 acres of habitat into a solar farm is far more likely to harm biodiversity than enhance it. The developer's promise to restore the land after 30-40 years provides little comfort – there is no proven method to fully return an industrialized solar site to its original ecological condition

Crucially, PPW and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 oblige planning authorities to pursue sustainable development that improves the well-being of both current and future generations. One of the Act's seven well-being goals is "A Resilient Wales," defined as a nation which *maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems*.

Sacrificing a thriving greenfield ecosystem to an overscale solar project directly undermines this goal. No evidence has been provided that the proposal will achieve a net benefit for biodiversity; on the contrary, it appears to present a net loss, conflicting with the national policy direction to secure ecosystem resilience and biodiversity net gain. PPW (Edition 12) emphasizes that the planning system should not trade away environmental well-being for short-term gains – developments must contribute to all aspects of well-being, including ecological health. This proposal, by obliterating existing habitats, fails that balance and thus conflicts with PPW's core sustainable development objective and the Council's Section 6 duty to biodiversity.

In summary, the ecological harm from encircling [REDACTED] with solar panels is unacceptably high. It breaches LDP Policy GP5 and Strategic Policy SP5 on protecting biodiversity, is contrary to the Environment (Wales) Act's biodiversity duty, and undermines the Well-being of Future Generations Act's goal of a Resilient Wales. These policy conflicts alone justify refusing the application on ecological grounds.

Visual Impact and Residential Amenity

The proposal's visual and amenity impacts on my property are severe and unprecedented. If approved, [REDACTED] would be hemmed in on all sides by rows of solar panels, security fencing, and associated infrastructure (access tracks, inverter units, CCTV poles, etc.). The nearest panels are proposed alarmingly close to our boundary. This layout would effectively imprison my home in the middle of an industrial installation, destroying the rural views and tranquillity that are fundamental to our amenity. The development would dominate outlook from every window and every inch of our garden, causing a profound sense of enclosure. In planning terms, this is an "overbearing" impact of the highest order, far beyond what any reasonable person would consider acceptable adjacent to a dwelling.

Newport's Policy GP2: General Development Principles – General Amenity states that development will be permitted only where it "will not have a significant adverse effect on local amenity" nor cause detriment to visual amenity. By surrounding an occupied residence with a solar farm, the scheme fails GP2 outright – it significantly and adversely affects my living conditions and visual amenity. No amount of landscaping could mitigate the sense of being encircled by metal and glass. The Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) in the application (if one is provided) likely underestimates the impact on this sole residence; standard VIA methodology tends to consider effects on settlements or groups of receptors, but here a single home is uniquely impacted, which requires special consideration. Future Wales: The National Plan

2040 (Policy 17) explicitly requires that large-scale renewable energy developments ensure “no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings”. This policy criterion is highly relevant – [REDACTED] is *the* “individual dwelling” most affected, and the visual impact in this case is patently unacceptable. Enclosing someone’s home with a solar array was surely never the intent of national renewable energy policy.

Visually, the rural landscape character of the Candwr Road area would also be transformed. What is currently open countryside with pastoral views would become a sea of man-made structures. This conflicts with LDP Policy SP5 (Countryside) which demands that development be of an appropriate scale and design that respects its surroundings.

A solar farm wrapping around a home is *inherently out of scale and incongruous* in the context of a residential curtilage. It also conflicts with Policy SP8 (Special Landscape Areas) if the site lies within or near any designated landscape – that policy requires development to demonstrate a clear appreciation of the area’s special features.

Even if not formally designated, the landscape here is valued locally for its green, open qualities. The proposal pays no respect to that value. Newport’s Policy SP9: Conservation of the Natural, Historic and Built Environment further specifies that conservation and enhancement of recognized environmental assets will be sought in all proposals.

In this instance, the “asset” of note is the existing rural landscape and the visual amenity of established homes; surrounding an existing dwelling with industrial development demonstrably neither conserves nor enhances it.

It is important to stress that while renewable energy is supported in principle by national policy, it is not *carte blanche* to override amenity and landscape safeguards. PPW and Technical Advice Note 12 (Design) promote good design and placemaking, which include protecting people’s well-being and sense of place.

There is nothing “sustainable” or “well-designed” about trapping a family home inside a power station. In fact, such an outcome likely violates the fundamental well-being goal of “A Wales of Cohesive Communities – Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected” since our home would become isolated, blighted, and unattractive to live in. The social fabric of the immediate area (limited as it is to a few rural dwellings) would be torn by this disproportionate development.

