

Appendix A.3 Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Direction



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Ein Cyf / Our Ref: DNS CAS-01392-D2T3F3

Dyddiad / Date: 21/02/2025

Dear Christina Dawkins

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 Cefn Meiriadog, St Asaph

Proposed Development: Proposed development of a Solar PV array and ancillary infrastructure

On the 19 December 2024 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 not 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 proposed solar farm will lead to effects on a number of aspects of the environment. However, due to the nature of the proposed development, most effects are unlikely to be significant. In terms of biodiversity, Great Crested Newt (GCN) have been confirmed within the site. NRW are satisfied with the proposed mitigation measures and habitat enhancement, and therefore impacts on GCN and other species would not be significant.

On the basis of the information available in the Screening Report and the consultation responses by Denbighshire County Council and NRW, I consider that significant effects

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

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not involve any delay.

are likely in relation to landscape character and visual amenity, particularly on the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty / National Landscape. In addition, due to the concentration of renewable energy infrastructure within the immediate area, significant cumulative landscape and visual effects are also considered likely. As such, the proposed development represents EIA development, and an ES is required to accompany any future DNS application.

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 Denbighshire County 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

T Leck

Tanya Leck

Swyddog Cynllunio | Planning Officer

Penderfyniadau Cynllunio ac Amgylchedd Cymru | Planning and Environment Decisions Wales

Llywodraeth Cymru | Welsh Government

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

We welcome correspondence in Welsh. Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not involve any delay.

STAGE 1 – INITIAL EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

1 Case Details		
A	Case reference	
	DNS CAS-01392-D2T3F3 - St Asaph Solar	
B	Brief description of development	
	Proposed development of a Solar PV array and ancillary 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>	
	Schedule 2(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 move 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>	
	Yes – the site exceeds 0.5 ha in area.	
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)?	Yes
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

Tanya Leck

Date

17/02/2025

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 ancillary infrastructure. The site is approximately 33.54 ha (previously 37.5 ha), split over two blocks 250 m apart. The land use will change from agricultural land to host the solar arrays. However, the Screening Report (SR) confirms that much of the land can continue to be used for low intensity grazing during the lifetime of the development. Agricultural land quality surveys have confirmed the site to be grade 3b, therefore does not qualify as Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. The development does not involve any topographic changes, nor does it propose removal of trees or hedgerows. The lifespan of the scheme is 40 years, after which the site would be restored. Therefore, whilst there would be physical change during the lifetime of the development, grazing could continue on the site and the site would be restored in the future. Therefore, I do not consider there to be significant effects in EIA terms.	Significant effects unlikely .
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?	Yes. Denbighshire and NRW highlight the significant amount of energy infrastructure development centred around St Asaph business park and the Bodelwyddan area due to availability	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> ?
- 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?	of a grid connection. The following schemes are relevant to consider cumulative impacts: - DNS CAS-03950-F9K3T4 - Bodelwyddan BESS and Solar Farm (to the north and northwest of the site) - Awel y Môr offshore wind farm and Mona Offshore Wind Farm - Kinmel Solar Farm located immediately north of the A547 Rhuddlan Road - Burbo Bank Substation, Bodelwyddan Substation, Gwynt y Mor Substation - Solar farms located on land adjacent to the proposal (both east and west of Squirrels Lodge) I am satisfied that construction impacts can be mitigated through the submission of a CEMP and CTMP. Given my conclusion below regarding biodiversity, I am also satisfied that cumulative biodiversity impacts would not be significant. In terms of landscape and visual impacts, Denbighshire and NRW state that cumulative effects are likely during operation, particularly on sensitive receptors. Within the SR, the above schemes are listed but scoped out. Due to the number of renewable energy schemes within the immediate area, there is the potential for simultaneous and/or sequential visibility, particularly from elevated areas such as within the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) / National Landscape (NL). There is the potential for significant cumulative landscape and visual impacts.	
Question 1(c) Use of Natural Resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity		

