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# Planning, Design & Access Statement

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**Land at Trewyn Bach  
Clawdd Poncen  
Corwen  
Denbighshire  
LL21 9RR**

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**Erection of a 2MW Solar Farm and  
associated infrastructure**

Mark & Nadine Budgen

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**October 2024**

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning, Design and Access Statement is prepared and submitted in connection with a full planning application made to Denbighshire County Council (“The Local Planning Authority”) for the erection of a 2MW solar farm and all associated works and infrastructure at Land at Trewyn Bach, Clawdd Poncen, Corwen, Denbighshire, LL21 9RR.

1.2 The description of development is:

*Erection of a 2MW Solar Farm and associated infrastructure.*

1.3 This statement sets out the need for the development, assesses the impacts of the development, and provides a full assessment of the proposal against the relevant policies in the Local Development Plan, and other material considerations. The statement is designed to aid the Planning Officer in making their recommendation.

1.4 The following plans/drawings and reports/surveys are submitted in support of the full planning application:

- Completed Application Form and Certificates
- This Planning, Design & Access Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation Report
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Site Location Plan
- Existing Block/Site Plan
- Proposed Block/Site Plan
- Solar Panel Elevations/Sections
- Proposed Access Plan
- Biodiversity Enhancement Plan
- Transformer Building Plans and Elevations
- Construction Traffic Access Routing Plan

1.5 The information contained within the listed documents and surveys provides a comprehensive assessment of the proposal and confirms that the development can be delivered without giving rise to any unacceptable impacts with the significant benefits of the scheme also considered.

## 2.0 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 contain two development schedules (Schedule 1

development and Schedule 2 development). Schedule 1 contains a list of development where EIA is mandatory and Schedule 2 contains a list of development, coupled with development thresholds, where EIA may be considered necessary. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) must screen every planning application falling under the Schedule 2 development thresholds to determine whether an Environmental Statement (ES) is required. Schedule 2 contains a list of development descriptions (categories) and applicable thresholds and criteria for the purpose of classifying development as Schedule 2 development. There is no category which specifically refers to ground mounted solar development, although Category 3(a) refers to (inter alia) industrial installations for the production of electricity whereby the need for an EIA should be considered if the development footprint exceeds 0.5 hectares.

- 2.2 The proposed development has a total site area of approximately 2.49 hectares, and is therefore in excess of the 0.5 hectare threshold outlined within Schedule 2 Category 3(a). However, given the distance between the application site and the nearest statutory ecological sites and the generally passive nature of the proposed solar development, it is considered the development as proposed would not meet the thresholds to be considered EIA Development, and therefore no Environmental Statement has been produced.

### 3.0 Need for the Development

- 3.1 The need to introduce a change in how the country deals with climate change has been recognised by the UK Government. On 1st May 2019, the UK Government declared an Environmental and Climate Change Emergency, following the finding by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change, that to avoid more than 1.5°C rise in global warming, global emissions would need to fall by around 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero by around 2050. The Government recognises a need to move swiftly to capture economic opportunities and green jobs in the low carbon economy, while managing risks for workers and communities currently reliant on carbon intensive sectors.
- 3.2 The Welsh Government made its climate change declaration on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The declaration sends a clear signal that the Welsh Government will not allow the process of leaving the EU to detract from the challenge of climate change, which threatens health, economy, infrastructure and our natural environment.
- 3.3 National and International legislation sets targets for the reducing of carbon emissions and increasing renewable energy generation. This section of the statement provides specific legislation, policy and guidance in relation to climate change and the UK's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

#### European Policy, Legislation & Guidance

3.4 The UK left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020. The UK then entered into a the transition period as set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, during which time it continued to have the same relationship with regards to rules, including on energy and climate change, as when the UK was a Member State of the EU for the duration of the transition period.

3.5 The European Union Renewable Energy Sources Directive (2009/28/EC) was published in April 2009. A key principle of this document is the inclusion of a binding agreement which commits member states to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020 compared to 1990 levels. The legally binding obligation for the United Kingdom was set at 15% of final energy consumed to be from renewable sources by 2020.

3.6 The above targets have been further updated in this European Union 2030 Climate Change Framework which builds on the 2020 climate and energy package and was adopted by European Leaders in October 2014.

3.7 The 2030 climate and energy framework includes EU-wide targets and policy objectives for 2021 to 2030. The key targets for 2030 are outlined below:

- At least 40% cuts in greenhouse gas emissions (from 1990 levels)
- At least 32% share for renewable energy
- At least 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency.

#### UK Policy, Legislation & Guidance

3.8 Electricity Market Reform (EMR) is a government policy to incentivise investment in secure, low-carbon electricity, improve the security of Great Britain's electricity supply, and improve affordability for consumers. The objectives of the EMR to which the Secretary of State will have regard when carrying out the key EMR functions are:

- the carbon reduction targets as set out in the climate change act 2008, which include a 34% reduction by 2020 and 80% reduction by 2050;
- to ensure a security of energy supply (including through diversification of energy mix);
- the cost to consumers; and
- the legally binding EU targets for 15% of UK energy to be supplied from renewable sources by 2020.

3.9 As part of the EMR the Energy Bill was introduced by the Coalition Government in November 2012 and aimed to “**power low-carbon economic growth for the UK**”. The Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change confirmed the introduction of the Energy Bill to the House of Commons alongside the Annual Energy Statement. The Bill sought to establish a legislative framework for delivering secure, affordable and low carbon energy throughout Great Britain.

- 3.10 At its core is the need to ensure that, as old power plants are taken off line, the UK remains able to generate enough energy to meet its needs even if demand increases. Doing this while also decarbonising requires significant investment in new infrastructure to be brought forward. The Energy Act received Royal Assent on 18th December 2013.
- 3.11 The 'UK Renewable Energy Strategy' was published in July 2009 by DECC, identifying how to increase renewable energy use in the UK as part of an overall strategy for tackling climate change. This strategy sets out how the UK can reach the goal of 15% of energy from renewables by 2020.
- 3.12 On 12 June 2019 the UK Government laid the draft Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target. The draft order would amend the 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target in the Climate Change Act from at least 80% to at least 100% thereby constituting a legally binding commitment to end the UK's contribution to climate change.
- 3.13 The draft instrument was subject to the affirmative procedure and was debated and approved by the House of Commons on 24 June 2019; and by the House of Lords on 26 June 2019. The Order came into force on 27 June 2019.
- 3.14 The Energy Security Strategy was published in November 2012. The Energy Security Strategy provides an assessment of the UK's current energy security, outlines work already underway to safeguard our energy security, and sets out the policy Government is putting in place to ensure that our energy supplies remain secure. The Energy Security Strategy considers these issues in the short and longer term, looking ahead as far as 2050.
- 3.15 The Energy Security Strategy recognises that **"electricity use is likely to increase by at least 30 per cent and potentially by 100 per cent as much of our heating and transportation becomes electrified."**
- 3.16 The Strategy recognises the need to decarbonise our energy supplies to help reduce dependence on international fossil fuel markets in the longer term.
- 3.17 The UK Government recognises that increasing the amount of energy the UK gets from low carbon technologies will help ensure the UK's energy supply is secure.
- 3.18 The Government published the UK Renewable Energy Roadmap in July 2011, the Roadmap has since been updated in 2012 and most recently in November 2013. The UK Renewable Energy Roadmap sets out the path to achieve the UK's headline renewable energy target.