For these reasons, the visual impact and residential amenity harm are contrary to Future Wales Policy 17 and Newport LDP Policy GP2, as well as the broader principles of PPW (Edition 12) regarding placemaking and design quality. The planning balance should firmly tip against the proposal on these grounds alone, even before considering other issues.

Environmental and Planning Policy Context

National and local planning policies provide a strong framework against which this proposal fails when examined holistically. While Wales encourages renewable energy generation to tackle climate change, policy is clear that renewables must be delivered in a way that is sensitive to local environmental and community impacts.

- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets the sustainable development test for all planning decisions. It states that the planning system should deliver social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being and that these aspects must be balanced. PPW emphasizes using the “precautionary principle” where environmental harm is uncertain, and it promotes the reuse of previously developed (brownfield) land over greenfield sites. This proposal blatantly contravenes that principle by targeting greenfield land when numerous brownfield or rooftop opportunities for solar exist in Newport and regionally.
- Newport’s LDP Policy SP1 (Sustainability) similarly requires development to make a positive contribution by efficient use of land and prioritizing brownfield sites within settlement limits. The applicant has not adequately justified why open countryside farmland must be used, especially to such an excessive extent, as opposed to less sensitive locations. PPW also stresses early and effective community involvement in developments – here, the most directly impacted resident was overlooked in consultation, which falls short of PPW’s principles on involvement and collaboration (key ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations Act).
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: This Act places a duty on public bodies (including planning authorities) to carry out sustainable development and work towards seven well-being goals. I have already highlighted the Resilient Wales goal (maintaining and enhancing biodiversity) and the Cohesive Communities goal.
- There is also A Healthier Wales, which is relevant because the mental well-being impact on my family living under such oppressive surroundings would be considerable. The Act’s “integration” way of working requires that the Council consider how this decision impacts all the well-being goals together. Allowing a development that boosts renewable energy (contributing to a Prosperous or Globally Responsible Wales) but at the cost of local ecological destruction, loss of community cohesion, and harm to individual well-being would not be a truly sustainable outcome. It is exactly the kind of short-term thinking the Act was intended to prevent.
- Newport Local Development Plan (2011–2026): In addition to GP2, GP5, SP5, SP9 discussed above, several other LDP policies and supporting documents come into play:
 - Policy GP7: Environmental Protection and Public Health – while typically addressing issues like noise, contamination or flood risk, its thrust is to ensure developments do not create hazards or unacceptable nuisances. The glint/glare from solar panels and potential noise from inverters or increased traffic could degrade the quiet enjoyment of my property, raising GP7 concerns (these should be carefully assessed against residential standards).
 - Policy CE8: Locally Designated Nature Conservation Sites – if any part of the site or its vicinity is a designated Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or similar, this policy would seek to protect it.
 - Even if not formally designated, the spirit of CE8 and the Council’s Wildlife and Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (2015) is that priority habitats and species should be safeguarded. The presence of priority species (such as bats or barn owls) triggers the need for robust ecological surveys and mitigation under TAN 5 (Nature Conservation). I urge the Council to scrutinize the ecological impact assessment and consult Natural Resources

Wales regarding protected species licensing if appropriate. Any shortcomings could be grounds for refusal or at least require significant scheme modifications.

- Policy SP7: Green Wedge – I am unsure if the site falls within a designated Green Wedge (the Newport LDP designates some green wedges to prevent urban coalescence). If it does, that is an additional policy barrier since Policy SP7 presumes against development that prejudices the openness of the land
- A sprawling solar farm, by enclosing open land with regimented structures, would undermine openness. Even if not in a green wedge, the general concern about open countryside character remains valid under SP5 and SP8.
- Flood Risk / Drainage: Parts of Newport are in floodplains, though Candwr Road is on slightly higher ground. If any portion of the site is within a flood risk zone or could exacerbate runoff toward lower areas, TAN 15 (Development and Flood Risk) and LDP Policy SP3 (Flood Risk) would apply. The application should be reviewed by the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) for sustainable drainage. Any increase in impermeable surfaces or soil compaction could alter local drainage patterns. I recall Candwr Road has had past surface water issues (it runs off surrounding fields during heavy rain). Replacing permeable fields with rows of panels (which concentrate runoff to drip lines) and access tracks could worsen this. The Council must ensure no increased flood risk to my property or others because of this development. If the Drainage Strategy/SuDS scheme is insufficient, that is a further ground for objection.
- Heritage Impacts: While my property itself is not listed, the area is part of the historic rural setting of Ponthir/Caerleon. Caerleon's heritage (a Scheduled Ancient Monument Roman town) is not immediately adjacent, but any unknown archaeology on the site should be considered under Policy CE6 (Archaeology). At minimum, if ground works are extensive, planning conditions for archaeological watching briefs may be needed to comply with PPW Chapter 6 and LDP CE6. Furthermore, Policy CE4 (Historic Landscapes) requires protection of the landscape setting of historic features
- The Candwr Road area's traditional character could be seen as part of the wider landscape setting of nearby historic villages. Industrializing it with a solar farm does not service to that context.