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 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 proposal will require a degree of land take and use of natural resources during construction and operation. However, the land is only of moderate agricultural quality (3b) and there is the potential for infrastructure to be recycled. Therefore, whilst the development will use resources, none of them are in short supply. I am therefore satisfied no significant effects are likely.	Significant effects unlikely .
Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes, some solid waste would be produced during construction and for any parts that cannot be recycled at the decommissioning stage. However, operational waste is proposed to be managed in accordance with a CEMP to be submitted with the application. Given the scale and nature of the 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?	Yes, dust generation is possible during construction. However, I am satisfied that standard good practice and mitigation measures to be incorporated into a CEMP would prevent any significant impacts.	Significant effects unlikely .
Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes, the construction phase is likely to result in noise and vibration. These impacts would be localised and time limited, these impacts would also be managed through measures outlined in a CEMP. During operation, there is potential for glint and glare from the panels alongside a minimal amount of noise. A glint and glare assessment submitted by the applicant concludes no impact for most nearby dwellings and road users, with low impact on three dwellings. Whilst I note that the scope of the assessment only extends to 1 km, thereby omitting the AONB/NL, significant effects are unlikely due to the distance from the site. Due to the nature of the development, significant operational noise is unlikely. I am therefore	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> ?
		satisfied that significant effects are unlikely during construction and operation.	
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)?		The SR states that surface water run-off will be managed on-site during the construction and operational phases. NRW and LPA's Drainage Officer confirm that the proposed mitigation would prevent any significant effect on the receiving water environment.	Significant effects unlikely .
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, 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 water contamination during construction and decommissioning. However, mitigation measures including a CEMP, drainage scheme and a Traffic Management Plan would prevent any significant impacts.	Significant effects unlikely .
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?		Yes, the construction phase would result in some short term employment opportunities. The impacts are not considered significant in EIA terms.	Significant effects unlikely .
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. The SR states that the PRoW network will not be directly impacted as a result of the scheme. I am satisfied that routes and facilities would not be significantly impacted. Users of footpaths within and adjacent to the site would experience visual impacts from the scheme, which would be cumulative in combination with other schemes. Landscape and visual impacts are considered below.	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 transport routes which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?		Yes. Some impacts would 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.	Significant effects unlikely .
Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?		Yes. The site will change from greenfield agricultural land to host the solar farm. However, the SR states that much of the land can continue to be used for low intensity grazing during the lifetime of the development. Agricultural land quality surveys have confirmed the site to be grade 3b, therefore does not qualify as Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. The land is proposed to be largely restored at the at the end of the solar farm’s lifespan. I therefore do not consider that significant effects are likely.	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?		No.	N/A
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. There is a watercourse along the eastern boundary of the site, with a small reservoir to the south of the eastern parcel. The SR confirms that NRW’s Development Advice Map indicates the site is within Flood Zone A and at low risk of flooding. Notwithstanding the applicant intends to submit an FCA with the forthcoming application. The scheme has been amended to distance the solar arrays from areas of ancient woodland. No tree or woodland removal is planned at the site. Given the scale and nature of the development, I do not consider that significant effects are likely.	Significant effects unlikely .
Question 2(c) Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment			

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 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?	The site is also within 1 km of the Coed Ac Ogofau Elwy a Meirchion SSSI and Coedwigoedd Dyffryn Elwy SAC. The SR states that the site is not connected hydrologically or via habitat corridors to the designated sites. NRW are satisfied that based on the implementation of routine mitigation measures, significant environmental effects on statutory nature designations are unlikely. Great crested newt (GCN) have been confirmed as present within the site, with seven ponds within 250-500 m buffer distance found to be positive for GCN eDNA. The SR confirms that all ponds will be retained through the development. Mitigation measures and habitat enhancement are proposed as part of the scheme. Mitigation measures and habitat enhancements are also proposed for badger, bats and dormice. NRW are satisfied that, based on appropriate mitigation, the development is not likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of GCN. For the foregoing reasons, I therefore do not consider that significant effects are likely.	Significant effects unlikely.
Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No	N/A
Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/NL is located approximately 5 km to the east. The AONB/NL is a highly sensitive receptor and is also subject to consultation as the site of a new National Park. The ZTV shows visibility beyond the 5 km study area, particularly from areas of higher ground within the AONB/NL. NRW note this area has far reaching views looking down-upon, and across the Vale of Clwyd from the Clwydian Range.	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> ?
	NRW note their previous screening advice that the presence of woodland, trees and hedgerows in areas of low-lying topography would help integrate the solar farm into the rural landscape. However, the alteration of field arrangements away from these tree enclosed fields to more open land parcels increases the risk of intrusive views of the site from the AONB/NL. Due to the more exposed visibility of the site from elevated viewpoints, there is the potential for significant landscape and visual effects on the AONB/NL. The SR states that due to the distance from the site, the local topography, and existing screening, any effect on the AONB/NL would not be significant. However, no evidence has been provided to substantiate this assessment. The ZTV indicates a high level of visibility from the areas of the AONB/NL shown on the plan. The SR refers to mitigation screening, but no detail is provided. I am therefore unable to conclude that mitigation measures would prevent any significant impact. Having considered all matters before me, there is potential for significant landscape and visual impacts on the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/NL. Given the sensitive nature of this receptor, EIA is warranted.	
Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Views from outside the 5 km include the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/NL as noted above.	Significant effects unlikely .
Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	The ZTV indicates visibility within 5 km which appears to be mainly on rural areas.	Significant effects unlikely .
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 listed buildings and scheduled monuments within 3 km of the site. The submitted historic environment desk-based assessment states that the proposed development	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> ?
	will not have a significant impact on the historic environment. Cadw concur with this assessment. I therefore do not consider that significant effects are likely.	
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?	No	N/A
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?	No. The SR confirms the site to be at low risk of flooding and there is no Air Quality Management Area within or adjacent to the site.	Significant effects unlikely .
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 proposed solar farm will lead to effects on a number of aspects of the environment. However due to the nature of the proposed development, most effects are unlikely to be significant. In terms of biodiversity, Great Crested Newt have been confirmed within the site. NRW are satisfied with the proposed mitigation measures and habitat enhancement, and therefore impacts on GCN and other species would not be significant.