- 3.19 The 2012 Roadmap Update included solar PV as one of the key renewable energy technologies that can help the UK create a balanced energy mix. The UK Renewable Energy Roadmap recognises the advantages with Solar PV including: **"it is versatile and scalable, with deployment possible in a wide range of locations including domestic and commercial buildings and where appropriate on the ground; solar projects can be developed and installed very quickly; and the fuel, solar radiation is free."**
- 3.20 The Clean Growth Strategy was published in October 2017 and sets out **"a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of "clean growth", i.e. deliver increased economic growth and decreased emissions."**
- 3.21 The Strategy sets out an approach which has two guiding objectives:
1. **"To meet our domestic commitments at the lowest possible net cost to UK taxpayers, consumers and businesses; and**
  2. **To maximise the social and economic benefits for the UK from this transition."**
- 3.22 The Strategy recognises that in order to meet the above objectives the UK will need to nurture low carbon technologies, processes and systems that are as cheap as possible. This includes subsidy free ground mounted solar parks such as the proposed development. The Strategy confirms that the Government **"want to see more people investing in solar without government support"**.
- 3.23 Since coming to power in June 2024, the new UK Labour Government have pledged to **"make Britain a clean energy superpower"**. Sir Patrick Vallance, Former Chief Scientific Adviser, has said: ***"A national mission for clean power by 2030 is achievable and should be prioritised. We desperately need to end the era of high energy bills, excessive carbon emissions and energy insecurity by accelerating the transition to clean, homegrown energy. Britain can lead on this by treating this mission like the vaccine challenge. We can be the innovators and the implementers, helping ourselves and exporting our solutions worldwide. But if we choose to go slowly, others will provide the answers, and ultimately we'll end up buying these solutions rather than selling them."***
- 3.24 The Labour Government have pledged **"clean energy by 2030"** which will involve **"working with the private sector to double onshore wind, triple solar power, and quadruple offshore wind by 2030."**

## Welsh Policy, Legislation & Guidance

3.25 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 **sets a target to reduce emissions by at least 80% from 1990 levels by 2050**. The Act provides the legislative framework for establishing a carbon budgeting approach in Wales.

3.26 The Climate Change Strategy for Wales (October 2010), sets out the Welsh Government commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Wales. The following targets are set out:

- Commitment to achieving a 3% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 2011;
- Achieving at least a 40% reduction in all greenhouse gas emissions in Wales by 2020 against the 1990 baseline.

3.27 A series of key themes are set out in this strategy, including:

- Supporting Behavioural Change – helping people minimise resource use and enabling people to consider the risks posed by climate change.
- Innovation and Skills – helping Welsh businesses develop.
- Energy Generation – drive to reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency, whilst maximising renewable and low carbon energy generation in Wales.

3.28 The Welsh Government Policy Statement, Preparing for Climate Change was published in March 2013. Through this Policy Statement, the Welsh Government sets out the challenge of a changing climate and the response. The Policy Statement details how it will implement relevant provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008.

3.29 The Ministerial Foreword confirms:- **"Climate change is one of the greatest environmental, economic and social challenges facing the planet. The robust scientific case for human-induced climate change underpins the Welsh Government's commitment to lead action on tackling climate change. Measuring carbon footprints, a process pioneered by the Welsh Government is becoming mainstream, and many public sector bodies, businesses and individuals are taking action to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. The Welsh Government is committed to deliver on its commitments to reduce emissions year on year, but we are also committed to ensuring that Wales is well-equipped to manage the consequences of a changing climate. As part of this we need to raise awareness, engage and encourage action on adapting to the impacts of climate change... We need to act now if we are to reduce the impact of the negative consequences and capitalise on the opportunities that future changes may bring."**

3.30 The scientific evidence on climate change is summarised in 'Climate Change Explained' first published on 23 October 2014 by the Department of Energy and Climate Change. This publication confirms that:- **"There is clear evidence to**



show that climate change is happening. Measurements show that the average temperature at the Earth's surface has risen by about 1°C since the pre-industrial period. 17 of the 18 warmest years on record have occurred in the 21st century and each of the last 3 decades have been hotter than the previous one. This change in temperature hasn't been the same everywhere; the increase has been greater over land than over the oceans and has been particularly fast in the Arctic. The UK is already affected by rising temperatures. The most recent decade (2008-2017) has been on average 0.8 °C warmer than the 1961-1990 average. All ten of the warmest years in the UK have occurred since 1990 with the nine warmest occurring since 2002. Although it is clear that the climate is warming in the long-term, note that temperatures aren't expected to rise every single year. Natural fluctuations will still cause unusually cold years and seasons but these events will become less likely.

Along with warming at the Earth's surface, many other changes in the climate are occurring:

- warming oceans
- melting polar ice and glaciers
- rising sea levels
- more extreme weather events."

3.31 This publication also sets out the causes of climate change and confirms:

"Rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, such as methane, in the atmosphere create a 'greenhouse effect', trapping the Sun's energy and causing the Earth, and in particular the oceans, to warm. Heating of the oceans accounts for over nine-tenths of the trapped energy. Scientists have known about this greenhouse effect since the 19th Century.

The higher the amounts of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the warmer the Earth becomes. Recent climate change is happening largely as a result of this warming, with smaller contributions from natural influences like variations in the Sun's output.

Carbon dioxide levels have increased by about 45% since before the industrial revolution. Other greenhouse gases have increased by similarly large amounts. All the evidence shows that this increase in greenhouse gases is almost entirely due to human activity. The increase is mainly caused by:

- burning of fossil fuels for energy
- agriculture and deforestation
- the manufacture of cement, chemicals and metals

**About 43% of the carbon dioxide produced goes into the atmosphere, and the rest is absorbed by plants and the oceans. Deforestation reduces the number of trees absorbing carbon dioxide and releases the carbon contained in those trees back into the atmosphere."**

3.32 The publication also provides the following information on tackling climate change:-

**"If we take action to radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions now, there's a good chance that we can limit average global temperature rises to 2° C above pre-industrial levels. This doesn't mean that there will be no more changes in the climate – warming is already happening – but we could limit, adapt to and manage these changes. If we take action now:**

- **we will avoid burdening future generations with greater impacts and costs of climate change economies will be able to cope better by mitigating environmental risks and improving energy efficiency**
- **there will be wider benefits to health, energy security and biodiversity**

**It makes good economic sense to take action now to drastically cut greenhouse gas emissions. If we delay acting on emissions, it will only mean more radical intervention in the future at greater cost, and larger impacts on society. Taking action now can also help to achieve long-term, sustainable economic growth from a low-carbon economy."**

### Summary

3.33 The above documents outline the immediate and pressing need for deployment of renewable energy generation in the UK, which is derived from the challenging and legally binding obligation in relation to the generation of 15% of energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020 initially and thereafter to meet more challenging targets by 2030 and 2050. It is clear that solar PV development is recognised by the new UK Labour Government as a key part of the UK's transition to achieving a low carbon economy and tackling climate change, as well as boosting energy security for the whole country.

