

STAGE 1 – INITIAL EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

1 Case Details	
A	DNS case reference 3154384
B	Brief description of development Solar Park, Access and Ancillary Development
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>
	3a - Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water
(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? N/A <i>If Yes, provide reasons for your answer below. *If unsure, discuss with PET. Proceed to point (iii).</i>
	N/A - not a change or extension
(iii)	Is the project located wholly or partly within a ' Sensitive Area ' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations? No <i>If Yes, state which area and more to Question 3. If No, proceed to point (iv) below.</i>
(iv)	Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded / met? Yes <i>If Yes, note which applicable threshold/criteria. If No, EIA is not required.</i>
	Development exceeds 0.5ha

3 LPA / Welsh Ministers' Screening		
(i)	Has the LPA issued a Screening Opinion (SO)?	No
(ii)	Have the Welsh Ministers issued a Screening Direction (SD)?	No
4 Environmental Statement (ES)		
	Has the applicant/appellant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?	No

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 likely to be significant? <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 development will involve free-standing, static solar photovoltaic (PV) panels being installed on approximately 58ha of greenfield land, currently in agricultural use (grazing).	Any physical changes in the locality will be temporary (30 years) and reversible. The effect is unlikely to be significant.
Question 1(b) Cumulation with Existing and/or Approved Development		
Are there any other factors which should be considered such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consequential development which could lead to environmental effects? the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality? any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project? transfrontier impacts? 	Within 5 km of the site there are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 solar park at Hafod y Dafal 5 operational wind turbine developments 4 additional consented wind turbine developments 	The identified wind turbines are all 4km from the development site, and any cumulative effects from the turbines or the solar park at Hafod y Dafal (such as landscape and visual effects) are unlikely to be significant.
Question 1(c) Use of Natural Resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity		
Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Yes, the proposed development will utilise building materials and energy during construction, operation and decommissioning phases. The loss of agricultural land is not proposed to be permanent.	Due to the reversible nature of the proposed developments, any effect to natural resources is unlikely to be significant.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
Question 1(d) Production of Waste		
Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Yes, some waste will be generated during construction and decommissioning of the development.	Due to the nature and scale of developments, any effect is unlikely to be significant.
Question 1(e) Pollution and Nuisances		
Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	No, harmful substances and/or materials are not proposed to be used as part of the development.	N/A
Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Yes, some noise and vibration will be generated during construction and decommissioning of the solar park.	Due to the scale and nature of the development, any noise or vibration generated during the 4 month construction period is unlikely to be significant.
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 proposed development would not release pollutants or lead to risks of land or water contamination.	N/A
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, some risk of accident during construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development.	Standard best practice during construction will reduce the risk of accident, and any effect is unlikely to be significant.
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	Due to the nature and scale of the development, the main effects arising from the development is visual. It is unlikely for the development to be a risk to human health during either construction or	N/A

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
	operation.	
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?	The development would create some employment during phases of construction, operation and decommissioning, with up to 100 employees on site during the 4 month construction period.	Due to the scale of development, any effect on employment is unlikely to be significant.
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?	There is a restricted byway within the eastern section of the site, and the proposed access track crosses a footpath. It is proposed to divert the restricted byway.	There will be some disruption to the PROW network during construction, but this is unlikely to be significant. There will be a visual effect for PROW users once panels are installed (visual impact discussed below).
Are there any transport routes which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	There will be HGV movements to and from the site during the 4 month construction period (up to 11 HGV movements per week).	Due to the nature and scale of development, any effect on the nearby transport network is unlikely to be significant.
Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes, the panels will be installed on 58ha of greenfield land.	Any loss of greenfield land in the locality will be temporary (30 years) and reversible. The effect is unlikely to be significant.
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?	The site is located between Tredegar and Rhymney Golf Club to the west and Mountain Ash Inn public house to the east. There is a potential visual effect on these community facilities.	Visual impact is discussed below. Nearby sensitive land uses are unlikely to be significantly affected.
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,	The Nant Tysswg river is adjacent to the western boundary of the site. The Agricultural Land Classification of the land is likely to be of grade 5.	Due to the nature of the development, any effect on nearby resources is unlikely to be significant. Any effect from installing solar panels

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	The eastern part of the site lies within a Coal and Aggregates Safeguarding Area, however due to the temporary nature of the development, there is unlikely to be an effect on sterilising this resource.	on the agricultural land will be temporary, and is unlikely to be significant.
Question 2(c) Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment		
Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology, or are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora, which could be affected by the project?	The site is adjacent to <i>the 'Mynydd Bedwellty'</i> Site of Importance for Nature Conservation along its eastern boundary. The closest statutory designation is ' <i>Cefn y Brithdir</i> ' Site of Special Scientific Interest located approximately 2.6 km to the south. An upland bird survey identified the presence of a pair of Curlew on site, and the applicant is proposing to mitigate through suitable habitat to maintain one pair of breeding Curlew being provided off-site via appropriate habitat management or through a commuted sum contribution to wider curlew conservation initiatives.	Natural Resources Wales were consulted, and consider that the proposed development is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Their conclusion is based only on matters included on their checklist (Natural Resources Wales and Planning Consultations, March 2015), which includes effects on European sites and SSSIs. Due to the nature of the development, no direct effect is expected on the adjacent SINC, however Blaenau Gwent CBC in their response highlight that any impact on breeding bird species would need to be minimised. Any effect on habitats or species is unlikely to be significant.
Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	The applicant states that a Hydrological Assessment is being prepared that provisionally concludes that there will be no hydrological consequences as a result of the proposals.	Natural Resources Wales were consulted, and consider that the proposed development is not likely to have a significant effect on the environment. Their conclusion is based only on matters included on their checklist (Natural Resources Wales and Planning Consultations,