On the basis of the information available in the Screening Report the consultation responses by Denbighshire Council and NRW I consider that significant effects are likely in relation to landscape character and visual amenity, particularly on the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB/NL. In addition, due to the concentration of renewable energy infrastructure within the immediate area, significant cumulative landscape and visual effects are also considered likely. As such, the proposed development represents EIA development, and an ES is required to accompany any future DNS application.

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		Tanya Leck

Date of Assessment	20/02/2025
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Eich cyf / Your ref: CAS-01392-D2TSF3

Ein cyf / Our ref : 31/2024/1574/EIA-SCR

Dyddiad / Date : 23/01/2025



PEDW
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

Dear Sir / Madam

CYNNIG /
PROPOSAL:
LLEOLIAD /
LOCATION:

EIA Screening for proposed development of a Solar PV array and ancillary infrastructure
St. Asaph Solar Farm Land at, Cefn Meiriadog, St. Asaph

Introduction:

An EIA Screening Request has previously been submitted (reference: CAS-01392-D2TSF3), which was determined to be non EIA as outlined in the attached Screening Direction. Since that determination the Applicant has revised the red line boundary. The changes to the development are summarised as:

- A reduction in site area from 37.5ha to 33.54
- Alternative fields selected for solar arrays

The council consider the proposal falls within the description of paragraph 3(a) Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1).

Your letter dated 20th December 2024 requests the council provide advice regarding any environmental effects the development may have and whether you consider that any of those effects would be **likely to be significant**. The council consider that the matters raised in our letter dated 16th June 2022 responding to the first consultation for screening of this project are still of relevance to this altered application.

In response to your letter dated 20th December 2024, Denbighshire County Council would like to make the following observations on the above EIA Screening Opinion Request.

Landscape:

By virtue of the scale of the proposed development and the topography of the area, there is potential for significant impacts upon the local landscape. The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape is located circa 5km east of the site. The National Landscape hosts many views towards the site from higher ground and therefore the proposal has potential to impact the setting of the designated area.

Gwasanaethau Cynllunio a Gwarchod y Cyhoedd, Caledfryn, Ffordd Y Ffair, Dinbych, Sir Ddinbych LL16 3RJ

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The new fields selected for solar arrays are not enclosed by natural landscape features (including the ancient woodlands) in the same manner as previously selected fields were. Whilst it is accepted that mitigation measures (including vegetative screening) may help reduce impacts, there may be increased short-medium term impacts as vegetation grows in.

Cumulative effects:

Denbighshire hosts a number of renewable energy developments of varying scales, including offshore and onshore windfarms, solar farms, and energy infrastructure developments (overhead lines and substations). There is a significant amount of energy infrastructure development centred around the Bodelwyddan area due to availability of a grid connection. The applicant has identified a number of developments in proximity to the site.

In addition to those identified by the applicant the council would draw PEDW's attention to the following:

- DNS Ref: CAS-03950-F9K3T4 - Bodelwyddan BESS and Solar Farm
- The solar farm located immediately north of the A547 Rhuddlan Road (Kinmel Solar).
- Burbo Bank Substation, Bodelwyddan Substation, Gwynt y Mor Substation
- Solar farms located on land adjacent to the proposal (both east and west of Squirrels Lodge).

The likely cumulative effects of the proposal would relate to impacts on landscape character and visual amenity, and on the setting of heritage assets.

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LLFA Consultation Response

Pre-Planning Application Reference: 31/2024/1574/EIA-SCR – EIA Screening Request for the proposed development of a solar PV array and ancillary infrastructure (PEDW Ref - CAS-01392-D2T3F3).

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) have reviewed the following documentation as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report consultation request.

