

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 20/10/2025
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	

Number: 1

Application Number: C23/0338/38/LL

Date Registered: 22/12/23

Application Type: Full

Community:

Ward: Llanbedrog and Mynytho

Proposal: A full application to install solar panels (PV) to create a 4.99MW solar farm with associated developments, including the creation of a new vehicular access and access tracks, building a fence, landscaping, installing two transformer stations to gather and distribute electricity produced and installing underground cables

Location: Land near Lôn Pin, Llanbedrog, Pwllheli LL53 7PH

Summary of the Recommendation: TO REFUSE

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1 Description:

- 1.1 This is a full application to install photovoltaic solar panels on existing agricultural land for a period of 25 years to create a 4.99MW solar farm. The proposed development would also include supplementary work in the form of creating a new vehicular access and access tracks, building a fence, landscaping, installing two transformer stations to gather and distribute electricity produced, installing underground cables and landscaping work.
- 1.2 The application site measures approximately 13.15 hectares (32.4 acres), and it includes agricultural grazing land assessed as 98% of grade 2 land (very good-quality agricultural land) and 2% of grade 3b land (moderate land to produce crops or high to produce hay) in accordance with the relevant requirements. It is located within a varied land form and landscape, which includes a mixture of smooth and rolling slopes. The presence of established hedges is seen bordering the area's fields with scattered mature trees growing on and near the site. The closest part of the site varies in terms of distance from the development boundary of the village of Llanbedrog in the nearest places between approximately 689m to the north-west, 623m to the north-east and 709m to the north. The site is located in open countryside within landscape that could be mainly described as rolling in terms of its form. Generally, within the local area, a mixture is seen in terms of the use of buildings and lands, including farms, residential houses, holiday cottages, leisure sites (caravans and camping) and a shooting range. A public footpath borders the application site to the north/north-eastern direction, whilst there is another public footpath a field's width away from the site to the west/north-western direction. A Class 3 public road known as Lôn Pin is located to the south-east/west/north-western direction.
- 1.3 The site is located within the Western Llŷn Special Landscape Area and the Llŷn and Enlli Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. The nearest boundary to the Llŷn AONB is approximately 1km away from the nearest part of the site of the proposed development. Listed monuments are scattered within the local area, all within 2.5km of the site. In addition, there are many Listed Buildings within 2.5km of the site, including Wern Fawr to the north. The following wildlife sites are located nearby or relatively close to the site:
- Coed Caerhos - bordering to the north/east
 - Castell Grug-Henllys Uchaf - partly bordering to the south
 - Wern Fawr - partly bordering to the north
 - Coed Penarwel - approximately 122m to the south-east
 - Henllys Ganol - approximately 212m to the west
- 1.4 The proposal involves installing solar panels to create a solar farm that would create 4.99MW of electricity for the National Grid. The application includes the following elements:
- Rows of PV panels on a north-eastern, south-facing axis. The panels would be approximately 3m at their highest point with a gap of between 3m and 6m between the rows depending on the formation of the land. The angle of the panels themselves will be on a 30-35° gradient.
 - 2 sub-stations which would measure 3m x 6m and 3m high.
 - 1 building for distribution to the network which would measure 6m x 4m and 3m high
 - A security fence measuring 2m high around the whole site
 - CCTV on 2.5m poles in different locations around the site

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- Vehicular access and access tracks

1.5 The following documents have been submitted as part of the application:

- Planning Statement
- Ecological Assessment
- Agricultural Land Quality Assessment
- Archaeology and Heritage Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Welsh Language Impact Assessment and Statement
- Community Involvement Statement
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
- Impact Assessment on Trees
- Biodiversity Management Plan
- Glare Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Glint and Glare Report
- Environmental Construction Management Plan
- Construction Transport Management Plan
- Decommissioning and Land Reclamation Plan
- Landscaping Plan
- Green Infrastructure Statement

1.6 Scottish Power's existing electricity sub-station is located approximately 300m to the west from the nearest part of the application site. An underground connection will be made with this station to distribute the electricity produced on the site to the local grid network.

1.7 In response to responses received to the application's original consultation, additional and/or amended information was received and the relevant parties were re-consulted fully. Specifically, amended and additional details were received, as well as the vehicular access and the access tracks; detailed plans of the frames to hold the solar panels themselves; Green Infrastructure Statement; Linguistic Statement; and responses to observations received by the Archaeological Service, Natural Resources Wales, Woodland Trust, Community Council and the Land Drainage Unit regarding SUDS matters.