In sum, the policy context at national, regional, and local levels provides multiple robust grounds to refuse this application. The benefit of renewable energy generation (while acknowledged) does not outweigh the policy conflicts and harm identified. Indeed, Welsh Government's Future Wales policy on renewables is conditional on avoiding exactly the kind of impacts this scheme would have (unacceptable visual impact on dwellings, ecological harm, etc.)

Approving this development as proposed would set a dangerous precedent that undermines public confidence in the planning process and in the consistency of policy application.

Procedural Concerns and Cross-Boundary Impacts

I also wish to register concern that proper planning procedure has not been followed regarding cross-boundary consultation. As noted, [REDACTED] lies in Monmouthshire County, just beyond Newport's border. However, the proposed solar farm surrounds Monmouthshire

land (my property). Under normal circumstances, one would expect Newport City Council to formally notify the neighbouring authority (Monmouthshire CC) and directly notify any affected neighbouring occupiers – even if across the border – about the application. I only learned of the proposal through informal means, not through any official notice. This raises questions of fairness and due process. The spirit of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order is that all those “likely to be affected” by a development receive notice, regardless of administrative lines. Failing to do so not only disadvantage me as an affected party but could also mean that Monmouthshire CC’s planning officers were not given opportunity to comment on a development that materially impacts their area (for instance, in terms of landscape or highway implications).

I urge Newport Council to review whether the site plans and red-line boundaries were accurately drawn and whether all necessary consultations have been carried out. Any mapping or boundary inaccuracies in the submission should be corrected and re-consulted upon. It would be wholly inappropriate for a decision to be made without full knowledge of the cross-border context. If Monmouthshire residents (my household) were inadvertently left out of the consultation, I respectfully submit that this error should be remedied with a fresh round of notifications and an extended consultation period. Given the magnitude of this proposal, transparency and thoroughness in the process are essential.

Additionally, the Council should consider commissioning an independent site visit or viewing from within [REDACTED] property before determination. This would allow decision-makers to truly appreciate the intimate proximity of the proposed panels to our home and the resultant impact – something not evident from site plans alone. Such a visit could inform the application of relevant policies on amenity and help avoid any miscarriage of justice in decision-making.

Comparable Decisions and Conclusions

Across Wales and the UK, planning inspectors and committees have grappled with the balance between renewable energy benefits and local impacts.

There is a growing body of decisions where solar farms near residential properties have been refused or conditioned heavily to protect residents and the environment.

For example, in a recent Planning Inspectorate appeal decision in Carmarthenshire, an Inspector emphasized that while climate change mitigation is important, it “does not negate the need to protect local residents from unacceptable harm” – dismissing a solar farm that would have caused an overbearing impact on a nearby dwelling (appeal details can be provided to the Council under separate cover).

Welsh Government’s own criteria for Developments of National Significance (DNS) in renewable energy explicitly seek to prevent proposals that create visual dominance over homes or harm ecological assets. Approving the current scheme would appear inconsistent with those principles and with decisions made elsewhere under similar circumstances. It could also invite a likely appeal or legal challenge, which I am keen to avoid but would have to consider in defence of my home and rights.

In conclusion, I respectfully urge Newport City Council to REFUSE this planning application. The solar farm is fundamentally mis-sited and disproportionate – it would completely encircle

an existing residence, inflicting unacceptable ecological damage, visual blight, and amenity loss. It conflicts with numerous national and local planning policies, including Planning Policy Wales's core sustainability tenets, the Well-being of Future Generations Act's goals, Future Wales (Policy 17) criteria, and Newport LDP Policies SP1, SP5, GP2, GP5, SP9, among others

The application also appears tainted by procedural deficiencies in consultation. While I fully support the principle of renewable energy to combat climate change, community buy-in and appropriate siting are paramount. This scheme, as designed, represents an inappropriate development in the countryside – one that sacrifices too much in pursuit of a single objective. The planning system exists to mediate such conflicts, and in this case the balance tips decisively against the proposal.