## 4.0 Site Location & Context

4.1 The application site relates to approximately 2.49 hectares of agricultural land located to the north-east of Clawdd Poncen and the Tyn Llidiart Industrial Estate (a designated Employment Area under Policy PSE2 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan). The site comprises a large arable field, together with a thin strip of land through adjacent fields to facilitate site access to the public highway network. To the south-west of the site, in between the application site and the industrial premises, lies a former disused railway line. The landscape

surrounding the site consists primarily of agricultural pastureland and arable fields, with native hedges and tree lines forming field boundaries.

4.2 The topography of the site is generally undulating, being reflective of the wider character of the host landscape in the area. The land however generally rises in elevation towards the north-east of the site.

4.3 The main field parcel is bound by mature native species hedgerows and trees. The proposed vehicular access route, to the south-east, is also generally bound by hedgerow along the north-eastern edge, as well as several large mature trees.

4.4 Whilst the surrounding area is largely rural in nature, the character of the application site is inevitably heavily impacted and influenced by the large industrial complex and industrial paraphernalia associated with it, which lies to the application site's south-west.

4.5 As noted, the village of Clawdd Poncen lies approximately 200 metres to the south-west of the application site whilst the larger settlement of Corwen lies approximately 1.1km as the crow flies to the south.

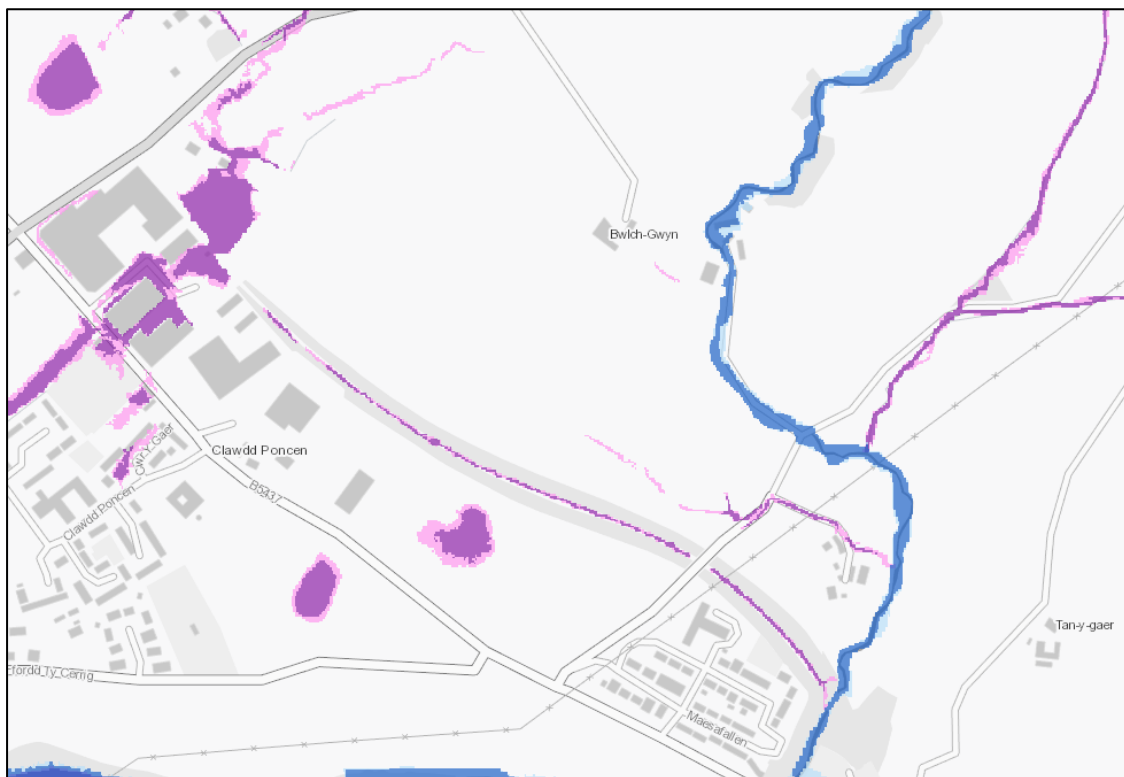
4.6 A public right of way (footpath) lies to the north-east of the application site but would be unaffected by the proposed development. Its route has been indicated on the submitted Site Location Plan.

4.7 Figure 1 below is an aerial plan showing the location of the application site (yellow star) and its surroundings/context:



**Figure 1: Aerial view of application site and surroundings**

- 4.8 Two Grade II Listed Buildings lie approximately 0.5km to the east of the main solar site, whilst the Caer Derwen Scheduled Monument lies approximately 1km distant to the east.
- 4.9 The boundary of the Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape (AONB) lies approximately 0.5km to the east of the main proposed solar site. The entirety of the application site itself however lies outside of any landscape designations as per both local and national planning policy.
- 4.10 In terms of flood risk, Figure 2 below confirms there are no fluvial flooding risks on the site, whilst a small area of land along the proposed access route, within the easternmost part of the application site, lies within Zones 2 and 3 of the Flood Map for Planning (for surface water and small watercourses).



**Figure 2: Extract from the Flood Map for Planning showing the application site and its surroundings (source: NRW)**

- 4.11 The application site does not lie within or adjacent to any statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation, however, there are several designated sites in the area; the closest of which is the River Dee and Bala Lake SSSI and SAC – which lies approximately 550 metres to the south of the main solar site itself.
- 4.12 The application site primarily forms grade 2 quality agricultural land, with some smaller areas of grade 3a land. The site is capable of being used for sheep grazing during the operational life to continue an agricultural use. The

agricultural potential of the site can be fully restored following the decommissioning and removal of the proposed development from the land.

- 4.13 A review of the Denbighshire County Council adopted Local Development Plan has been undertaken. The proposed application site is located outside of any defined settlement/development boundaries, and is therefore located within the open countryside in planning terms. None of the land is allocated in the Local Development Plan for development. The site is located within a Mineral safeguarded Area (Sand and Gravel).

### Site Selection

- 4.14 The first suitability requirement for solar farm sites is access to the local electricity distribution network, therefore such facilities must be delivered in locations where energy can be exported at a level which justifies the financial viability of the installation.
- 4.15 There is extensive existing electricity infrastructure within the application site's vicinity; with the Deeside – Trawsfynydd 400kV electricity line running within 1km of the site, which forms part of the national network. 'Supergrid' transformers convert the 400kV voltage down to 132kV for use on the local Distribution Network Operators (DNO) network. It is further noted that a new electricity substation along the 400kV route is planned at nearby Gwyddelwern by National Grid in the near future to allow for increased connections of renewable energy developments to be made.
- 4.16 A grid connection point has been identified within the site by Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN). The SPEN plans confirming the grid connection has been approved accompany the planning application.
- 4.17 When selecting a specific site, the Applicant has considered a range of criteria. These criteria include:
- Proximity of a grid connection
  - Availability of grid capacity to export, with no constraints on the grid connection
  - The financial viability of grid connection costs
  - Sufficient land area available for the installation
  - A suitable site access for construction, operation, and decommissioning
  - A site free of statutory or non-statutory ecological, landscape and heritage designations.

