

Code No. and Date Received	Name and Address of Applicant	Description and Location of Proposed Development
15/0433/FULL 30.06.2015	Pearmat Solar 4 Limited Ms Y Qin 55 Baker Street London W1U 7EU	Create 4.1MW solar farm, consisting of around 15,796 solar modules, on-site access tracks, substation, three combined inverter/transformer stations, underground cables, perimeter fencing and CCTV cameras Pen-y-fan Farm Pen-y-fan Farm Lane Manmoel Blackwood NP12 0HZ

APPLICATION TYPE: Full Application

SITE AND DEVELOPMENT

Location: Pen-y-fan Farm, Pen-y-fan Lane, Manmoel, NP12 OHZ. The site of the development is situated approximately 350m south-east of Pen-y-fan Farm, Manmoel Road, Blackwood. It is 0.4km to the west of the settlement of Pentraepod and approximately 0.4km north-west of the Oakdale Industrial Estate, which is beyond the Pen-y-fan Pond country Park.

Site description: The site is located on the eastern side of Manmoel Road and comprises seven agricultural fields. The fields are enclosed by fragmented hedgerows with mature hedgerow trees.

The site is gently sloping, rising up from approximately 305metres (m) above Ordnance Datum (AOD) in the south-eastern corner to 330m in the north-western corner.

Pen-y-fan Pond Country Park lies adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the site and the area is traversed by a number of Public Rights of Way (PROW) that run alongside and to the east of the proposed development. There are no PROW within the site.

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Pen-y-fan Caravan and Leisure Park is located approximately 220m to the north of the site on the opposite side of Manmoel Road.

The proposed development would be accessed from the north-west of the site via a turning off Manmoel road through an existing gate which would require widening.

Development: Full planning permission is sought in respect of a proposed 4.1MW solar farm. The scheme consists of around 15,796 solar modules, on-site access tracks, substation, three combined inverter/transformer stations, underground cables, perimeter fencing and CCTV cameras.

The proposals are for rows of fixed solar photovoltaic panels with a maximum height of 2.18m above ground level, enclosed by a 1.8m high tensile steel deer fence. Within the solar farm are other small structures, namely the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) sub-station and control building, and three inverter stations.

The application has been supported by a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Flood Consequences Assessment, Ecology Report prepared by Soil Environment Services Ltd dated May 2015, Agricultural Land Classification, a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment prepared by Cotswold Archaeology dated May 2015, A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared by LDA Design dated June 2015, Traffic and Transport Plan dated June 2015

Dimensions: The site area is 10.6 hectares. The proposed 4.1MW solar park consists of approximately 15,796 solar PV 260 watt modules mounted on approximately 359 tables (44 modules per table). The modules will be mounted in landscape formation, four panels high on double pile table structures.

Materials: Each solar array comprises a series of black/blue glass/plastic panels supported on a metal frame to allow air to circulate and prevent overheating. The individual modules measure 1.66m x 0.99m x 0.04m in thickness. When assembled on the table structures, the panels will be orientated to measure 2.18m at the back (highest point) and 0.6m off the ground at the front (lowest point) set at an inclination of 20 degrees. The rows of panels will be spaced 3.5m between rows to avoid overshadowing. The table structures are supported by steel posts 50mm in diameter which are directly rammed approximately 1.8m into the ground. The rammed foundation posts will be spaced approximately 3m intervals.

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Areas identified as archaeologically sensitive, where ramming is not suitable, will either avoid the placement of structures or will use concrete feet to mount the structures on top of the terrain. Conduits will run along the back of each row of panels linking each to an individual electrical connection box. Each connection box is mounted on the back of the panel structures. Each string of panels will then feed to the nearest of the three combined inverter/transformer housings.

Inverter/transformer station measures 6.1m x 2.6m x 2.9m in height.

DNO sub-station 12.3m x 7.3m x 6.4m constructed of red brick and slate roof.

A grid connection offer is in place to connect into the nearby 33kV grid.