1.8 In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Control Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended), the development that is the subject of this application is defined as a "major development" due to the size of the area of the development. In line with the appropriate procedure, a Pre-application Consultation Report was received as part of the application. The report shows that the developer advertised the proposal to the public and statutory consultee before submitting a formal planning application. The report contains copies of the responses received at the time.

1.9 The proposal is screened under C25/0704/38/SC.

2. Relevant Policies:

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that planning decisions should be in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy and the Local Development Plan.

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2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet the 7 well-being goals within the Act. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2.3 **Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan 2011-26, adopted 31 July 2017**

PS 1: The Welsh Language and Culture

PS 2: Infrastructure and developer contributions

ISA 1: Infrastructure provision

PS 4: Sustainable transport, development and accessibility

TRA 4: Managing transport impacts

PS 5: Sustainable development

PS 6: Alleviating and adapting to the effects of climate change

PCYFF 1: Development boundaries

PCYFF 2: Development criteria

PCYFF 3: Design and place shaping

PCYFF 4: Design and landscaping

PS 7: Renewable technology

ADN 2: PV Solar Energy

PS 19: Conserving and where appropriate enhancing the natural environment

AMG 1: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plans

AMG 5: Special landscape areas

AMG 3: Protecting and improving features and qualities that are unique to the character of the local landscape

AMG 5: Local Biodiversity Conservation

AMG 6: Protection sites of local or regional significance

PS 20: Protecting and where appropriate enhancing heritage assets

AT 1: Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites and Registered Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens.

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AT 4: Protection of non-designated archaeological sites and their setting

Also, the following is relevant to this case:

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities

2.4 National Policies:

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12 - February 2024)

Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5: Planning and Nature Conservation

TAN 6: Planning for sustainable rural communities

TAN 11: Noise

TAN 12: Design

TAN 18: Transportation

TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language

TAN 24: The historical environment

3. Relevant Planning History:

3.1 It appears that there is no recent planning history in relation to the site.

3.2 A pre-application enquiry was submitted under reference Y21/0938 where the principle of such developments was discussed and what would be expected in terms of assessments and information to be presented as part of any formal Planning application.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council:

Llanbedrog Community Council has received a significant number of letters expressing concerns from local residents who objected to this application. Llanbedrog Community Council members discussed the application at a meeting last week and they have voted against the planning application at that meeting. Llanbedrog Community Council has several reasons for objecting to the application. Those reasons have been noted below:

1. Firstly, concern was expressed from several members regarding the

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quality of the application.

2. Concern was also expressed regarding the location and the fact that the solar farm would be constructed on good agricultural land. It was noted that this land has been used for years for farming and keeping good dairy cattle. As a result, the Community Council was very concerned about the impact of the plan on local farmers.

3. Further concern was expressed about the impact of the plan on the views of the area.

4. Furthermore, an important footpath from Llanbedrog to Nefyn goes through one field. The footpath is not seen on the map. But it has been included in the body of the application.

5. Concern was also expressed about the lack of consideration for helicopters that would fly above the location of the solar farm. It was noted that the Air Ambulance's landing spot was very close to the location in question.

6. The Community Council also noted that it was important to take a stance against such a plan from setting a dangerous precedent for the future.

7. This type of plan would not bring significant economic benefit to the area.

8. The exact location of the proposed application that the planning department has on the website is incorrect and the boundary should be extended to Lôn Pin, therefore makes the application site twice its size.

9. The planning department's map does not show the location of a brick building that would need to be constructed (as part of the plan) to connect the power from the site to the national grid.

These failures make this application invalid and therefore it should be thrown out.

Transportation Unit:

I refer to the above application and I confirm that the transportation unit does not have any objection. A request is made to include a series of conditions / standard notes should the application be approved.

Natural Resources Wales:

We continue to have concerns with the application as submitted. However, we are satisfied that these concerns can be overcome if there is a condition regarding the prevention of pollution associated with any planning permission given and the document noted below has been included in the plans and the approved documents on the

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decision notice:

- Detailed Soft Landscape Proposal, Drwg Number edp2777_d025a, by EDP (Detailed Landscape Plan).

Designated Landscape

Our landscape planning advice relates to the potential impacts of the development on the character of the landscape and the visual amenity of the Llŷn National Landscape / Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and its location, and whether the proposals would protect and improve the natural beauty in accordance with the statutory purpose of the designation. The site is located approximately 1km from the AONB boundary at its nearest point and is within the AONB location, where the duty to give attention to the purposes of the AONB designation applies. We have reviewed the following additional information presented in response to our previous advice dated 31 January 2024, namely a Detailed Soft Landscape Proposal. The Detailed Landscaping Plan is based on the Outline Landscape Strategy prepared by EDP, previously submitted and referred to in our previous advice. The Detailed Landscaping Plan addresses the request for a detailed landscaping plan, as requested in our previous advice. If your Authority intends to approve the application, we ask for the Detailed Landscaping Plan to be added to the list of approved plans/drawings.