## 5.0 The Proposed Development



- 5.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the construction, operation, maintenance and future decommissioning of a 2MW solar farm and associated infrastructure. The application is sought for a temporary period of 40 years from the date of the first exportation of electricity from the site. The application site in total extends to approximately 2.49 hectares.
- 5.2 The proposed solar farm would provide enough electricity to power approximately 526 UK homes per annum. As these dwellings would be powered by renewable energy, the proposals would offer significant CO2 savings during the operational lifetime of the development.
- 5.3 The solar farm would consist of photovoltaic (PV) panels fixed to metal mounting substructures to form solar arrays. The height of the arrays would be approximately 2.7m above ground-levels. The accompanying drawings show the layout and extent of the proposed solar arrays.
- 5.4 The solar PV panels are designed to convert sunlight into electricity. The solar arrays will be laid out in multiple parallel rows running east-west across the site. The distance between the arrays will typically be around 5.2 metres. Land between and beneath the panels would be used for biodiversity enhancements and seasonal sheep grazing. The PV panels will be laid out in rows across the site and will be spaced to avoid any shadowing effect from one panel to another with topography dictating exact row spacing.
- 5.5 Direct Current (DC) cables from the solar panels will be fixed on the underside of the arrays. The DC string cables will run along the undersides of each row. The electrical cabling from each array will be concealed through shallow trenches linking to the Inverters and then to the on-site distribution network operator (DNO) substation/transformer room.
- 5.6 The Inverters are required to convert the DC energy produced by the arrays into Alternating Current (AC) energy, these will be located across the site. AC cables will be laid in trenches and would run directly to the on-site substation/transformer room. The solar farm will be contained within agricultural stock-proof wire deer fencing up to 2.45m in height. Badger friendly/small mammal access points will be prescribed at various locations along the stock-proof fencing to allow the passage of small mammals across the site.
- 5.7 Vehicular access would be provided into the site via an improved existing field access off Ffordd Prenol (a C-class public highway). The access improvements would consist of a widening of the existing field access, the translocation of the existing hedgerow either side of the access to behind the new visibility splays and the surfacing of the first 10m of the access with suitably bound material. As denoted on the submitted Site Location Plan, the land either side of the existing field access is within the ownership of the Applicant.

- 5.8 An existing stone access track already provides an access route from the site access halfway towards the subject field parcel. It is proposed to improve the route of the existing access track as denoted on the submitted Access Plan, to provide access to the site of the solar development from the public highway. The improved track would provide access for both construction/erection and then ongoing maintenance purposes. The track would have a width of approximately 4m and will be constructed with permeable crushed aggregate. Where the track does not currently exist, it is proposed to extend the existing track using the same materials and specifications to facilitate access from the public highway network to the application site itself.
- 5.9 A new small scale car parking/turning area is also proposed adjacent to the proposed solar farm site, which would also be constructed with permeable crushed aggregate.
- 5.10 In terms of access to the site during the construction/erection phase of the development, a Construction Traffic Access Routing Plan accompanies the application, showing the route between the A494 Trunk Road and the application site entrance. It is anticipated that temporary traffic calming measures and access requirements can be progressed with the Local Highway Authority as streetworks applications. A Construction Traffic Management Plan could be secured by way of condition if deemed necessary, as part of which exact arrangements would be confirmed and approved.
- 5.11 The layout of the scheme has been designed to ensure that all trees and field hedgerows can be retained wherever possible. The exception being the loss of a small section of 'Hedgerow 4' (H4) as is detailed within the accompanying Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. This small loss is required to facilitate site access. However, apart from this, the development would utilise existing field gateways and existing gaps in hedgerows, rather than require the removal of any significant lengths of hedgerow.
- 5.12 The proposed solar arrays and improved access track would also be sited appropriately away from existing trees and hedgerow so as to avoid any adverse impacts upon them, as is recommended within the accompanying Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- 5.13 The proposed landscaping as detailed on the submitted plans/drawings has been designed to fit the surrounding landscape character, improve the biodiversity, structure, and connectivity of the vegetation resource and provide screening / filtering of the proposed development while minimising potential shading of the proposed solar panels.
- 5.14 The land would be retained within agricultural use with the land between and beneath the panels used for seasonal sheep grazing.

- 5.15 At the end of the 40-year operational lifespan of the solar farm, the site would be restored back to full agricultural use with all equipment and below ground connections removed.
- 5.16 However, the landscape enhancement measures would remain, providing long-term benefits to the local landscape character of the area. It is envisaged that the decommissioning of the solar farm would take approximately three months in total. It is anticipated that full details concerning decommissioning arrangements would be subject to suitably worded conditions.

## 6.0 Planning Policy Context

6.1 This section of the statement identifies the national and local planning policy and guidance pertinent to the development proposal and the development site.

6.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) requires that all planning applications be determined in accordance with the relevant Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Welsh Government's Development Management Manual (DMM) confirms this requirement of the Act and states:

***“Factors to be taken into account in making planning decisions (material considerations) must be planning matters; that is, they must be relevant to the regulation of the development and use of land in the public interest, towards the goal of sustainability.”***

6.3 The current development plan for Denbighshire comprises the adopted Denbighshire Local Development Plan (2006-2021), which was adopted by the Council on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

6.4 In addition, *Future Wales: The National Plan 2040* comprises the national development plan for Wales, and was introduced by the Welsh Government in 2021.

6.5 Denbighshire County Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Renewable Energy is also of relevance.

6.6 Nationally, the following are noted to be of relevance in the assessment of the planning application:

- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024)
- Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation & Planning (2009)
- Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)
- Technical Advice Note 18: Transport (2007)
- Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development (2014)
- Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (2017)



## Development Plan

6.7 A series of objectives are set out within the adopted Denbighshire LDP which identify issues and needs within Denbighshire. The LDP policies aim to address these objectives. Objective 11 refers to 'Energy' and confirms that:

***“The Local Development Plan will ensure that Denbighshire makes a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gases through both supporting the principle of large wind farm development within identified zones and other suitable renewable energy technologies, and ensuring that all new developments are built to minimise their carbon footprint.”***

6.8 The key policies relevant to the Proposed Development are:

- Policy VOE10- Renewable energy technologies
- Policy PSE15 – Safeguarding minerals
- Policy RD1 – Sustainable development and good standard design
- Policy RD5 – The Welsh language and the social and cultural fabrics of communities
- Policy PSE5 – Rural economy
- Policy VOE1 – Key Areas of importance
- Policy VOE2 – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Outstanding Beauty
- Policy VOE5 – Conservation of natural resource
- Policy VOE6 – Water Management