Ancillary development, e.g. parking: None.

PLANNING HISTORY 2005 TO PRESENT

No previous planning history.

POLICY

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Site Allocation: In the open countryside with the south easternmost field of the site lying within the Pen-y-fan Pond and Meadows Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) (Policy NH3.49 of the LDP).

Policies:

SP2 - Development Strategy in the Northern Connections Corridor, SP6 - Place making, SP8 - Minerals Safeguarding, SP10 - Conservation of Natural Heritage, SP21 - Parking standards.

Countywide Policies

CW2 - Amenity, CW3 - Design considerations - highways, CW4 - Natural Heritage Protection, CW5 - Protection of Water Environment, CW6 - Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection, CW15 - General locational constraints, CW19 - Rural Development and Diversification, CW22 - Minerals.

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NATIONAL POLICY

Planning Policy Wales, 7th Edition July 2014, TAN 5 - Nature Conservation and Planning (2011), TAN 6 - Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010), TAN 8 - Renewable Energy (2005), TAN 12 - Design, Welsh Office Circulars 11/99 Environmental Impact Assessment, Circular 60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology, circular 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas. Welsh Assembly Practice Guidance Planning Implications of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy 2011.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Did the application have to be screened for an EIA? Yes.

Was an EIA required? No.

COAL MINING LEGACY

Is the site within an area where there are mining legacy issues? Not an issue in respect of this application.

CONSULTATION

Argoed Community Council - Object to the development, it is the perception of the Community Council that this area of natural beauty, bordering one of the Borough Council's Countryside Parks is become a 'dumping ground' for all the so-called green energy proposals.

Transportation Engineering Manager - No objection to the development subject to conditions being attached to any consent requiring the submission of a Construction Traffic Management Plan together with details

Head Of Public Protection - No objections subject to conditions being attached to any consent restricting hours of construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning, together with the provision of a noise mitigation scheme, prior to the commencement of construction works.

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Countryside And Landscape Services - Has no objection to the development but requests conditions are attached to any consent requiring details of the wearing course of all access tracks/vehicle routes through the site, finished colour of the proposed transformer and Inverter cabinets, the cladding of the substation in either stone or timber and the CCTV poles painted black together with an existing and proposed landscaping plan and a detailed Landscape and Ecology Management Plan. In addition in terms of ecology it is considered appropriate to attach a condition to any consent requiring a Construction Environment Management Plan together with a condition requiring a monitoring programme for grassland habitats, invertebrates and bats. A standard nesting bird condition should also be added as a condition.

Senior Engineer (Land Drainage) - Requests a condition is attached to any consent requiring comprehensive proposals showing how surface water and land drainage flows from the site will be dealt with. He provides advice to be conveyed to the developer in respect of land drainage matters.

Senior Arboricultural Officer (Trees) - Requests a condition is attached to any consent requiring a Tree Survey in accordance with BS5837:2012 (Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations) together with an Arboricultural Impact assessment to identify and evaluate the direct and indirect impacts on existing trees that may arise as a result of the implementation of the scheme. In addition an Arboricultural method statement is required to detail in full how the proposed works will be undertaken in relation to the retained trees on and off site.

Minerals Officer - The application site is within the sandstone safeguarding area, where development should be restricted to avoid sterilisation of the resource. However, the proposed development is temporary and there is no indication that the mineral resource is likely to be exploited within the next 25 years. Therefore, the proposal complies with policy CW22 B in the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021- Adopted November 2010.

Strategic & Development Plans – No response.

Natural Resources Wales - Has no objection to the development but provides advice to be conveyed to the developer regarding biodiversity and waste management.

Gwent Wildlife Trust - has expressed concern regarding the proximity of the panels to Pen-y-fan Pond and the potential impact on invertebrates and bats mistaking the panels for water disrupting their respective egg laying and drinking behaviour.

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Dwr Cymru - Provides advice to be conveyed to the developer.