- 971429171735337887__ - __EIA-Screening-Request-to-PEDW-Cover-Letter-Final.pdf
- 531675531735337885__ - __DNS-EIA-Screening-Consultation-Letter-DNS-CAS-01392-D2T3F3-St-Asaph-Solar.pdf
- 91380641735337889__ - __EIA-Screening-Request-00-Covering-Email.pdf
- 444829821735337892__ - __EIA-Screening-Request-01-Screening-Report.pdf
- 33101795181735337929__ - __EIA-Screening-Request-02-Appendix-A-D.pdf
- 51169386271735337987__ - __EIA-Screening-Request-03-Appendix-E.pdf
- 7747080011735338011__ - __EIA-Screening-Request-04-Appendix-F.pdf
- 444829821735337892__ - __EIA-Screening-Request-01-Screening-Report.pdf
- 353806671735338135__ - __EIA-Screening-Report.pdf
- 85293302061735338183__ - __EIA-Screening-Report-APPENDICES-1-6.pdf
- 75212942571735338261__ - __EIA-Screening-Report-APPENDIX-7.pdf
- 7364598951735338286__ - __EIA-Screening-Report-APPENDIX-8.pdf
- 6580451735338364__ - __EIA-Screening-Report-Additional-Information-GCNR-Design-Info-and-Covering-Letter.pdf
- 5532584301735338400__ - __EIA-Screening-Direction-w__-Appendix.pdf
- 22171130951735338463__ - __Additional-information-from-Agent.pdf
- 5156359571735338387__ - __EIA-Screening-Report-Additional-Information-Great-Crested-Newt-Report-GCNR.pdf

The following Consultation Response is limited to flood risk, surface water drainage and water quality.

Flood Risk

The NRW 'Flood Map for Planning – Surface Water and Small Watercourses' shows that limited areas of the site are within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Provided that the flood risk is mitigated appropriately, and all essential equipment remains operational in times of flood, the development is not considered to have a significant effect on flood risk and the wider water environment.

Surface Water Drainage

Paragraph 8.4.18 of the Welsh Government 'Practice Guidance – Planning Implications of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy' (Date: February 2011) states *"the potential effects of solar arrays on hydrology and flood risk should be considered. In general, these are unlikely to be significant because the presence of solar arrays will not greatly increase the time for rainwater to reach the ground where it can infiltrate in the usual way"*.

Whilst runoff from the solar arrays will continue to infiltrate as per the existing situation, the runoff will be concentrated at the base of the solar arrays which could lead to soil erosion. Whilst a formal drainage system is not required for runoff from the solar arrays, the Applicant should consider features such as swales or filter drains placed at regular intervals between rows of panels (every 10 -15 rows) as a means of erosion control.

Providing that the proposed DNO substation area is appropriately drained, with the surface water drainage system designed in accordance with the guidance set out in the Welsh Government 'Statutory Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems', the development is not considered to have a significant effect on the receiving water environment. The drainage system for the DNO substation should be designed to accommodate the 1 in 100 year plus 30% climate change event and appropriate treatment provided.

Water Quality

Any measures to mitigate any identified adverse impacts to the surrounding watercourses during the construction and operational phases should be detailed within a Water Framework Directive (WFD) Report and Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Providing that appropriate water quality treatment measures are undertaken; the development is not considered to have a significant effect on the receiving water environment.

If the Applicant wishes to discuss the LLFA's comments further, please contact the LLFA via landdrainage.consultations@denbighshire.gov.uk.

Via email to: PEDW.Infrastructure@gov.wales

Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-273621-D1F1
Eich cyf/Your ref: CAS-01392-D2T3F3

Dyddiad/Date: 10 February 2025

Annwyl Syr/Madam/Dear Sir/Madam,

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 THE DEVELOPMENTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE (PROCEDURE) (WALES) ORDER 2016 (as amended)

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (WALES) REGULATIONS 2017 (as amended)

BWRIAD/PROPOSAL: Proposed development of a Solar PV array and ancillary infrastructure.

LLEOLIAD/LOCATION: Land at Cefn Meiriadog, St Asaph

Thank you for your letter dated 20th of December 2024 requesting Natural Resources Wales' views on whether the above proposed development is likely to have a significant environmental effect

We understand that the works will comprise of the construction, operation and decommissioning of a solar farm, along with 1127 string inverters, 31,556 x W585 modules and nine transformers with underground cable link to the St Asaph substation approximately 1km to the north.

We consider that the proposed development is likely to have adverse effects on the environment. However, in light of the information available to us we cannot confirm the significance of these effects.