6.9 Policy VOE 10 refers to 'Renewable energy technologies' and states:

***“Development proposals which promote the provision of renewable energy technologies may be supported providing they are located so as to minimise visual, noise and amenity impacts and demonstrate no unacceptable impact upon the interests of nature conservation, wildlife, natural and cultural heritage, landscape, public health and residential amenity. In areas that are visually sensitive, including the AONB, Conservation Areas, World Heritage Site and Buffer Zone and in close proximity to historic buildings, visually intrusive technologies will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no negative impact on the designation or there is an overriding public need for development.”***

6.10 The application site lies within a Mineral Safeguarding Area (Sand and Gravel). Policy PSE15 of the Local Development Plan relates to 'Safeguarding Minerals' and states:-

***“High quality resources of minerals, including limestone, sand and gravel, Denbigh Gritstones, igneous and volcanic deposits will be safeguarded***

**from development that would result in its permanent loss or hinder future extraction. Development will only be permitted where:**

- i. It can be demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to protect the mineral resource; or**
- ii. Where such development would not have a significant impact on the viability of that mineral being worked; or**
- iii. Where the mineral is extracted prior to the development."**

6.11 Policy RD1 refers to 'Sustainable development and good standard design'. This policy seeks to ensure that all new developments enhance and respect their surroundings. Policy RD1 refers only to development within development boundaries. The application site is located outside of any defined settlement limits and is therefore considered to be located within the open countryside in planning terms.

6.12 Policy RD5 sets out provisions relating to the Welsh language and states:-

***"In determining all planning applications, the needs and interests of the Welsh language will be taken into account. Development could be refused if its size, scale or location would cause significant harm to the character and language balance of a community...Developers will be expected to provide bilingual signage as a minimum means of promoting the Welsh Language."***

6.13 Policy PSE5 relates to the 'Rural Economy' and confirms:-

***"In order to help to sustain the rural economy, tourism and commercial development, including agricultural diversification, will be supported throughout the County subject to detailed criteria, which include making a significant contribution to sustainable development and recognising the special status of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty/Area of Outstanding Beauty."***

6.14 Policy VOE1 sets out how 'key areas of importance' should be protected, this policy states:-

***"The following areas will be protected from development that would adversely affect them. Development proposals should maintain and, wherever possible, enhance these areas for their characteristics, local distinctiveness, and value to local communities in Denbighshire:***

- Statutory designated sites for nature conservation;**
- Local areas designated or identified because of their natural landscape or biodiversity value;**
- Sites of built heritage; and**
- Historic Landscape, Parks and Gardens."**

6.15 Policy VOE2 refers to 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Outstanding Beauty' and confirms:-

***"In determining development proposals within or affecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Area of Outstanding Beauty (AOB), development that would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the landscape and the reasons for designation will not be permitted."***

6.16 Section 8 of the adopted Denbighshire SPG on renewable energy outlines the key land use planning considerations in relation to solar energy schemes and includes:

- Landscape and Visual Impact
- Landscape Mitigation
- Noise
- Ecology
- Historic Environment
- Aviation
- Site security, safety and lighting; and
- Glint and glare.

6.17 The relevant key land use planning considerations outlined in this SPG have been considered within this statement and also within the accompanying technical assessments.

### National Policy

6.18 Edition 12 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) was published in February 2024 and sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Welsh Government Circulars, and policy clarification letters, which together with PPW provide the national planning policy framework for Wales.

6.19 The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system delivers sustainable development by improving the social, economic and environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. PPW confirms that ***"a well functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places."***

6.20 PPW sets out five key principles which underpin the Welsh Government's approach to sustainable development to ensure the right development is located in the right places. The five key principles are:

- Growing our economy in a sustainable manner – the planning system should enable development which contributes to long term economic well-

being, making best use of existing infrastructure and planning for new supporting infrastructure and services.

- Making best use of resources - The efficient use of resources, including land, underpins sustainable development. The planning system has a vital role to play in making development resilient to climate change, decarbonising society and developing a circular economy for the benefit of both the built and natural environments and to contribute to the achievement of the wellbeing goals.
- Facilitating accessible and healthy environments - Our land use choices and the places we create should be accessible for all and support healthy lives.
- Creating and sustaining communities - The planning system must work in an integrated way to maximise its contribution to well-being.
- Maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact - Natural, historic and cultural assets must be protected, promoted, conserved and enhanced. Negative environmental impacts should be avoided in the wider public interest. This means acting in the long term to respect environmental limits and operating in an integrated way so that resources and/or assets are not irreversibly damaged or depleted.

6.21 PPW Paragraph 3.59 relates to the best and most versatile agricultural land, and reads:

***“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 or 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.”***

6.22 In referring to climate change and the sustainable management of natural resources (paras 3.30 – 3.32), PPW states:

***“In 2019 the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in order to co- ordinate action nationally and locally to help combat the threats of climate change. The planning system plays a key role in tackling the***

***climate emergency through the decarbonisation of the energy system and the sustainable management of natural resources. The transition to a low carbon economy not only brings opportunities for clean growth and quality jobs, but also has wider benefits of enhanced places to live and work, with clean air and water and improved health outcomes.***

***The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets a legal target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Wales by at least 80% in 2050. The Act also requires a series of interim targets (for 2020, 2030 and 2040) and carbon budgets. The budgets set a limit on the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions in Wales over a 5-year period to serve as stepping stones and ensure progress is made towards the decadal targets.***

***In May 2019 the Climate Change Committee published its recommendation for the UK to set a net zero target for 2050. It recommended Wales set a 95% target as our fair contribution to the UK effort. The Welsh Government accepted this recommendation, but is seeking to go beyond 95% to reach net zero. In October 2021 the Welsh Government published its Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 Plan. This Plan focuses on our second carbon budget (2021 – 2025) and looks beyond this time period to start building the foundations for Carbon Budget 3 and our 2030 target, as well as net zero by 2050.***

6.23 Paragraphs 5.9.14 and 5.9.15 relate to renewable and low carbon energy development. They state:

***“Planning authorities should support and guide renewable and low carbon energy development to ensure their area’s potential is maximised. Planning authorities should assess the opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy in the area, and use this evidence to establish spatial policies in their development plan which identify the most appropriate locations for development of energy developments below 10MW...”***

***Outside identified areas, planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy developments should be determined based on the merits of the individual proposal. The local need for a particular scheme is not a material consideration, as energy generation is of national significance and there is a recognised need to optimise renewable and low carbon energy generation. Planning authorities should seek to ensure their area’s renewable and low carbon energy potential is achieved and have policies with the criteria against which planning applications outside of identified areas will be determined.”***

6.24 Paragraph 5.9.19 of PPW adds:

***“In determining applications for the range of renewable and low carbon energy technologies, planning authorities should take into account:***

- ***the contribution a proposal will make to meeting identified Welsh, UK and European targets;***
- ***the contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and***
- ***the wider environmental, social and economic benefits and opportunities from renewable and low carbon energy development."***

6.25 As noted, the Welsh Government published its first National Development Plan in February 2021; namely Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (FW).