Glam/Gwent Archaeological Trust - Has no objection to the positive determination of this application. It provides advice to be conveyed to the developer in the event any archaeological remains are discovered during the ground works.

ADVERTISEMENT

Extent of advertisement: The application has been advertised in the press, on site and 31 neighbouring properties have been consulted.

Response: 10 comprising two objections and eight letters in support.

Summary of observations:

Objections - Adverse impact upon the visual amenity of the area particularly in close proximity to the Pen-y-fan Pond country Park and Pen-y-fan Caravan and leisure Park.

Support - Good opportunity to increase the level of renewable energy generation within the local area which aligns with UK and Welsh Assembly Government policy for the promotion of sustainable energy generation.

The environmental information submitted predicts the project will have a minimal impact on the visual receptors in the area and the habitat management measures will provide the opportunity for improved biodiversity gain across the site.

SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT

What is the likely effect of the determination of this application on the need for the Local Planning Authority to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area?
There are no specific crime and disorder implications material to the determination of this planning application.

EU HABITATS DIRECTIVE

Does the development affect any protected wildlife species? No.

The south easternmost field of the application site lies within Pen-y-fan Pond and Meadows Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) (Policy NH3.49 of the Local Development Plan).

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This SINC has been designated for its marshy grassland and flush vegetation; its semi-improved neutral grassland, acid grassland and heath, standing open water body and lesser horseshoe bat roost. The SINC field within the application site supported a diverse semi-improved neutral grassland community, although it appears that this field has been ploughed in the last 12 months and possibly top soil removed so that only remnants of the habitat remained along the edges of the field. The remaining fields within the application site are agriculturally improved grassland with the field in the south west corner being the most diverse, although this has also been ploughed in the past. It is not clear whether this ploughing has been undertaken to facilitate the development of the solar farm or as part of a general programme of agricultural improvement. However due to the very recent loss of this habitat it is considered that this loss of biodiversity should be taken into account and mitigated for as part of this proposal. The applicant has proposed to manage the two fields described as poor semi-improved grassland to increase the species richness of the current swards. This is to be welcomed but details will be required on the proposed management and monitoring of these grasslands and this may be addressed by attaching appropriate conditions to any consent.

The applicant has also proposed to plant wildflower meadow and wild bird cover strips in the fields that are currently agriculturally improved which if managed appropriately will provide a net benefit for biodiversity. Details of the species composition, and subsequent management and monitoring of these new grasslands have not been provided to date and will need to be provided as a condition.

The Ecological report identified that the trees within the field boundaries have the potential to support roosting bats and breeding birds. The proposal will include the coppicing of two defunct hedges and removal of nine trees at the entrance of the site and one in the centre of the site. The impact of this on bats and birds has not been considered in the report, although during a site visit by this Council's Ecologist it appeared that these trees have the potential for nesting birds, and are unlikely to be suitable for roosting bats. However, to ensure that all species are protected during the construction period, the preparation a Construction Environmental Management Plan should be prepared and agreed with the local planning authority as a condition.

The Gwent Wildlife Trust has expressed concern regarding the proximity of the panels to Pen-y-fan Pond and the potential impact on invertebrates and bats mistaking the panels for water disrupting their respective egg laying and drinking behaviour.

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The applicants have provided a robust scientific response to the Gwent Wildlife Trust's concerns and in the absence of other scientific information, the additional information is acceptable. However it is considered appropriate to include some initial monitoring of invertebrates and bats during the first active season after the panels have been installed to confirm that there is no impact on these species. Again this may be addressed by condition.

Is this development Community Infrastructure Levy liable? No.

ANALYSIS

Policies: The development has been considered in accordance with local plan policies and national planning guidance.