Protected Species

We note that the explanatory letter dated 7 March 2025 notes: "The proposed development will not disrupt any trees with the potential of bats.". Therefore, we have no comments to make on the application as submitted in relation to bats. We recommend that you discuss the need to ensure further avoidance measures with your internal ecological adviser.

Pollution Prevention

We have reviewed the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). There is a watercourse to the south-eastern boundary of the site and a watercourse approximately 110 metres from the western/south-western boundary of the proposed site. Given how close the two watercourses are, we would advise that a water management plan should be put in place to correctly address run off and the pollution risks. We are satisfied that the CEMP fully addresses waste management and removal, but limited information has been provided in relation to how the project will reduce the risk

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of pollution. We advise that more information is presented by imposing a pollution prevention condition on any Planning permission.

Welsh Water:

Having reviewed the proposal, it does not appear that any connections are required with the local sewerage network for foul or surface water as part of the development. For this reason, Welsh Water has no observation to make regarding the application.

Public Protection Unit:

A noise assessment will be submitted showing compliance with the following noise level.

Noise outputs from the implementation of the solar farm will not be higher than: -

i) a level that corresponds to curve NR 30 between 0700 and 2200 and curve NR 20 at all, when it is assessed with open windows within any noise-sensitive annexes or buildings;

ii) 50 dB(A) Leq(1hour) from measuring it within the external amenity space or any noise-sensitive annexes or buildings.

Usually, they are expected to conduct a noise assessment, but it is not believed that there is reason to object, and mitigation measures could be built into the plan. Conditions can be imposed on any decision on the application.

Fire Service:

Access for fire vehicles: No observations.

Water supply: Any water supply should be in accordance with the Approved Document B Section 16.

Land Drainage Unit:

Since 7 January 2019, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are needed to control surface water for every new development of more than 1 house or where the construction area with drainage obligations is 100m² or more. Drainage systems must be designed and constructed in accordance with the minimum standards for sustainable drainage as published by Welsh Ministers.

These systems must be approved by Cyngor Gwynedd in its role as SuDS Approval Body (SAB) prior to commencement of the construction work.

Due to the size and nature of the development, it is likely that an application will need to be provided to the SDS Approval Body for

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approval before construction work commences. No drainage plan has been submitted and until an application is made to the SAB there is no assurance that the site plan would enable compliance with the full suite of national SuDS standards. Early consultation with the SAB is recommended.

Biodiversity Unit:

The applicant has provided an ecological report. The survey was undertaken to a good standard, however the grasslands and hedges were surveyed on the 10th March 2023, which is before the spring and summer when many plants grow and flower, it is likely that many plant species were missed. A new access would be created and tracks across the four fields. I notice that the survey covers 4 fields and that the lease of the solar energy company covers 4 fields, two of which will have the solar arrays and I recommend that the other two fields provided biodiversity enhancement by managing them to suit breeding skylark and as traditional hay meadows. I therefore recommend that a biodiversity enhancement plan is provided show which fields will be managed as traditional meadow and a timetable of management operations. Reptile survey was not carried out and as the site is short grassland it is currently unlikely to support reptiles. The soft landscaping plan dated 21 March 2024 shows that the area of the solar arrays will be seeded with an agricultural mix, and for other parts a wildflower mix or the original grassland retained. I recommend that the original grasslands for the whole sites are retained. Where cabling is to be installed then turves of the trenches must be replaced with the soil. This development will result the following ecological and biodiversity impacts: 1. Loss of grassland habitat (solar arrays, trackways, hard standing areas, electrical connections). Although this grassland does not qualify as a section 7 habitat, it is likely it has a moderate biodiversity value and maybe a suitable habitat for grassland fungi. 2. Loss of part of hedge and mature trees. 3. Loss of part of clawdd. Cloddiau are a habitat of local biodiversity priority and part of the character of the local landscape. The ecological report has not provided an estimate for the area of grassland lost or the length of hedge/clawdd. These impacts have not been mitigated and I recommend suitable management with grazing levels and periods to enhance biodiversity and allow wildflowers to grow.

Trees Unit:

A visit was made to the site on 22/09/2025 and it is agreed with the Woodland Trust's comments dated 07/02/2024 that damage to the veteran trees lining the existing access track (as identified on the Ancient Tree Inventory (ATI)) **must be avoided**. This aligns with the stepwise approach detailed in PPW12.