6.26 FW confirms that ***"generating renewable energy is a key part of our commitment to decarbonisation and tackling the climate emergency."*** FW recognises that there is an opportunity for Wales to ***"become a world leader in renewable energy technologies."*** To enable this the Welsh Government have set out the following targets for the generation of renewable energy:

- ***"For 70% of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030."***
- ***For one gigawatt of renewable energy capacity to be locally owned by 2030."***
- ***For new renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership by 2020."***

6.27 Policy 17 of FW refers to Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated infrastructure and confirms that: ***"The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs."***

***In determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision-makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency...***

***Applications for large-scale wind and solar will not be permitted in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and all proposals should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment."***

***Proposals should describe the net benefits the scheme will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities. New strategic grid infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of energy should be designed to minimise visual impact on nearby communities. The Welsh Government will work with stakeholders, including National Grid and Distribution Network Operators, to transition to a multi-vector grid network and reduce the barriers to the implementation of new grid infrastructure."***



## 7.0 Review of Main Planning Considerations

### Principle of Development

- 7.1 The principle of new renewable energy development is supported strongly at a national scale in policy and legal commitments to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions. Key UK and Welsh Government Policy and legislation is summarised within Sections 3 and 6 of this statement and confirms the immediate and pressing need for deployment of renewable energy generation, derived legally binding obligations for renewable energy development. This development would provide significant assistance in achieving the obligations as part of the transition to a low carbon economy.
- 7.2 A key objective of the Denbighshire LDP, forming the current development plan relevant to this application, is to ensure Denbighshire makes a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gases. LDP Policy VOE 10 confirms in principle support for renewable energy development, subject to consideration of impacts (which is undertaken below).
- 7.3 Subsequent to the adoption of the LDP, Denbighshire County Council declared a 'climate emergency' in July 2019 and is developing plans to become a net carbon zero Council by 2030. Denbighshire County Council's replacement LDP is currently in development, but this includes provision to plan positively for the provision of renewable energy generation.
- 7.4 At the national level, PPW confirms that considerable weight should be attached to the need to produce more energy from renewable and low carbon sources in order for Wales to meet its carbon and renewable targets. The Welsh Government is aiming to generate at least 70% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030, whilst it has a legally binding target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050. In June 2019 the Welsh Government confirmed its target to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in response to recommendations by the Committee on Climate Change. The Energy Generation in Wales 2018 report identifies how, of all electricity generated in Wales, 25% is from renewable sources, up from 22% in 2017. In terms of its own electrical consumption target of 70% by 2030, Wales reached the milestone of 50% electrical consumption being generated by renewable energy by 2018. In terms of progress toward the 70% target, the Energy Generating in Wales 2018 report states how renewable energy installation rates have significantly cut as a result of reductions in government subsidies and "There remain significant challenges to meeting the 70% target by 2030, notably the lack of available price support for renewable generation, as well as network constraints and network unavailability in some areas restricting the ability for new projects to connect".

7.5 The proposed development relates to the provision of a new solar farm with a generating capacity of approximately 2MW; all of which would be ‘clean’ energy from a renewable resource.

7.6 The proposal would generate renewable electricity for export to the national grid; with a connection to the grid being available within the site’s vicinity. As outlined within Welsh Government national planning policy, there is an overarching need for new renewable and low carbon generation within Wales. It is therefore clear that the principle of a solar PV development is wholly supported within national planning policy, and support is afforded to the development by Policy VOE 10 of the adopted Denbighshire LDP.

### Design & Visual/Landscape Impact

7.7 The application site is located within the Hills South of Llanellidan Visual and Sensory Aspect Area of LANDMAP, and is evaluated as being of moderate value.

7.8 The Visual and Sensory aspect area is summarised as follows:

*“A strongly undulating enclosed hilly area. Overgrown hedgerows give impression of strong tree cover, the area is bounded by the east west running river of the Clwyd (to the North) and Morwynion (to the South). The field pattern varies according to landform with the upper slopes displaying a regular open field pattern of medium to large size fields whilst to the east the lower slopes reflect the underlying topography and are consequently smaller and more intimate in scale with well maintained and vegetated hedgerows with a high incidence of hedgerow trees. Settlement pattern is limited to valley side slopes and lower flanks with only isolated farmsteads on the more remote upper areas. Single and pairs of turbines are located in the area and Wern Ddu windfarm is visible to the north.”*

7.9 The LANDMAP Visual and Sensory evaluation for the aspect area confirms that the area has a distinct but ‘not overly strong sense of place’.

7.10 As noted, the application site and its wider surroundings comprise an undulating landscape with varying topography. The application site is currently bound on all sides by mature hedgerows with several interspersed mature native species trees. The result of the natural landform and topography, along with the existing natural screening, is that the application site itself is of only limited public visibility within the wider landscape setting.

7.11 The nature of the proposed development, being a development of low-lying solar PV panels, would also aid in helping to ensure the development would not cause any detrimental impact upon the character of the host landscape.

7.12 It is also important to note that the development would lie within very close proximity to the large-scale existing industrial premises at Tyn Llidiart Industrial



Estate and the wider settlement and its associated built development at Clawdd Poncen. Indeed, the proposed development would not be located within a wholly rural landscape but would be viewed very much within the context of, and against the backdrop of, the existing large-scale built development nearby.

- 7.13 It is noted the boundary of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB lies approximately 0.5km to the east of the application site. However, and importantly, when viewed from this direction, owing to the undulating site topography and the backdrop of the industrial estate, the development would not cause any adverse impacts upon the special qualities of the AONB landscape.
- 7.14 The site layout has been designed sensitively, to ensure the solar panels would be sited in the least prominent and visible location possible; where the natural topography of the land and existing natural screening features would help to minimise the visual impacts of the development to the greatest extent possible.
- 7.15 Notwithstanding the above, additional native species tree planting is proposed within the field parcel on land under the ownership of the Applicant; which would further help to limit any views of the development from the AONB and would ensure the proposed solar farm would be assimilated fully into the landscape.
- 7.16 It is considered that in light of the above, the development is acceptable in visual terms owing to its nature, sensitive design and siting, and the industrial context of the site's environs and the natural existing screening afforded to the site by way of existing trees and hedgerows.
- 7.17 In light of the above, no adverse or unacceptable landscape visual impacts are anticipated and the development would be in accordance with the requirements of Policies VOE 2 and VOE 10 of the LDP.