National Policy is contained within Planning Policy Wales Edition 7 (July 2014) and Technical Advice note (TAN) 8: Renewable Energy (2005). PPW reflects a UK target of 15% of energy from renewables by 2020, and here in Wales "we have set a 4TWh per annum renewable electricity production by 2010 and a 7TW target by 2020 as stepping-stones to our ambition of 60% carbon savings by 2050." In order to meet these targets Welsh Government has concluded that 800MW of additional installed capacity is required from onshore wind sources and a further 200MW of installed capacity is required from offshore wind and other renewable technologies. The provision of this solar farm falls under the heading of 'other renewable technologies' and will help to contribute to this target.

There are no specific policies in the LDP relevant to the provision of large solar farms. The application site lies in the countryside for purposes of the LDP. Policy CW15 - Locational Constraints is therefore relevant. Criterion C (iv) states that development in such locations will not be permitted unless the proposal is associated with the provision of public utilities and infrastructure that cannot be reasonably located elsewhere. Policy SP10 - Conservation of Natural Heritage sets out the overarching intention that the natural heritage of the Borough, including landscape, is to be protected. Policy CW4 - Natural Heritage Protection supports this and permits proposals, which conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the distinctive or characteristic features of the Special Landscape Area. Policy CW2 sets out specific aims with regard to development, namely development should not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of adjacent properties or land, should not result in overdevelopment, and be compatible with surrounding land uses. Policy CW3 - Design considerations - Highways ensures that development satisfies and follows highway requirements.

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The proposed development raises several key issues and these are addressed as follows:-

- Principle of development.
- Use of agricultural land.
- Landscape and visual impact.
- Impact upon the historic environment.
- Ecology.
- Highway safety and access.
- Drainage.
- Duration of permission.

PRINCIPLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Policy CW19 - Rural Development and Diversification. The applicant has cited Policy CW19 as a policy consideration. The reasoned justification to Policy CW19 states "Diversification is essentially changing an existing facility that is no longer suited to its original purpose to another use that will benefit the local community, economy and people". This policy is therefore aimed at conversions and more local considerations than this proposal which is for the production of sustainable energy that has much wider implications. It is the case though that Welsh Assembly Practice Guidance Planning Implications of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy 2011 part 8.4.16 does predict that a "significant proportion of proposals for solar PV arrays will be on agricultural land" and as such can support farm diversification (as per Planning Policy Wales 2012 part 7.3).

That practice guidance explains that whilst many solar proposals will be on agricultural land it is not expected that such land should be of a high grade. The application site is not high grade in accordance with that expectation.

In terms of the principle of the development, ideally large-scale solar PV arrays should be directed towards previously developed land or Brownfield sites. However, with relatively few sites of appropriate status and size within the Caerphilly County Borough, it is considered that, subject to other considerations set out below the principle of the proposed photovoltaic development on this undeveloped land in the countryside is endorsed by planning policy as a suitable source of obtaining renewable energy to meet the energy demands of the county. The applicant advises that an assessment of other land within the county borough was considered but solar PV is highly constrained by the requirement to be close to a suitable grid connection point.

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This site has the capacity to accept additional load on the overhead lines crossing the site and therefore fulfils this critical constraint. Other barriers to development such as site access and ecological impacts have been demonstrated to be manageable. The risk of disturbing buried features of archaeological interest has shown to be low. The applicant advises that finding alternative sites, which satisfy the above criteria where the landowner embraces the development, is even more difficult.

USE OF AGRICULTURAL LAND

Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is a standardised method for classifying agricultural land according to its versatility, productivity and workability based upon interrelated parameters including climate, relief, soil characteristics and drainage. These factors form the basis for classifying agricultural land into one of five grades (with grade 3 land divided into sub grades 3a and 3b). Best and most versatile agricultural land is classified as grades 1, 2 or 3a; whereas moderate, poor and very poor quality land is designated sub grade 3b or grades 4 and 5 respectively. The ALC map for Wales shows that the site has an ALC of grade 4 across the site.

The proposal is for the temporary use of the land for the purposes of solar power generation. It is the intention of the landowner to use the land to graze sheep to prevent it from becoming overgrown and will assist eventual full restoration. The installation is capable of being decommissioned and removed from site at the end of its viable life or duration of planning permission if approved, whichever is the sooner, with the site returned to its original appearance; this would be enforced by planning condition.

LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

Objection has been received regarding the adverse visual impact the development will have in this countryside location as a result of the scale of the development and its cumulative impact with other development. The application site lies in the countryside for purposes of the LDP. Policy CW15: Locational Constraints, at criterion C, states that development in such locations will not be permitted unless the proposal is associated with the provision of public utilities and infrastructure that cannot be reasonably located elsewhere (criterion iv). Policy SP10: Conservation of Natural Heritage sets out the overarching intention that the natural heritage of the Borough, including landscape, is to be protected. Policy CW4 furthers this: Natural Heritage Protection permits proposals, which conserve, and where appropriate, enhance the distinctive or characteristic features of the Special Landscape Area. The site has no land use designations.

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The main issue in respect of this application relates to the extent of impact the PV panels would have on the landscape character of the site and its adjacent landscape and the visual impact of the PV panels on people living, working enjoying or passing through the area. The applicant has submitted a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment in respect of the proposed application, which is in accordance with what is currently regarded as best practice.

The methodology used to undertake the Appraisal of Landscape and Visual Effects is robust and in accordance with what is currently regarded as best practice. A series of matrices are used to guide the assessment of potential effects of the development upon Landscape Character and Visual receptors. This formulae approach is supplemented by professional judgement.

A study area of 4 kilometres from the centre of the application site and 7 no. representative photo viewpoints were selected following analysis of the Zone of Theoretical visibility mapping and discussions with the Council's Landscape Architect. It is considered that there is unlikely to be a significant effect upon Landscape Character and that whilst the potential effect upon users of several public rights of way, Manmoel Road and the western fringe of Pen-y-fan Country Park will be adverse in the early years of the development, the scale of these effects will be very localised and can be reduced significantly by the mitigation planting proposed for this development. It is not considered the cumulative visual effects upon landscape character to be significant and the potential cumulative visual effects can within a reasonable time period be reduced by mitigation planting.

Consequently, it is considered appropriate to attach conditions to any consent requiring details of existing and proposed landscaping (mitigation), a detailed landscape and ecology management plan and conditions requiring details of the colour of the transformer and inverter cabinets and CCTV poles, and an alternative design in respect of the sub-station.

IMPACT ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

A detailed Archaeological assessment of the potential impacts on the historic environment of the proposal was undertaken on behalf of the applicant and submitted as part of this planning application. The assessment identified no overriding heritage constraints which are likely to prohibit the development. No adverse comments have been received in respect of the same from this Council's Conservation Officer or statutory consultees. It is therefore considered the proposed development would not be in conflict with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, or with national or local planning policy.

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ECOLOGY

Policy SP10 - Conservation of Natural Heritage, Policy CW4 - Natural Heritage Protection and Policy CW6 - Trees Woodland and Hedgerow Protection of the LDP are relevant and aim to protect, conserve, enhance and manage the natural heritage of the county borough. The ecological assessment that accompanied the planning application concluded that the proposed development is not anticipated to result in any significant adverse impacts on designated sites; important habitats or protected species during the construction or operational phase and it also recommends opportunities for habitat creation. The ecological assessment has been considered by this Council's Ecologist and statutory consultees and is discussed above.

In terms of ecology and biodiversity it is considered that the proposed development does not conflict with policies CW4 and CW6 of the LDP and subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions is considered acceptable in planning terms.

HIGHWAY SAFETY AND ACCESS

Vehicular traffic, which is mainly in the construction phase of the development, is anticipated to last for approximately 3 months.

The Traffic and Transport Plan and Method Statement submitted considers the traffic impacts that could arise during construction of the proposed development and outlines the principles to manage site operations with the view to minimising any transport and traffic-related issues during the construction

The Council's Transportation Engineering Manager has considered the information submitted in support of the application and raised no objection to the development subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions as discussed above.