Reasons

Our view on the likelihood of significant effect on each of the environmental interests which are within NRW's remit is set out below.

We note the submission of the following reports:

- Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report, for St Asaph Solar Farm Land at Cefn Meiriadog, St Asaph (Project Ref 33010 Rev 01) by Stantec dated January 2025
- Oliver, G, M. (2022). Letter dated 23/11/2022, Re: St Asaph Great Crested Newt Enhancement Strategy.

We have taken the mitigation measures identified in these documents into account when considering the significance of any impact.

Designated Landscape

Our advice relates to the landscape character and visual amenity of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape/Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (CRDVNL) and the statutory purpose of the designation to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.

We have reviewed the St Asaph Solar Farm Environmental Impact Assessment Screening Report Rev01 (Stantec UK Ltd) 29 January 2025 together with the following:

- *Chapter 2 EIA 'Landscape and Visual' baseline, Stantec Jan '25*
- *Chapter 3 Screening Assessment, EIA Stantec, Jan '25 including Cumulative Effects*
- *Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) Plan, Stantec, Dwg LN-LP04 Rev C, Dec 2024*
- *Visual Appraisal Plan, Stantec Dwg LN-LP05, Oct 24*
- *Glint and Glare Report, Pagepower Urban & Renewables, Nov 24*
- *PEDW screening opinion of previous site Jan 2023*
- *NRW screening advice of previous site CAS-204048-Y5J8 Dec 2022*
- *LANDMAP*

Baseline

The proposal is for a Solar PV Array and associated infrastructure extending to approximately 33.5ha across 4 field parcels located some 5.3km west of CDVNL.

The changes to the site from the previous screening represent an intensification of the array in the existing field parcel to the west; removal of fields in the northwest and east (which were adjacent established woodlands); addition of fields in the northeast and northwest; and overall reduction in footprint of the site from 37.5ha to 33.54ha.

Our previous screening advice identified the presence of woodland, trees and hedgerows in areas of low-lying topography that would help integrate the solar farm into the rural landscape. However, the alteration of field arrangements away from these tree enclosed fields to more open land parcels increases the risk of intrusive views of the site from the National Landscape.

ZTV

The ZTV (Drawing No LN-LP04 Rev C) shows potential visibility beyond the 5km study area particularly from areas of higher ground which have far reaching views looking down-upon, and across the Vale of Clwyd from the Clwydian Range. This intervening landscape setting has a high visual evaluation for its pastoral agricultural landscape with attractive views throughout.

The screening assessment with regards to CDVNL (page 26 and 27) confirms that long distance views are available from elevated areas within the National Landscape but considers that due to distance, the site is not readily identifiable, and visual effects are unlikely to be significant from this location. In the absence of the local landscape features previously relied upon for mitigation (woodland and trees surrounding fields now omitted), and without a detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) confirming views, we are unable to gauge the extent to which effects of the development will now be exposed and therefore if there are significant effects to the National Landscape.

Glint and Glare

The Glint and Glare assessment focuses wholly on receptors within 1km of the site and thus omits assessment of potential effects from elevated roads and receptors within the National Landscape.

LVIA

Due to the high landscape value and sensitivity of the landscape setting of the site together with the outstanding special qualities and unspoilt views from inside the National Landscape across the Clwydian Slopes South of Rhualt and Clwyd Valley, where receptors are more sensitive we advise that there may be potential for significant effects from the National Landscape by virtue of more exposed visibility of the site from elevated viewpoints and location of the development within fields without surrounding woodland mitigation.

Our advice is consistent with that provided on existing and proposed PV sites locally e.g. approximately 1km west beyond Cefn Meiriadog, at Bodelwyddan and Rhuddlan Rd with these being 6km+ from the CDVNL. In these more distant schemes both EIA and LVIA have been provided to confirm the scale and significance of effects of development and potential for cumulative impacts on the National Landscape.

An LVIA, including landscape mitigation plan should be submitted in support of the planning application. We advise adherence to NRW Guidance Note 46 *Using LANDMAP in Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments* together with site-based experience of likely impacts to confirm the search and study areas and selection of an asymmetric study area as necessary to include the National Landscape and elevated viewpoints as highlighted by the ZTV.

Viewpoint photography from within CDVNL should include viewpoints that look down and across the lowland setting of the site from the western fringes of the Clwydian Range.

There are a number of Public Rights of Way that descend into the Vale of Clwyd and have a direct line of sight towards the proposed solar farm. We would expect views from PROW within the National Landscape to be included to identify effects and mitigation proposals.

Cumulative Effects

On cumulative effects we note that our previous screening position followed consideration of Elwy Solar Farm at St Asaph which has now been dismissed by Welsh Ministers.