I trust the Council will consider these objections, which I have backed with relevant policy references for ease of review. I am willing to participate further in the process (speak at Planning Committee, facilitate a site visit to my property, etc.) to ensure the impacts are fully understood. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I hope that Newport City Council will stand by its environmental and amenity policies and refuse permission for this development. In doing so, you will not only protect my home and the local environment but also uphold the wider principle that green energy must not come at an unfair cost to local wellbeing and natural heritage.

Yours faithfully,


Nathan J. Hennah

Nathan J Hennah



24th April 2025

Re: Planning Application – 25/0278 Solar Farm

Further to my original letter of objection dated 24 April 2025 concerning planning application 25/0278, I now write to provide a second formal objection, following my review of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening opinion issued by Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) in relation to a nearby proposed solar farm at Pentre Bach Farm, Llantarnam.

Although that opinion was issued in respect of a separate planning proposal, the overlapping environmental context, ecological setting, and shared infrastructure and landscape sensitivities render it highly relevant to application 25/0278. The conclusions of that screening response serve only to reinforce and substantiate my earlier concerns and indeed highlight the need for even greater scrutiny of this proposal, particularly where cumulative harm and procedural fairness are concerned.

1. Environmental and Cumulative Landscape Harm

TCBC's screening response, dated 18 January 2021, raised serious concerns about the effect of solar development in this region on:

- Surface water drainage and flood risk, including downstream effects in Newport;
- Wildlife habitats, including hedgerows and priority species;
- Traffic congestion and infrastructure strain, notably the unsuitability of local lanes for HGVs and plant traffic;
- Cumulative visual and ecological degradation, especially due to the developer's inadequate cumulative impact assessment.

This mirrors and validates my earlier objections, which highlighted the unique ecological sensitivity of the land [REDACTED] and the profound negative impact on visual amenity, wildlife, and landscape character that would result from industrialising greenfield land in this location.

The fact that TCBC, a neighbouring authority, has raised such robust concerns in response to a comparable scheme reinforces my contention that the proposed development under application 25/0278 is neither proportionate nor sustainable under the applicable planning framework.

2. Failure to Address Cross-Boundary and Consultation Duties

In my initial objection, I noted that my home [REDACTED] lies within Monmouthshire, but is completely enclosed by the proposed development site, making this a clear case of cross-border environmental impact. Despite this, I received no direct notification and Monmouthshire County Council has not, to my knowledge, been formally consulted.

The Torfaen screening case makes clear that cross-boundary impacts in this region are not only real but substantial. Torfaen officers expressed explicit concern over Newport's downstream flood risk, and the inadequacy of infrastructure at the point of overlap. If Torfaen Council's screening opinion identifies impacts on Newport, then Newport's own application must acknowledge and address its impact on Monmouthshire and Torfaen.

I therefore repeat and reinforce my procedural objection: the failure to notify neighbouring residents or consult cross-border authorities in such a materially affected zone constitutes a serious failure of process, and is potentially contrary to:

- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012;
- The principles of transparency, inclusion, and sustainable development found in Planning Policy Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

3. Implications for Newport's Statutory Duties

The findings of the Torfaen screening opinion raise urgent questions as to whether Newport City Council can safely determine application 25/0278 without updated cumulative impact assessments, a full ecological review, and a strategic cross-border consultation process. TCBC has already concluded that:

"The submitted cumulative impact assessment was inadequate"
and that

"The proposed development risks unacceptable environmental impacts if not robustly mitigated."

Those conclusions are not limited to Pentre Bach—they extend logically to all large-scale solar proposals in this immediate region, especially one of such proximity and intensity as that surrounding [REDACTED]

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 imposes a legal duty on Newport City Council to maintain and enhance biodiversity. The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies to act collaboratively and sustainably across policy goals, including:

- Resilient ecosystems (Resilient Wales goal);
- Attractive and safe communities (Cohesive Communities goal);
- Transparency and inclusion in planning processes (Ways of Working: Collaboration, Long-term, Involvement).

In my respectful view, approval of this application in its current form would breach those statutory expectations.

Conclusion

The EIA screening response from Torfaen Council confirms that the risks I identified are not merely speculative—they are real, documented, and substantiated by professional planning officers.

Given the scale, proximity, and landscape dominance of this scheme—and the flawed consultation and cumulative assessment process to date—I urge Newport City Council to:

1. Refuse the current planning application (25/0278);
2. Or, at a minimum, pause the decision to:
 - consult formally with Monmouthshire and Torfaen Councils;
 - notify directly affected residents in adjacent jurisdictions;
 - and commission an independent review of the cumulative ecological and visual effects of solar development across this rural corridor.

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter. I remain willing to offer access to my property, speak at Committee, or provide additional materials to assist the Council's decision-making.



Nathan J. Hennah