DRAINAGE

In this respect Policy CW5 of the LDP - Protection of the Water Environment is relevant. The flood risk assessment submitted as part of the planning application has identified that the development is not at risk of flooding. The applicant has also investigated the impact of run-off rates from the site. Existing grasses and vegetation will be maintained such that surface flows will be minimised and kept at current levels. It concludes the development's associated infrastructure will result in a very minor increase to the site's impermeable area at ground level.

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In accordance with Part H of the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended), and subject to percolation testing, it is proposed in the first instance that infiltration techniques are employed to drain this increase in impermeable areas. In this respect the design of such a scheme will be required by condition and will be considered by this Council's Senior Engineer (Land Drainage).

GLINT AND GLARE

Solar PV panels are specifically designed to absorb, not reflect, light from the sun. The PV panels are manufactured with anti-reflective coatings to be as absorbent as possible in order to maximise their efficiency in producing electricity. There have been no consultee objections in respect of this aspect of the development.

DURATION OF PERMISSION

The application seeks consent for a temporary period of 25 years and this can be conditioned within any planning permission. Once the life of the permission is reached, the recommended condition would require the site be decommissioned, all infrastructure removed and the site restored to its original state.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

TAN 8 encourages developers to take an active role in engaging with the local community on renewable energy proposals (Para. 2.15). The applicant has followed that advice and engaged with the local community in Manmoel. A community consultation meeting was held on the 9th June 2015 and in advance of the presentation 30 event letters were sent out to the community, LPA Councillors, two Community Councillors, seven local residents and two local publications. Sixteen people attended the presentation.

Comments from consultees: The concerns of the statutory consultees referred to above may be addressed by attaching appropriate conditions to any consent.

Comments from public: See above.

Other material considerations: None.

In conclusion, it is considered the selected site is appropriate in that it can accommodate the proposed solar farm without significantly affecting the landscape character and appearance of the surrounding area, and potential archaeology or the amenities of residents in the vicinity.

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The temporary and reversible nature of the development, together with the measures that are to be taken to enhance and encourage ecological diversity of the site will ensure that, in the long term, the site can not only be restored to its current use, but will also have been improved. The proposed development does not conflict with local plan policies or national planning guidance and subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions is considered acceptable in planning terms.

RECOMMENDATION that Permission be GRANTED

This permission is subject to the following condition(s)

- 01) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.
REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 02) At least 5 working days' notice in writing shall be given to the Local Planning Authority in respect of the commencement of works.
REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure construction works take place in a timely manner and to minimise disturbance to neighbouring amenity in accordance with Policy CW2 of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021- Adopted November 2010.
- 03) Notwithstanding the submitted plans, details of the colours of the external finishes of the Transformer and Invertor Cabinets together with the CCTV poles and associated attachments shall be submitted for consideration and approval in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details prior to the first use commencing.
REASON: In the interests of visual amenity.
- 04) This consent does not extend to the details submitted in respect of the external wall materials of the substation indicated on the approved drawing no. 506 Rev. A. Revised details shall be submitted for consideration and approval in writing with the Local Planning Authority, which provide for a pitched roof building with either a stone/timber clad or rendered finish to the external walls. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details prior to the first use commencing.
REASON: In the interests of visual amenity.

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- 05) Prior to the commencement of the development a scheme depicting hard and soft landscaping shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Those details shall include:
- (a) Proposed finished ground levels or contours; means of enclosure; car parking layouts; other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas; hard surfacing materials; minor structures including furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units; and
 - (b) Proposed and existing functional services above and below ground (e.g. drainage, power, communications cables, pipelines etc. indicating lines, manholes etc.); and
 - (c) Planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants, noting species, plant sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate.
- The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed scheme and all planting, seeding, turfing/hard landscaping works comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner. Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.
- REASON: In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.
- 06) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a Construction Environmental Management Plan shall be prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its agreement. The agreed plan shall be complied with during and after the completion of the development hereby approved.
- REASON: To ensure adequate protection to protected species.
- 07) Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a nature conservation and landscape management plan shall be prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for its agreement. The agreed plan shall be complied with during and after the completion of the development hereby approved.
- REASON: To ensure adequate protection to protected species.