Having reviewed the updated plans, it appears that a new access

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track will be created rather than undertaking any alteration, widening, resurfacing, or other engineering operations to the existing track, which could have had a detrimental impact on veteran trees. The new track will cross improved agricultural land and will therefore avoid such impact.

Should planning permission be granted, a condition should be imposed to ensure that no construction or operational traffic associated with the development utilises the track to the north of the site. This is to prevent harm to the veteran trees identified on the ATI, in accordance with the stepwise approach set out in PPW12 to ensure the protection of irreplaceable habitats.

Scottish Power:

I have reviewed the proposals and provide comments for SP Energy Networks who operate and manage the electricity network up to 132kV on behalf of the licenced network operator, SP Manweb, for the area including the application site.

In general, SP Energy Networks has no objection to the proposed development subject to required measures to protect SP Manweb network assets and ensure safe working around the affected network. The applicant should be advised to contact the SP Energy Networks regarding any connection enquiries and the consent should be subject to a planning condition. In the event of the application being approved, the applicant must be made aware of the need to work safely around these assets.

Language Unit:

The risk/impact on the language identified by the applicant: Barely any impact.

Language Unit's brief opinion: The Policy Unit has confirmed the need for a Language Statement. It was encouraging to see that the developer intends to use a Welsh name for the site and bilingual signs (contact details and warning signs). We would like to refer the applicant to the website of the Welsh Language Commissioner and the Welsh Offer, in order to assist them to create a Language Plan and identify the development in terms of promoting the Welsh language.

CADW:

This additional information comprises; formal drawings to a recognised metric scale (including access track details, formal drawings of the panel frames, a Landscaping Plan. Green Infrastructure Statement and addition information with respect to specific points of consultation. This additional information does not affect our advice given previously; that the proposed development

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will have no significant adverse impact or have an unacceptably damaging effect upon the settings of the above scheduled monuments.

Archaeological Service:

A report on the archaeological trial trenching completed at the site has been produced. We have reviewed the report and monitored the preceding fieldwork as regional curators, and confirm that the work has been undertaken in accordance with the CIfA professional standards for such work.

In accordance with national and local planning policy, it is recommended that, should planning consent be granted, the Local Planning Authority should require the completion of a staged programme of archaeological work.

Rights of Way Unit:

I refer to the above application. Public Rights of Way (Footpaths) number 8 and 10 in the community of Llanbedrog are affected by this proposal. The applicant will need to ensure that the public footpaths remain open and available for users before and after this development, as well as ensuring public safety measurements. Additionally, there will be a need to ensure that there is no damage to the surface of the path.

In terms of temporarily closing the public footpath, namely Llanbedrog footpath number 8, the applicant is asked to contact Cyngor Gwynedd's Public Footpath Team.

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Public Consultation:

Notices were posted in many scattered locations near the site, a notice was posted in the press and nearby residents were informed. The advertisement period has expired, and several letters/correspondences were received as well as a petition, objecting on the following grounds:

- Unacceptable scale/the impact of glare
- Harmful impact on the landscape designations/harmful impact on visual amenities/harm to sensitive views from high lands within the AONB
- The materials and finishes of features such as an out-of-character sub-station
- Insufficient information/misleading information/lack of thorough assessments/the quality of the information is poor
- The prominence of the type of development on the form and natural appearance of the local landscape/harming the area
- Harmful impact on tourism/local businesses
- Loss of good-quality agricultural land
- Similar applications have been refused
- Detrimental impact on heritage/archaeological assets
- Concern about ecological harm/local biodiversity/impact on protected species
- Harm to ancient and/or protected trees
- Setting a precedent
- Closing a public footpath/harmful impact on pedestrians
- Detrimental impact on residential amenities/health of local residents
- Harmful impact on the local road networks and on movements/public roads are too narrow for the development/harmful to the condition of the roads
- Contrary to the requirements of relevant policies/government guidance
- Detrimental impact on a nearby listed building
- No local benefit
- Unacceptable light/noise
- Unsuitable location
- Environmental Impact
- Concern about decommissioning work/financial responsibility
- Lack of capacity in the network to accept the electricity produced
- Independent assessments required
- Detrimental impact on carbon footprint/environmental harm
- Unsuitable location for such a proposal

As well as the above objections, objections were received that were not material planning objections, which included:

- The site lies within the AONB
- Loss of value would be a resulting impact

A letter / correspondence was received, supporting / giving comments on the application based on:

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- A strong need for a renewable energy source like this
- It is a form of diversification for agriculture that is more attractive than the caravan developments that we have locally