Cumulative effects at Table 1 (page 15) identifies the operational PV site on land immediately north of A547 Rhuddlan Road (Kinmel Solar Conwy Ref 0/40999) is out of scope. This lies approximately 6km to the north west of Cefn Meiriadog. The proposed 153ha PV expansion proposed at Bodelwyddan approx. 5km away is similarly scoped out. However, Bodelwyddan also includes a remote 6.5ha Battery Storage Site (BESS) site within close proximity to Cefn Meiriadog. These Solar PV sites and the BESS site have all been subject to Environmental Impact Assessment and LVIA which identify some effects in relation to CDVNL even though they are more distant than the proposals at Cefn Meiriadog. We advise it would be helpful to include both PV sites and the BESS site within the cumulative zone of influence for Cefn Meiriadog in line with the good practice set out in

Advice on Cumulative Sites Assessment (Planning Inspectorate Sept 2024). In the absence of any assessment the potential for significant cumulative effects cannot be ruled out.

Protected Species

The EIA Screening Report has identified that Great Crested Newts (GCN) are material to the application site and confirmed to be present on site.

Based on appropriate mitigation we consider that the development is not likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the favourable conservation status of GCN.

In terms of terrestrial habitat provision, we advise the provision of additional terrestrial habitat within a dedicated GCN conservation area. If the proposal involves off site habitat provision, we advise that a planning obligation such as a Section 106 would be required.

In terms of long-term management, we note the outline in the letter (Oliver, G, M. (2022). Letter dated 23/11/2022, Re: St Asaph Great Crested Newt Enhancement Strategy) and welcome that measures will be detailed in a long-term management plan, such as a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, to be secured via an appropriately worded planning condition. With reference to an Ecological Compliance Audit, monitoring and biosecurity risk assessment, we note the principles set out in the letter.

We advise that any planning submission includes further details regarding a long term GCN conservation plan. We refer you to Annex 1 which includes a description of the type of information that would be required as part of a long term GCN conservation plan.

We also note that part of the application site is also included within the redline boundary for the Mona Offshore Wind project and is proposed to contain ponds as part of the GCN mitigation for that scheme. This should be fully considered as part of any planning submission.

Protected Sites

The EIA Screening Report identified the following European protected site within the surrounding area:

- Coedwigoedd Dyffryn Elwy / Elwy Valley Woods SAC – approximately 850m to the south of the Site;

The proposed site is also located within 850m of the Coedydd ac Ogofau Elwy a Meirchion Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Based on the information available to us and taking into account the implementation of routine mitigation measures (see section on pollution prevention), we consider significant environmental effects on statutory nature designations are unlikely.

Pollution Prevention

Based on the information available to us and with the implementation of standard pollution prevention measures, we consider potential significant environmental effects on the water environment to be unlikely. We refer you to Annex 1 which includes detailed advice on good practice/guidance in relation to pollution prevention which the developer should follow.

Other Matters

We have considered the likelihood of significant effects from the scheme on environmental interests listed on our consultation topics list: Development planning advisory service, [consultation topics](#). Our advice is focused on the likelihood of significant impacts to environmental receptors identified on this list.

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.

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully,

Sara Thomas

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

E-bost/E-mail: northplanning@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.

ANNEX 1

A) Protected Species

We advise that any planning application includes the following:

1. Submission of details and associated plans concerning GCN avoidance and mitigation measures including: fence design, specifications and proposed locations; consideration of access issues across fence lines (including PROW if applicable); fence monitoring and maintenance requirements; and supervised removal of barrier fences. Submission to include proposed timescales and reporting requirements.
2. Submission of further details concerning on-site and/or off-site compensatory proposals including plans, extent, access, current and proposed tenure. Details shall identify areas of terrestrial and aquatic habitat to be retained, enhanced and created. Submission to include timescales and reporting requirements.
3. Submission of a long term site management plan (for the duration of construction, operation and de-commissioning phases of the scheme that includes defined aims and objectives; habitat management prescriptions; contingency measures if fish or invasive non-native species (INNS) are detected; proposals that are capable of being implemented in the event of failure to undertake or to appropriately implement identified or contingency actions; site liaison and wardening; licensing requirements for undertaking habitat management and surveillance; current and any proposed changes to tenure of the compensation area; (freehold) tenure of the compensation area to be approved by the LPA in consultation with NRW; persons or bodies responsible for undertaking management and surveillance together with required skills and competencies; reporting requirements; and proposed dates for updating or revising the management plan.
4. Submission of measures designed to prevent the accidental capture/killing of newts (amphibians) during construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the scheme in respect of post development, this is essentially the installation and maintenance of an amphibian friendly surface water management system that does not include gully pots (or other similar features).
5. Details of timing, phasing and duration of construction activities and conservation measures.
6. Timetable for implementation demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed development.