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- 08) Within 6 months of the commencement of the development hereby approved, a monitoring programme for grassland habitats, invertebrates and bats shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The agreed management programme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details and copies of the monitoring reports submitted to the local authority in accordance with an agreed time frame.
REASON: In the interests of biodiversity.
- 09) No vegetation clearance, works or development shall take place until a scheme for the protection of the retained trees (section 7, BS59837, the Tree Protection Plan) has been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. This scheme shall where the Local Planning Authority consider appropriate include:
- a) a plan to a scale and level of accuracy appropriate to the proposal that shows the position, crown spread and Root Protection Area (para. 5.2.2 of BS5837) of every retained tree on site and on neighbouring or nearby ground to the site in relation to the approved plans and particulars. The positions of all trees to be removed shall be indicated on this plan,
 - b) the details of each retained tree as required at para. 4.2.6 of BS5837 in a separate schedule,
 - c) a schedule of tree works for all the retained trees in paragraphs (a) and (b) above, specifying pruning and other remedial or preventative work, whether for physiological, hazard abatement, aesthetic or operational reasons. All tree works shall be carried out in accordance with BS3998, 1989, Recommendations for tree work,
 - d) written proof of the credentials of the arboricultural contractor authorised to carry out the scheduled tree works,
 - e) the details and positions (shown on the plan at paragraph (a) above) of the Ground Protection Zones (section 9.3 of BS5837),
 - f) the details and positions (shown on the plan at paragraph (a) above) of the Tree Protection Barriers (section 9.2 of BS5837), identified separately where required for different phases of construction work (e.g. demolition, construction, hard landscaping). The Tree Protection Barriers must be erected prior to each construction phase commencing and remain in place, and undamaged for the duration of that phase. No works shall take place on the next phase until the Tree Protection Barriers are repositioned for that phase,
 - g) the details and positions (shown on the plan at paragraph (a) above) of the Construction Exclusion Zones (section 9 of BS5837),
 - h) the details and positions (shown on the plan at paragraph (a) above) of the underground service runs (section 11.7 of BS5837),

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- i) the details of any changes in levels or the position of any proposed excavations within 5 metres of the Root Protection Area (RPA) (para. 5.2.2 of BS5837) of any retained tree, including those on neighbouring or nearby ground,
- j) the details of any special engineering required to accommodate the protection of retained trees (section 10 of BS5837), (e.g. in connection with foundations, bridging, water features, surfacing)
- k) the details of the working methods to be employed with the demolition of buildings, structures and surfacing within or adjacent to the RPAs of retained trees,
- l) the details of the working methods to be employed for the installation of drives and paths within the RPAs of retained trees in accordance with the principles of "No-Dig" construction,
- m) the details of the working methods to be employed with regard to the access for and use of heavy, large, difficult to manoeuvre plant (including cranes and their loads, dredging machinery, concrete pumps, piling rigs, etc) on site,
- n) the details of the working methods to be employed with regard to site logistics and storage, including an allowance for slopes, water courses and enclosures, with particular regard to ground compaction and phytotoxicity,
- o) the details of the method to be employed for the stationing, use and removal of site cabins within any RPA (para. 9.2.3 of BS5837),
- p) the details of tree protection measures for the hard landscaping phase (sections 13 and 14 of BS5837).
- q) the timing of the various phases of the works or development in the context of the tree protection measures.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity.

- 10) No development shall commence until details of a scheme for the disposal of surface water and land drainage flows from the site has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the beneficial use of the development and retained in perpetuity.

REASON: To ensure the development is served by an appropriate means of drainage.