#### Impact on Neighbouring Residential Amenity

- 7.18 The development does not have the potential to cause any adverse impacts upon neighbours by way of overbearing and overshadowing effects.
- 7.19 In terms of the potential for glint and glare effects, whilst a Glint & Glare Assessment has not been commissioned, owing to the limited scale of the proposals and the fact all boundaries would be screened by existing and proposed native species hedgerows, it is considered there would be no requirement for additional mitigation measures in this regard on this occasion.
- 7.20 With regards noise, the closest residential property to the proposed transformer room/substation would be approximately 200m to the south-west; with the nearby industrial premises at Tyn Llidiart lying between the two. As a

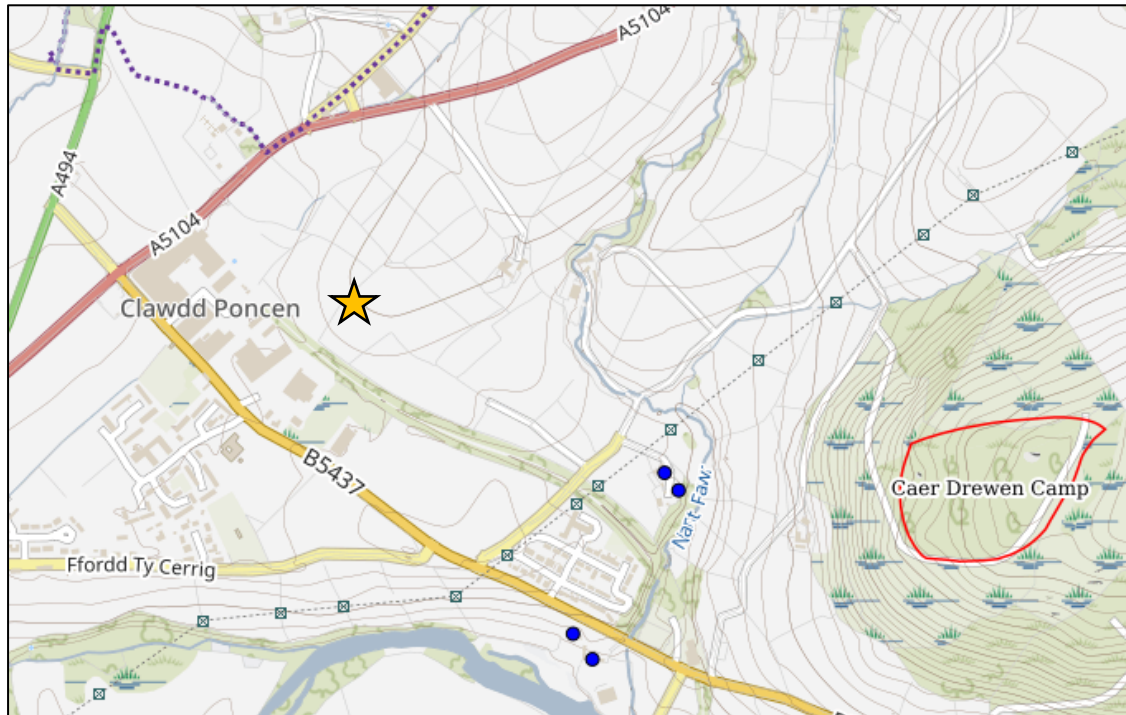
consequence, it is considered there would be no adverse noise impacts associated with the development over and above existing background noise levels.

### Ecology, Trees & Green Infrastructure

- 7.21 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the application site and its surroundings accompanies this planning application submission. Please refer to this separate report for a full assessment of the proposal's likely ecological impacts.
- 7.22 The PEA confirms the application site to be of low ecological value owing to its intensive agricultural use and improved condition. Further, the report confirms the hard surfacing of the access track with crushed aggregate would not have the potential to cause any adverse ecological effects.
- 7.23 The report does identify that a small section of existing mature native species hedgerow would be lost in order to facilitate site access; however owing to the small section which would need to be removed, this would not cause any significant ecological effect on a site-wide level.
- 7.24 It is confirmed that all mature trees on-site would be retained as part of the development; ensuring no adverse arboricultural effects would arise as a consequence of the development.
- 7.25 The submitted PEA also advises there would be no adverse impacts upon protected species caused by the development, although general avoidance measures are outlined within Part 6.2 of the submitted report in any case. Adherence to these will be ensured throughout the proposed development.
- 7.26 Net benefit for biodiversity is also proposed in-line with the submitted Biodiversity Enhancement Plan. The proposed measures would ensure the development achieves a net biodiversity benefit and it is considered the proposed measures are commensurate to the scale of the development.
- 7.27 A Green Infrastructure Statement accompanies this application, as well as measures proposing a net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) in accordance with Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12).

### Heritage

- 7.28 As noted, two Grade II Listed Buildings lie approximately 0.5km to the south-east of the main solar site, whilst the Caer Derwen Scheduled Monument lies approximately 1km distant to the south-east. The locations of the designated historic assets are indicated below within Figure 3; the yellow star represents the location of the application site, the blue dots represent listed buildings and the red-line area represents the Scheduled Monument:



**Figure 3: Location of designated historical assets within application site's vicinity (source: CADW)**

7.29 As noted within the Design & Landscape/Visual Impact section of this statement, the majority of views of the proposed development from locations to the east would be screened by a combination of the site's undulating topography along with existing and proposed screening afforded to the site by native species trees and hedgerows. Thus, it is considered there would be limited inter-visibility between the proposed solar farm and the heritage assets identified above.

7.30 Special regard must be paid to the significance of preserving and enhancing the setting of the assets identified. However, through the site design put-forwards and the inclusion of additional soft landscaping proposals within the plans, it is considered that there would be no harmful impacts caused upon the setting of the Grade II listed buildings and the scheduled monument in this instance.

7.31 The development is also justified in this location as meeting a clear policy and 'on-the-ground' need for new renewable energy sources. Thus, the limited impact the development would cause upon the setting of the heritage assets is justified in planning terms, and this must be given weight within the planning balance.

7.32 The application therefore complies with PPW requirements with regard to heritage and the LDP, including the requirements of Policy VOE 10 in this

respect, as well as TAN 24 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

### Highway Safety & Access

- 7.33 As noted, the proposed development would be accessed via an existing field access onto Ffordd Prenol, which would be improved by translocating the existing hedgerows either side of the access to create improved visibility splays, and by widening the access. The area of the access is within the Applicant's ownership and thus the proposed improvements to the access could be secured and controlled through the use of suitably worded conditions.
- 7.34 The application is accompanied by a Construction Traffic Access Routing Plan, which highlights in yellow the route construction traffic would take between the site access off Ffordd Prenol and the A494 Trunk Road. All road junctions along this route benefit from sufficient visibility so as to avoid any adverse impacts upon highway safety.
- 7.35 Owing to the constrained nature of Ffordd Prenol with regards road width, it is anticipated that temporary traffic calming measures and access requirements can be progressed with the Local Highway Authority as streetworks applications. There is also a commitment to avoid the use of HGV construction traffic where possible; with lots of the infrastructure being able to be brought onto the site via smaller lorries, 4X4s and trailers so as to avoid unnecessary transport movements by HGVs along Ffordd Prenol wherever possible. Owing to the limited scale of the proposed solar farm, it is anticipated that 'construction' would take place over a period of around 5 weeks, and thus any impacts caused by construction traffic would be over a very limited timescale. The Applicant is happy to accept a condition to secure a Construction Traffic Management Plan, as part of which exact arrangements would be confirmed and approved.
- 7.36 During the operational life of the development, only a negligible number of light vehicle movements will be generated; causing no appreciable impact upon highway safety within the application site's vicinity.
- 7.37 No unacceptable adverse impacts from traffic and transport during the construction and operation of the development are envisaged.