5. Assessment of the material planning considerations:

The principle of the development

- 5.1 It is a requirement to make decisions on planning applications in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless other relevant considerations note otherwise. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan (LDP) is the adopted 'Development Plan'. In terms of general policies, Policy PCYFF 1 states that proposals outside development boundaries will be refused unless they are in accordance with specific policies in the plan or national planning policies or that the proposal shows that its location in the countryside is essential.
- 5.2 In this case, it is said in the Planning Statement that the reason for locating the resource in the proposed place was its proximity to the current grid infrastructure, south-facing topography and its relatively isolated location away from visual recipients. It is noted that the size of the plan is at a scale that complements the landscape where it will be located. Given that the proposal in this case would be to install underground cables over a fairly short distance between the site and the nearby sub-station, it is believed that this is much less harmful to the landscape and the environment in general than running cables for some miles from further sites.
- 5.3 Policy ISA 1 is supportive of proposals regarding water, electricity, gas services etc., to improve the provision, subject to detailed planning considerations. The policy notes that proposals to provide infrastructure or public services, including water supply, sewerage drainage, gas and electricity and other relevant services will be approved, provided they do not pose significant harm to the local environment, public amenities or public safety. It is therefore accepted, from having an appropriate site that is acceptable from an environmental perspective, that there is justification in principle for developing this facility in a rural location like this.
- 5.4 Policy ADN 2 relates specifically to solar PV energy proposals. It is said that proposals for solar PV farms up to 5MW are approved if they can comply with a series of specific criteria mainly relating to the impact on the visual quality of the landscape, as well as the impact on other social and environmental factors:
1. All impacts on the character of the landscape, heritage assets and natural resources have been mitigated sufficiently, ensuring that special features of all landscape, biodiversity and heritage designations of local, national and international importance, including, where appropriate, in their layouts, are protected or improved;
 2. The proposal will not lead to significant harm to safety or sensitive recipients amenities including the impact of glint and glare and it will not have an unacceptable impact on road, railways or aviation safety;
 3. The proposal will not lead to a significant harm on the residential visual amenities of nearby residents;

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4. The proposal will not have an unacceptable cumulative impact in relation to current solar PV farms and those that have approval, and any other prominent features in the landscape;
5. At the end of the facility's operational life, the panels and associated infrastructure will be pulled down in accordance with the land's restoration plan and after-care submitted and agreed by the Local Planning Authority;
6. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is presented to show that any potential negative impacts emerging from the construction and decommissioning period are avoided.

- 5.5 Criterion number 1 of the policy notes that the type, scale and design of the proposed development should be appropriate from the perspective of the site, the location and the impact on the landscape. The Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study 2014 assesses the sensitivity and capacity of the landscape to cope with specific types of developments. According to the work that has been undertaken, this application site is located within the G07 West Llŷn Landscape Character Area, with the strategy for the area in relation to solar developments on the land stating *"Characteristically, there is no capacity for a solar PV energy development on a field scale (with the exception of very rare or micro scale developments that should link well with existing dwellings/buildings)"*. This result is based on the fact that the scenic quality and the strong feeling of place proven in this landscape has led to parts of it being designated nationally within the AONB Llŷn and the rest of the areas within the areas designated as West Llŷn SLA. It is noted that a micro development is defined as less than 500KW and/or 1ha. It is important to note that this assessment also highlighted that sensitivity varies locally within the Landscape Character Area, and the evidence available should be considered, as well as visiting every site individually before determining whether the nature of the specific site means that they could cope with the development on a larger or smaller scale than what is recommended in the Study. It must also be noted that the Study is Strategic from the landscape of the area, providing a snapshot of these areas. It is not prescriptive on individual site levels. It notes that area sensitivity varies and, therefore, a general evaluation across areas is conducted.
- 5.6 The applicant has submitted a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for the proposal. The landscape within the site and around it, particularly the mature vegetation that is associated with the hedgerows and the field boundaries, as well as the nearby woods, assists in integrating the development partly with the surrounding landscape. The LVIA concludes, due to the development's low nature, existing vegetation and the landscape's rolling form, that the impact of the proposal would be small on the character of the landscape on the local area. There would be no significant harmful impact on the AONB or any views into or out of the protected area. The LVIA also refers to mitigation measures in the form of additional landscaping, including filling gaps in the hedges and existing walls.
- 5.7 It is acknowledged that the land that would include the solar panel site is already comparatively hidden from the outside of the site, and it would be possible to ensure reinforcement to the screening to hide it even more efficiently through planning conditions. It is also acknowledged that it would be likely to be partly visible from some directions along the public road and nearby public footpaths, and the additional landscaping will take time to mature. It is noted that the development has an approximately 25-year operational period, and therefore it is possible that most of this period will have passed by the time that the landscaping has matured to an acceptable level. In addition, it must be acknowledged that the site is located within a Special Landscape Area, and although there are nearby houses, the site