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
		March 2015), which includes effects on water protection zones or watercourses.
<p>Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>The site is located within the 'Mynydd Bedwellty, Rhymney Hill and Sirhowy Sides Special Landscape Area' as designated in Blaenau Gwent's Local Development Plan. Land to the south and west of the site within Caerphilly CBC is designated as a Visually Important Local Landscape within their Local Development Plan. The solar panels (3m in height) and a 15m lattice tower on the 58ha site will be visible from these designations.</p>	<p>Blaenau Gwent CBC were consulted and consider that the "proposed development is likely to have a significant impact on the local landscape characteristics". Although the magnitude of the impact will be large in the immediate vicinity of the site, including the identified designations which are sensitive to large scale renewable energy projects, the spatial extent of the impact is localised. The effect will be temporary and reversible. Considering the characteristics of the potential effect, I do not consider that it is likely to be significant in EIA terms. However, landscape and visual effects are likely to be an important consideration for the decision maker, and a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is recommended.</p>
<p>Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?</p>	<p>As the site is in an elevated position, the development will be visible from some parts of the Rhymney Valley, in addition to minor roads passing near the site. Main visual impacts discussed above.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>The project is located in the countryside, but is close to the Rhymney Valley, and there could be visual effect on residents or traffic</p>	<p>N/A</p>

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
	disruption during construction, but these effects are discussed elsewhere in this assessment.	
Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	The site is located approximately 390m south of a scheduled monument (<i>Tredegar Ironworks Cholera Cemetery</i> , MM287).	Cadw were consulted, and state that <i>"the information about the development currently available is not sufficient for us to determine what damage will be caused to the setting of the scheduled monument"</i> . Cadw also recommend <i>"that an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the setting of the scheduled monument is submitted with any application and this should be prepared in accordance with the methodology outlined in the Welsh Government's best-practice guidance Setting of Heritage Assets in Wales (2017)"</i> . Due to the nature and scale of the development, it is unlikely that the effect on the historic environment will be significant in EIA terms, although it may be a consideration for the decision maker.
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	The applicant states that a Hydrological Assessment is being prepared that provisionally concludes that there will be no	Natural Resources Wales were consulted, and consider that the proposed development is not likely to

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
could cause the project to present environmental problems?	flooding consequences as a result of the proposals.	have a significant effect on the environment. Their conclusion is based only on matters included on their checklist (Natural Resources Wales and Planning Consultations, March 2015), which includes effects on flooding.
Has there already been a failure to meet environmental quality standards that is relevant to the project?	No.	N/A

Statement of reasons

The development will lead to temporary loss of 58ha of Grade 5 agricultural land for a period of 30 years. The main effects arising from the development is likely to be landscape and visual effects. The site is within 'Mynydd Bedwelty, Rhymney Hill and Sirhowy Sides Special Landscape Area', and near to a Visually Important Local Landscape designated in the Caerphilly LDP. Any impact on these designations may be large in magnitude, but the spatial extent of any impact will be small, and any impact will be temporary and reversible. Considering the characteristics of the potential effect, I do not consider that it is likely to be significant in EIA terms. However, landscape and visual effects are likely to be an important consideration for the decision maker, and a comprehensive Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is recommended. No other effects are likely to be significant. An EIA is therefore not required.

6		Outcome of assessment	
(ii)	If a SO/SD has been provided do you agree with it?		N/A
(iii)	Is EIA required?		No
Outcome		Action	✓
Schedule 2 development – threshold exceeded/ criterion met or Sensitive Area but not likely to have significant effects on the environment		Issue direction stating EIA Not Required (Letter 1)	✓
Schedule 2 development – threshold exceeded/ criterion met or Sensitive Area and likely to have significant effects		Issue direction stating EIA Required (Letter 2)	
Project does not fall within the EIA Regulations as either: (a) it is listed within the descriptions of development Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations but does not meet relevant threshold/criterion; or (b) it does not fall within the categories of development in Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations.		EIA Not Required - Issue direction stating either: (A) project listed within descriptions of development in Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regs but does not meet relevant threshold/criterion; or (B) project does not fall within the categories of development in Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regs (Letter 3)	
Schedule 2 development but effects not clear at this stage – file to be reviewed at a later stage		No action – review when appropriate i.e. on receipt of new information/case progress	
Schedule 2 development – appeal is at an advanced stage – referred for Direction; likely to have significant effects		Issue direction stating EIA Required (Letter 4)	
Development relates to a Report case, i.e. where the Welsh Ministers will make the final decision.		Ensure Welsh Government are copied in to Screening Direction when it is issued.	
Name and Job Title of Assessor		Ifan Gwilym, Planning Officer	
Date of Assessment		2 February 2018	