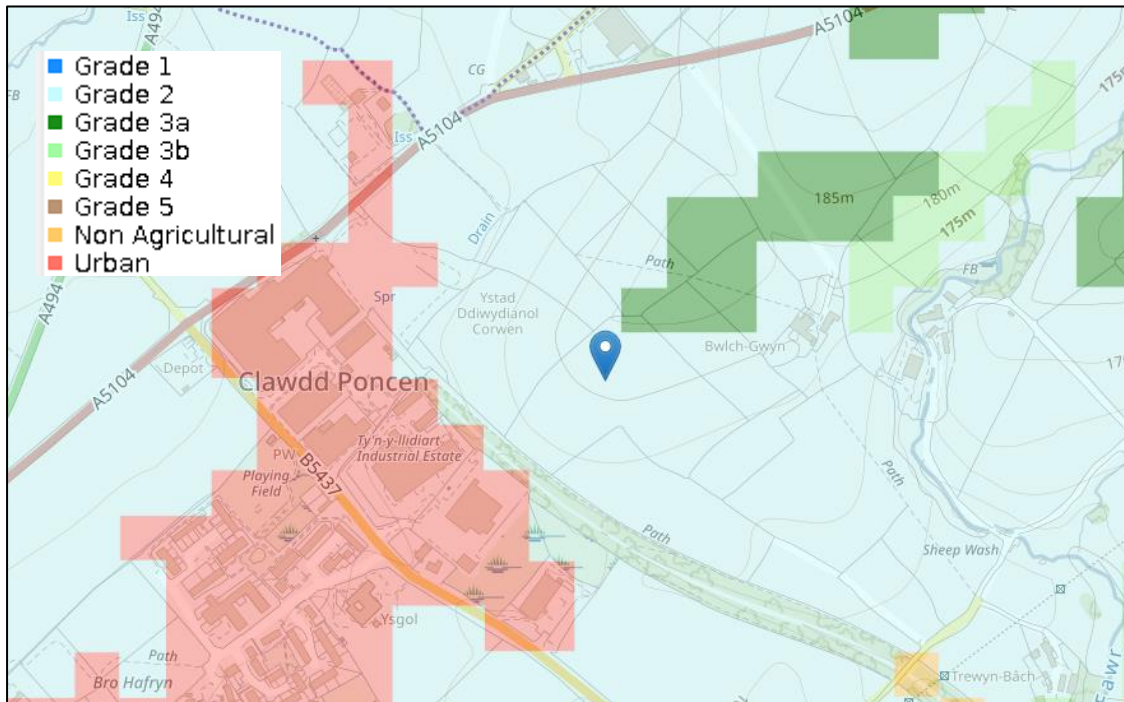
### Agricultural Land

- 7.38 The Welsh Government's Agricultural Land Classification Predictive Map identifies that the majority of the application site comprises Grade 2 agricultural land; with a small section being of Grade 3a quality.

7.39 Paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59 of PPW (Edition 12) confirm that agricultural land of grades 1, 2 and 3a is the best and most versatile and should be conserved for the future. It goes on to state that whilst considerable weight should be given to the protection of BMV land from development, land in grades 1, 2 and 3a can be developed where 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.

7.40 The need for the development is clear and unquestionable given the renewable energy and climate emergency context outlined within Sections 3 and 6 of this statement. Indeed, it is clear that if the UK and Wales are to meet their commitments on carbon reduction and renewable energy production, further renewable energy schemes are going to be required right across the nation. The application site has been identified as an ideal small-scale solar site given the lack of any ecological, landscape and heritage designations on-site and the availability and proximity of the national grid network nearby.

7.41 Figure 4 below is an excerpt from the Welsh Government's Agricultural Land Classification Predictive Map, and clearly shows that there is a distinct lack of lesser quality agricultural land within the vicinity in which to alternatively site the development.



**Figure 4: Welsh Government Agricultural Land Classification Predictive Map (source: DataMapWales)**



- 7.42 In light of the above, it is clear that no land of a lesser quality within the vicinity and within the ownership of the Applicant is available to house the proposed development, and therefore sequentially, there are no preferable sites within the area.
- 7.43 Given that the area of the proposed solar development itself only measures approximately 2.1 hectares, it is also noted that the extent of land ‘take up’ would be very limited and as such the impact upon the availability of BMV land within the area would be negligible.
- 7.44 Furthermore, the development proposed is for a time-limited period and does not involve the permanent loss of BMV land – it is temporarily unavailable but could be returned to a full agricultural use in the future.
- 7.45 The land would also be retained within agricultural use with the land between and beneath the panels used for seasonal sheep grazing. It is considered that this would provide some mitigation for the temporary loss of BMV land. In addition, there would be significant biodiversity enhancements. The soil is also likely to benefit from being taken out of arable production through an extended fallow period. These constitute benefits of the scheme.
- 7.46 Therefore, the proposed development complies with the requirements of PPW Paragraph 3.59 and is justified at this location despite comprising some best and most versatile agricultural land.

### Minerals

- 7.47 The application proposal forms part of a wider area of land safeguarded for sand and gravel extraction within the adopted LDP. The temporary nature of the proposed development means that it would not lead to the permanent or long term sterilisation of this mineral resource across the development site.
- 7.48 Thus, the proposals safeguard the mineral resource and do not conflict with the requirements of LDP Policy PSE15.

### Welsh Language

- 7.49 The proposed development of a solar farm would not affect the demographics of the population and, once constructed, would result in the need for relatively few visits from contractors for maintenance. Accordingly, there would be very limited effect on the character and language balance of the local community, and therefore not conflicting with LDP Policy RD5 or national policy requirements outlined within PPW and FW concerning the protection of the Welsh Language from inappropriate development.

## 8.0 Summary & Conclusions

- 8.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Roger Parry & Partners LLP on behalf of Mark and Nadine Budgen ("the Applicant") in support of a full planning application for a 2MW solar farm and associated infrastructure at Land at Trewyn Bach, Clawdd Poncen, Denbighshire ("the Application Site").
- 8.2 The development will support the UK Government's intention to move to a low carbon economy.
- 8.3 The Development Plan for the area relevant to the application comprises the Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021 (Adopted 4th June 2013). Denbighshire County Council have also published a Renewable Energy Supplementary Guide (April 2016). Denbighshire County Council are also currently preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (2018-2033). National planning policy and guidance is also a material consideration in the determination of this planning application. The proposal has been shown to be in compliance with the relevant Development Plan policies.
- 8.4 The impacts of the proposal have been shown to be acceptable and, where necessary, mitigation measures have been set out to reduce potential impacts of the proposed development.
- 8.5 The temporary and reversible nature of the development, together with the landscape/biodiversity enhancements will ensure that the site can be restored to its current use. The environmental benefits as well as the increased production of energy from renewable sources represents a significant case in favour of the development proposals.
- 8.6 This statement demonstrates that, upon considering the following matters, this proposal, on balance falls well within the scope of acceptability:
- The unquestionable need for the renewable energy development given the UK and Welsh Government's clean energy and carbon reduction targets;
  - Broad compliance with the Development Plan and national planning policy guidance contained within PPW and FW;
  - The significant benefits associated with the scheme; and
  - The relatively benign impacts associated with the development.
- 8.7 Accordingly, the proposal represents sustainable development and, as such, this planning application should be approved without delay.