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does not connect well with existing buildings or annexes, and the proposal is beyond what is defined as a micro development. The proposal falls into the 'medium' definition in terms of the energy produced (up to 5MW) or 'large' in terms of size (10-20ha) according to the Study. It is therefore considered that the area is sensitive, and the development is significantly larger than what the Study defines as a micro development. To this end, it is not considered that a proposal of this size is acceptable within this land designation and therefore it is contrary to the requirements of criterion 1 of policy ADN 2, as well as a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study 2014.

- 5.8 In terms of the second criterion, it is seen that a Glint and Glare Report has been submitted with the application which assesses the impact of the proposal in terms of these considerations. No evidence has been submitted to contradict this and therefore it is not believed that there would be a significant impact because of these considerations.
- 5.9 A residential property known as Wern Newydd to the southern direction of the site is on land higher than the application site and it would directly overlook the site. Although it is acknowledged that distances between this property and the application site varies between approximately 265m and 398m, due to its elevated location, the panels would be a prominent and permanent feature from looking to the north of this residential site. Criterion 3 notes *"The proposal will not lead to significant harm to the residential visual amenities of nearby neighbours"* and although there is no definition of what would be a 'significant' impact, it is believed that the size of the intended site and the permanent attendance of panels mean that the impact is significant in the case of Wern Newydd residents. Consequently, the proposal is contrary to the requirements of criterion 3 of the policy.
- 5.10 There are no other existing solar farms within the local area and therefore there is no concern in terms of any cumulative impact, it is therefore not considered that the proposal is contrary to criterion 4.
- 5.11 It is customary when considering these types of applications to impose a standard condition to ensure that the panels and associated infrastructure is removed from the site and that the land is restored to its original condition in accordance with criterion 5.
- 5.12 A Construction Environmental Management Plan is submitted with the application which appears standard but relevant to the development and the site. It is believed that criterion 6 is met.
- 5.13 Based on the above, although it is considered that the principle of the proposal is acceptable from the perspective of policies relating to renewable technology namely PS 7 and ADN 2, it fails based on its impact on the character of the landscape and the residential visual amenities of nearby residents.

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Visual amenities

- 5.14 Policy PCYFF 3 promotes a high-quality design by ensuring that proposals comply with a series of criteria aimed at protecting the recognised features and character of the local landscape and environment. This proposal would mean creating resources for associated equipment and these would be comparatively small. There is also an intention to install a security fence, as well as poles for CCTV. Reference was made to paragraphs 5.4-5.6 above which assesses the proposal on the character of the landscape, and based on that assessment, it is not considered that the proposal, due to its size and location, adds or improves the character of the site and therefore, it is considered that the proposal was contrary to the requirements of policies PCYFF 3 and 4 and AMG 2.
- 5.15 A concern has been highlighted by objectors in terms of the impact of the proposal on views into and out of the AONB. The nearest boundary of the AONB is approximately 1km away from the site application to the south-eastern direction. It is believed that this distance, as well as the nature of the landscape and permanent barriers restrict, if not completely prohibit, prominent views into and out of the AONB. It is not believed that the proposal is unacceptable based on any detrimental impact on the AONB and therefore is acceptable in terms of the requirements of policy AMG 1. As there is a local impact mainly because of the proposal, it is not believed that there would be a prominent impact on the wide Llŷn and Enlli Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest designations and therefore it is not considered that the proposal is contrary to the requirements of policy AT1.

General and residential amenities

- 5.16 Criterion 7 of policy PCYFF 2 of the Development Plan relates to protecting the amenities of the local neighbourhood. This criterion states that proposals are refused if they have a significant detrimental impact on the health, safety or amenities of local property occupiers.
- 5.17 In this case, additional documents (listed in the description of the application) have been submitted as part of the application and the information included in the documents states that the development will not cause any nuisance or unsuitable glare as a result of sunshine, and the proposal will not cause a significant harmful visual impact. Correspondence has been received from nearby houses mainly objecting on the grounds of the impact on the landscape and the views from the property. Reference was made to paragraphs 5.7 above, which assesses the impact of the proposal on the amenities of nearby residents that includes glint and glare. In accordance with this assessment, therefore, it is not considered that the proposal is likely to have an impact in terms of glint and glare. It is noted that paragraph 5.8 above confirms that the proposal is likely to have a significant visual impact from one specific property due to the size and location of the site compared with the residential property located on an elevated site, the requirements of policy PCYFF 2 do not refer to this impact and therefore it is not considered that the proposal is contrary to the specific requirements of this policy.