B) Pollution Prevention

During the construction phase the applicant should take every precaution to prevent contamination of surface water drains and local watercourses. Oils and chemicals should be stored in bunded areas and spill kits should be readily available in case of accidental spillages.

Use and design of oil separators in surface water drainage systems: PPG 3 should be adhered to ensure surface water drainage is passed through a Class 1 Fuel Interceptor. For further guidance please refer to PPG 3, GPP 5 and PPG 6 at the following link: <http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollution-prevention-guidelines-ppgs-and-replacement-series/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>

Planning and Environment Decisions Wales

Eich cyfeirnod
Your reference

DNS CAS-01392-D2T3F3

Sent by email:

Ein cyfeirnod
Our referencePEDW.Infrastructure@gov.walesDyddiad
Date

22 January 2025

Llinell uniongyrchol
Direct line

0300 025 6007

Ebost
Email:Cadwplanning@gov.wales

Dear Sir / Madam,

Screening - St Asaph Solar DNS CAS-01392-D2T3F3

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 construction, operation and decommissioning of a solar farm on land at Cefn Meiriadog, St Asaph

A screening report prepared by Santec has been submitted with the application and includes appendix 8 a historic environment desk-based assessment produced by SLR. This considers the impact of the proposed development on the designated historic assets, listed on Annex A, that are inside 3km of the application area. This work concludes that the proposed solar farm will not have a significant impact on these designated historic assets.

The historic environment desk-based assessment also considers the likelihood that unrecorded archaeological features are located inside the proposed development area and includes the results of a geophysical survey of the area. The geophysical survey has shown that apart from post-medieval agricultural features there are no indications that archaeological features are located in the proposed development area.

It is clear from the submitted historic environment desk-based assessment that the proposed development will not have a significant impact on the historic environment and therefore an EIA is not required to be submitted with any application for this proposed development.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Smith
Historic Environment Branch

Annex A

Designated Historic Assets

Our records show that the following historic assets are potentially affected by the proposal.

Within the developer 3km ZTV:

Scheduled Monuments

DE037 Bedd-y-Cawr Hillfort
DE038 Ffynnon Fair (Well), Cefn
DE200 Pysgodlan Moated Site
FL026 St Asaph Bridge
FL027 Pont Dafydd (old)
FL186 First World War Practice Trenches at Bodelwyddan Park

Registered Parks and Gardens:

PGW(C)28(DEN) Plas Heaton
PGW(C)41(DEN) Llannerch Hall
PGW(Gd)54(CON) Kinmel Park

Registered Historic Landscape

HLW (C) 1 Vale of Clwyd
HLW (C) 4 Lower Elwy Valley

Listed Buildings:

154	Plas-yn-Cefn	II
155	Bont Newydd (partly in Cefnmeiriadog community)	II
174	Former Laundry Block at Plas-yn-Cefn	II
175	Wigfair Isaf	II
176	Dolbelidr	II*
278	Bridge over Former Railway Line at Llannerch Park	II
1065	Plas Heaton	II*
1066	C-shaped Agricultural Complex at Plas Heaton	II
1377	Church of St Margaret (The Marble Church)	II*
1378	Barn to NW of Faenol-broper Farmhouse	II
1381	Gwernigron Farmhouse	II
1382	Gwernigron Dovecote	II*
1383	Bodelwyddan Castle	II*
1431	The Court House	II
1436	St. Asaph Auction Rooms	II
1437	House at St. Asaph Auction Rooms	II
1441	Rose Hill House	II
1442	Southcroft including North Cottage	II
1443	Staverton	II
	Former Coach House, Stables & Outbuildings to	
1444	Staverton & Southcroft	II
1446	Mary Short Memorial Drinking Fountain	II
1447	St. Kentigern & St. Asaph Parish Church	II*
	Railings & Boundary Walls to St. Kentigern & St. Asaph	
1448	Parish Church	II
	Sundial in the Churchyard to St. Kentigern & St. Asaph	
1449	Parish Church	II
1451	Greengrocer's Shop	II
1459	Sundial at Kentigern Hall	II
1460	Cathedral Church of St. Asaph	I
1461	Translator's Memorial	II
1469	The Old Palace	II*
1470	Lodge & Gatepiers at driveway to the Old Palace	II
1471	Tithe Barn House	II