- 11) Construction, movement of materials and decommissioning works shall take place only between the hours of 0800 - 1800 Mondays to Fridays and 0800 - 1300 Saturdays and not at all on Sundays or Public Holidays.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity and to minimise disturbance to foraging/commuting bats and other nocturnal animals.

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- 12) Prior to the development commencing on the construction of any roads, drainage, or buildings hereby approved a scheme for noise mitigation shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the agreed scheme shall be employed as necessary to deal with noise arising from construction works.
REASON: In the interests of the amenity of the area.
- 13) No external lighting shall be installed or operated during the operation of the site.
REASON: In the interests of nearby amenity and to safeguard the ecological interests of the site in accordance with Policies CW2 and CW4 of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021- Adopted November 2010.
- 14) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995 (or any Order amending, replacing or re-enacting that Order), no fixed plant or machinery, buildings, structures and erections, or private ways shall be erected, extended, installed, rearranged, replaced, repaired or altered at the site without prior planning permission from the Local Planning Authority, except for those works permitted by this consent.
REASON: To protect the landscape character of the area in accordance with Policies CW4 of the LDP.
- 15) Within 25 years and 6 months following completion of construction of development, or within 6 months of the cessation of electricity generation by the solar PV facility, whichever is the sooner, the solar PV panels, frames, foundations, inverter housings and all associated structures and fencing approved shall be dismantled and removed from the site. The developer shall notify the Local Planning Authority in writing no later than five working days following cessation of power production. The site shall be subsequently restored in accordance with a scheme, the details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority no later than three months following the cessation of power production.
REASON: In the interest of visual amenity.

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- 16) The demolition or site/vegetation clearance associated with the development hereby approved shall not take place during the breeding season for birds, from March to August inclusive in any given year, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: To ensure that breeding birds are protected. All British birds, their nests and eggs (with certain limited exceptions) are protected by law under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- 17) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out only in accordance with the following plans and other submitted details: drawing nos. 501 Rev A, 502 Rev A, 503 Rev A, 504 Rev A, 505 Rev A, 506 Rev A and 507 Rev A (or any plans or details subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority as an amendment to the approved plans).
REASON: To ensure that the development is carried out only as approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 18) The development hereby approved shall not commence until after a Construction Traffic Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall provide details on the proposed size/number/frequency of delivery vehicles associated with the construction of the solar park and any mitigation measures proposed to safely manage deliveries to and from the site. The works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed plan.
REASON: In the interests of highway safety.
- 19) Prior to the commencement of works on site, a scheme to prevent mud and other debris being deposited on the public highway, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed scheme.
REASON: In the interests of highway safety.
- 20) The development shall not commence until a means of vehicular access has been constructed in accordance with details that shall have first been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: In the interests of highway safety.

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- 21) The permission hereby granted shall endure for a period of 25 years from the date when electricity is first exported from the solar farm. Written confirmation of the first export date shall be sent to the Local Planning Authority within one month of the first export date.
REASON: In order to retain effective control over the development.
- 22) Within 25 years from the date when electricity is first generated to the grid, or within six months of the cessation of electricity generation by the solar farm facility, whichever is sooner, the solar farm and all associated works/equipment shall be dismantled and removed from the site and the land restored to its former condition in line with a restoration scheme, details of which shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: In the interests of visual amenity.
- 23) Within the year prior to decommissioning of the site, and during the appropriate survey period prior to decommissioning, a full ecological survey of the site shall be undertaken to inform decommissioning, as required by Condition 22). A survey report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of decommissioning and then implemented as approved. The report shall include ecological mitigation measures, as appropriate, based on the ecological assessment findings to be followed during commissioning and beyond.
REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and biodiversity.

Advisory Note(s)

The following policy(ies) of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021 - Adopted November 2010 is/are relevant to the conditions of this permission: CW2 and CW4.

The applicant is advised of the comments of this Council's Ecologist, Countryside and Landscape Services, Senior Arboricultural Officer (Trees), Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Senior Engineer (Land Drainage) and Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water.