Transport and access matters

- 5.18 Policy TRA 4 of the Development Plan relates to managing transport impacts.

In this case, there is a proposal to create a new vehicular access and access tracks within the site. Clearly during the site's development period, there will be an increase in movements associated with that in terms of deliveries and workers. Although this

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cannot be confirmed clearly, a similar impact would be expected during the decommissioning period in terms of the nature and number of movements.

- 5.19 It is acknowledged that the local road network is comparatively narrow and without controls, movements associated with such a development could cause difficulties for road users occasionally. It is therefore seen that consideration has been given to this impact and appropriate steps have been proposed to mitigate the biggest difficulties. For example, it is proposed that many materials are sent to the site stored in containers which results in fewer movements. Deliveries will be timetabled to avoid multiple deliveries arriving at the same time. As usual, it is believed that management of these matters is possible to be achieved through including a condition to agree final details and, in doing, ensure that the development satisfies the relevant requirements of policy TRA 4. The Transportation Unit's observations were received, which confirms that there were no objections to the proposal and therefore it is not believed that the proposal is unacceptable based on the relevant requirements of policies TRA 2 and TRA 4.

Archaeological Matters

- 5.20 An initial response to the application was received by the archaeological adviser declaring that the proposed development, based on the details submitted, would likely have an impact on archaeological matters and, as a result, there are implications to that. It was noted that the information was insufficient to form an opinion on the application as submitted.
- 5.21 Later, a further report was submitted as a result of additional inspections of the site, including the work of opening ditches. This information has been assessed, and it is noted that the work undertaken on the site had also been monitored at the time by Heneb officers. Confirmation was given that the work had been undertaken in accordance with relevant professional standards for this type of work, although it is anticipated that there was one element to be completed for this part. It is noted that further work can be undertaken to comply with the mitigation programme that will be undertaken. However, based on a full assessment of all the information and in accordance with the requirements of local and national policies, it is recommended should approval be given, that the Local Planning Authority must ensure a programme of final archaeological work, including standard conditions.
- 5.22 Given the guidance provided above by the archaeological adviser, it is believed, should the proposal be acceptable, that it would be possible to ensure an appropriate work programme for archaeology, and in doing so, ensure that the proposal complies with the relevant requirements of policies PS 20 and AT 4.
- 5.23 Policy PS 20 also protects and safeguards heritage assets, including listed buildings and registered historical landscapes. In addition, the Historic Environment (Wales) Act declares that Local Planning Authorities shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving/safeguarding the setting of a listed building. The Wern Fawr grade II* listed building is located approximately 230m to the north from the part nearest to the application site whilst several listed buildings are further and scattered but within 2.5km to the site. There is no historical listed monument within

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or adjacent to the site, but it is seen that there has been a record of monuments within 2.5km to the site.

- 5.24 It is believed that there is sufficient distance between the site and local historical assets so that it would not have a direct and prominent impact on them. It is seen that the Wern Fawr building is the nearest listed building but, given the distance between the site and the building, as well as the presence of many mature trees and established hedges, it is not considered that the proposal is likely to cause significant harm to the setting of listed buildings and other historical assets and it is therefore considered that the proposal complies with the requirements of policy PS20.

Biodiversity matters

- 5.25 Some objections have been received which raises concern about the impact of the development on biodiversity and protected species in the area. It is also noted that the Biodiversity Unit refers to additional needs that would need to be considered for the development of the site. It is believed, should the proposal have been acceptable, that it is possible to ensure appropriate management and mitigation measures for the site and its surroundings which would protect the interests of biodiversity features.
- 5.26 Concern has also been raised about the impact of the proposed development on ancient trees within the local area. The allegation that ancient trees are being affected has been made without being based on robust or scientific data and to identify trees as being ancient, rigorous criteria must be followed. However, the trees officer undertook an assessment of the proposal through a formal assessment of the amended information submitted, as well as conducting a site visit to consider the impact on nearby trees. It was confirmed, should the proposal use an existing walkway, that there would be concern about the impact on ancient trees but, as it is a proposal to create a new access road through agricultural fields away from the trees, there would be no concern as a result.
- 5.27 A Green Infrastructure Statement was submitted with the application, as well as an ecological assessment by a qualified company. Given that it is possible to implement the recommendations and the mitigation measures as noted in these documents through suitable conditions to protect the interests of species and habitats, it is considered that the plan could meet the objectives of policies PS 19 and AMG 5 which aim to protect the identified biodiversity features, as well as chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, which relates to green infrastructure and the step-wise approach.