1472	Palace Gardens	II
1473	Glan Elwy	II
1474	The old China Shop, including China House	II
1475	Roe Gau	II
1482	Plas Coch Rest Home (main block only)	II
1483	St. Asaph V.P. School	II
1484	Rosslyn	II
	H.M.Stanley Hospital (front range plus attached cross-	
1485	plan ranges & Chapel only)	II
1487	Esgobty Farmhouse	II*
1489	Dovecote at Esgonty Farm	II
1490	Garden Wall at Esgobty Farm	II
1491	Bryn Asaph including Gate House Range	II
1505	Rhyllon Farmhouse	II
1506	Stable Range at Rhyllon Farmhouse	II
19204	Milestone	II
19211	Middle Lodge	II
19215	Milestone	II
	Primary Barn and adjoining Cart Bays to NE of Plas	
19859	Buckley	II
19860	Tal-y-Bryn	II
19924	Church of St Mary	II
19925	Wigfair Hall	II*
19926	Terraces and Forecourt Walls at Wigfair Hall	II
19927	Bont Newydd (partly in Llanefydd community)	II
19928	Telephone Call-box	II
19929	Pentre Meredydd	II
19931	Barn at Pen-ucha-roe-bach	II
19934	Former Stable Block at Plas-yn-Cefn	II
19935	Stable and Coachhouse Range at Plas-yn-Cefn	II
19936	Former Carthouse Block at Plas-yn-Cefn	II
	Agricultural Range and adjoining Garden Walls at Plas-	
19937	yn-Cefn	II
19938	L-shaped Barn Range at Plas-yn-Cefn	II
19939	Former Smithy Range at Plas-yn-Cefn	II
19941	Groesffordd Marli Chapel	II
20897	Glascoed Lodge on Bodelwyddan Park Boundary	II
23514	Sundial at Plas Heaton	II
	Carthouse Range at Plas Heaton (with incorporated flat	
23515	to first floor)	II
23516	Stable and Carthouse Range at Plas Heaton	II
23517	Ice House at Plas Heaton	II
	Kitchen Garden Walls including associated Lean-to	
23518	Sheds and adjoining Melon House at Plas Heaton	II
80737	Bodelwyddan Village Hall (former School)	II
80738	Bryn Celyn Lodge on Bodelwyddan Park Boundary	II
80739	Churchyard Wall of St Margaret's	II
80745	Bodelwyddan Vicarage	II
80747	Garden Shelter in Bodelwyddan Castle Garden	II
80752	Obelisk in Bodelwyddan Castle Garden	II
80754	Play House in Bodelwyddan Castle Garden	II
80756	Sundial in Bodelwyddan Castle Walled Garden	II
80757	Terrace wall of main front of Bodelwyddan Castle.	II
80758	Tyddyn-isaf	II
	Wall of Bodelwyddan Castle Garden with Bothy at W	
80759	and Gateway at E	II
87542	Fountain near Marble Church	II

From: [REDACTED]
To: [PEDW – Seilwaith / Infrastructure](#)
Subject: Cadw - Screening - 2025-01-29 - DNS CAS-01392-D2T3F3 - St Asaph Solar - Response to amended screening report
Date: 29 January 2025 12:39:52
Attachments: [Cadw - Screening - 2025-01-22 - DNS CAS-01392-D2T3F3 - St Asaph Solar - Response.obr](#)
[image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)

Hi Tanya

Thank you for your email.

I can confirm the amended information does not alter our previous advice given in our response letter dated 22 January.

Kind regards

Nichola



Nichola Smith

Rheolwr Gwaith Achos/ Casework Manager, Cadw

Llywodraeth Cymru / Welsh Government

FFôn / Tel: [REDACTED]

E-bost/ Email: [REDACTED]

Cadw—er lles pawb.
For us all, to keep.

[Ymunwch â CadwJoin Cadw](#)

From: PEDW – Seilwaith / Infrastructure <PEDW.Infrastructure@gov.wales>

Sent: 29 January 2025 11:28

To: Smith, Nichola [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Cc: Cadw Planning <CadwPlanning@gov.wales>

Subject: FW: Cadw - Screening - 2025-01-22 - DNS CAS-01392-D2T3F3 - St Asaph Solar - Response (A56522935)

Good morning Nicola,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to bring to your attention a few errors identified by NRW in the Screening Report. Firstly, Section 3.5 mistakenly refers to sites in Caerphilly instead of Denbighshire, and there is no mention of ongoing schemes in and around this site. Additionally, in the Screening Assessment table under section 3.6 - 1(b), Accumulation with other development, there is a reference to the Elwy Solar Farm development which was refused.

As a result, we sought further information from the applicant regarding the cumulative