Operational period

- 5.28 The application seeks an operational period of 25 years for the development, which is a normal and reasonable period for such developments. Given that the period is not significant, it is considered that a 25-year development period would be acceptable.

Community benefit

- 5.29 The developer has considered possibilities that would include community contributions and local ownership, providing community benefits. It is said that funding models are considered to support owning a community project of this scale.

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It is acknowledged that any such steps must be feasible to be adopted, otherwise a commercial financial solution would be required to ensure the implementation of the plan. Should the application be acceptable, it is believed reasonable to impose a condition to agree on this matter further as it is reasonable to expect that a plan of this type, size and in a location like this, contributes to the local community.

Other matters

- 5.30 The site includes agricultural grazing land that has already been assessed as 98% of grade 2 land (very good-quality agricultural land) and 2% of grade 3b land (moderate land to produce crops or high to produce hay). Paragraph 3.58 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) states that *"agricultural land of grade 3a, as well as classes 1 and 2, in the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC)16 is deemed as the best and most versatile, and should be conserved as a finite resource for the future"*

while paragraph 3.59 states

"When considering the search sequence and in development plan policies and development management decisions considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because of its special importance. Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development, and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is unavailable, or available lower grade land has an environmental value recognised by a landscape, wildlife, historic or archaeological designation which outweighs the agricultural considerations. If land in grades 1, 2 and 3a does need to be developed, and there is a choice between sites of different grades, development should be directed to land of the lowest grade."

- 5.31 The information submitted as part of the application states that the proposal would not lead to the complete loss of the agricultural land, as it is possible to continue using the land for agricultural use, despite the solar panels. It is acknowledged that the development would have an impact on the type of agricultural use made of the land, should the proposal be approved, but it must also be acknowledged that installing solar panels is a temporary development (albeit for a 25-year period) and should the proposal be acceptable, a planning condition would be imposed to restore the land once the operational period would come to an end. Therefore, in this respect, it is not considered that the proposal is completely contrary to the requirements of criterion 6 of policy PS6 or the Advice given in Planning Policy Wales, specifically therefore, paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59 in this case.

Linguistic matters

- 5.32 Excluding the developments that meet the thresholds for submitting a Welsh Language Impact Statement/Assessment noted in Policy PS1, guidance is provided in terms of the type of relevant applications where consideration should be given to the Welsh language in Appendix 5 (The Screening Procedure) of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities'. The guidance contained states that every retail, commercial or

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industrial development that are not required to submit a Welsh Language Impact Statement / Assessment should show how consideration has been given to the language. Although it is not completely essential in this case based on the scale of the proposal, a Linguistic Statement was submitted noting the consideration that had been given to the Welsh language when drawing up the plan and noted several aspects how the plan would promote the language, these include:

- A Welsh name for the development;
- Ensuring bilingual signs within the site

- 5.33 It is believed, should the application be acceptable, that a condition could be imposed to agree on a Welsh name and the use of Welsh on signs, and in doing so, ensure that the development would contribute towards the language's visual presence in accordance with the requirements of policy PS 1.

Response to the public consultation

- 5.34 It is acknowledged that several objections have been received to this proposal, and it is considered that all relevant planning matters have been given appropriate consideration as part of the above assessment. The recommendation is made based on a full assessment of all relevant planning considerations, including all the observations and objections received during the public consultation, and nobody was wronged in any way when considering this application.

6. Conclusions:

- 6.1 As a result of the assessment above, it is not considered that the proposal is completely acceptable based on full compliance with the requirements of relevant policies as noted above. Specifically, it is considered that the impacts noted and discussed in the assessment above conflict with the policy although the general principle of this proposal is supported provided it complies with other adopted policies. It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable based on the size and location of the proposal within an Area of Special Landscape and its visual impact on the character of the landscape, and harm to the residential visual amenities of nearby residents.

7. Recommendation:

- 7.1 To delegate powers to the Senior Planning Manager to refuse:
- 7.2 The proposal is unacceptable given the requirements of criterion 1 and criterion 3 of policy ADN 2, as well as the requirements of policies PCYFF 3 and 4 and AMG 2 of the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan (2017) and a Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study 2014 as a result of the size and location of the proposal within an Area of Special Landscape and its visual impact on the character of the landscape, and that it has a significant harm on the residential visual amenities of nearby residents, specifically the Wern Newydd property.