

**STAGE 1 – INITIAL EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT**

1 Case Details	
A	DNS case reference DNS CAS-01391-M3G6Q9 – East Aberthaw Solar, Land at Fonmon
B	Brief description of development Photovoltaic Solar Farm with generation capacity of circa 35 MW.
2 EIA Screening Details	
2A Schedule 1	
	Is the project Schedule 1 development as described in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations? <span style="float: right;">No</span>
	<i>If Yes, under which description of development? If No, consider whether project is 'Schedule 2' development below in part 2(B).</i>
2B Schedule 2	
(i)	Is the project listed as a description of development under Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations? <span style="float: right;">Yes</span> <i>If Yes, under which description of development? If No, EIA is not required.</i>
	3(a)
(ii)	Does the project change or extend development described in paragraphs 1 to 12 of Column 1 of schedule 2, where the change or extension may have SIGNIFICANT* adverse effects on the environment? <span style="float: right;">No</span> <i>If Yes, provide reasons for your answer below. *If unsure, discuss with PET. Proceed to point (iii).</i>
	Choose an item.
(iii)	Is the project located wholly or partly within a ' <a href="#">Sensitive Area</a> ' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations? <span style="float: right;">No</span> <i>If Yes, state which area and more to Question 3. If No, proceed to point (iv) below.</i>
(iv)	Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded / met? <span style="float: right;">Yes</span> <i>If Yes, note which applicable threshold/criteria. If No, EIA is not required.</i>
	Should be filled in!
3 LPA / Welsh Ministers' Screening	
(i)	Has the LPA issued a Screening Opinion (SO)? <span style="float: right;">No</span>
(ii)	Have the Welsh Ministers issued a Screening Direction (SD)? <span style="float: right;">No</span>
4 Environmental Statement (ES)	
	Has the applicant/appellant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application? <span style="float: right;">No</span>

**Is a detailed screening assessment (Section 5) required?**

If Yes has been answered in response to either 2B(iii) or 2B(iv), send to relevant team to undertake detailed screening assessment.

If No has been answered for both questions, or the questions are not applicable, start appeal.

**Sign-off**

**Signature**

A Wilcox

**Date**

29/03/22

## STAGE 2 – DETAILED EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

As per Schedule 3, Para 3: When considering the potential impact, take into account; (a) magnitude / spatial extent / population likely to be affected; (b) nature of impact; (c) transboundary nature; (d) intensity & complexity; (e) probability; (f) expected onset / duration / frequency & reversibility; (g) cumulation with existing and / or approved development; (h) the possibility of effectively reducing the impact.

5		Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For ‘Yes/Unknown’, are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ? <i>Include consideration of features or measures to avoid or prevent what might otherwise be significant effects</i>	
<b>CRITERION 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENT</b>			
<b>Question 1(a) Size and design of the Development</b>			
Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.)?	<p>Yes. The proposed development would result in the site (some 40 ha) being altered from agricultural use to that of a circa 35 MW solar farm made up of PV Panels and associated infrastructure. The majority of the land is classified as moderate quality agricultural land (3b) and the lifespan of the proposed scheme is up to 40 years, which after that the site would be largely restored.</p> <p>As such, whilst there would be considerable physical change to the site itself during the lifespan of the development, those factors lead me to conclude that the change would not be likely to result in significant effects in EIA terms.</p>	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .	
<b>Question 1(b) Cumulation with Existing and/or Approved Development</b>			
<p>Are there any other factors which should be considered such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consequential development which could lead to environmental effects?</li> <li>• the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality?</li> <li>• any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project?</li> <li>• transfrontier impacts?</li> </ul>	<p>Yes. There are a number of proposed schemes in the vicinity of the site, most notably the decommissioning of East Aberthaw Power Station to the west of this site, and another solar farm at Land at Pen Onn, approximately 1.7km north west.</p> <p>The proposal is also predominantly within the East Aberthaw and Rhoose Green Wedge designation and is adjacent to the Nant Llancarfan Special</p>	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .	

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	<p>Landscape Area (SLA) to the immediate west of the site.</p> <p>Taking the topography of the site and surrounding area into account, whilst there is the potential for a cumulative impact given the overall scale should the two schemes come forward, it is unlikely that the overall impact would be significant in EIA terms.</p>	
<b>Question 1(c) Use of Natural Resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity</b>		
Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	<p>Yes, the proposal would require a degree of land take and use of natural resources during both the construction and operational stages.</p> <p>However, the land is only of medium agricultural quality and there is potential for a degree of material recycling at the end of the project's lifespan. Given the low degree of impact and the scale of the project, I am content that significant effects on natural resources are unlikely.</p>	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .
<b>Question 1(d) Production of Waste</b>		
Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	<p>Yes, some waste would be produced during construction and, notwithstanding the potential for some recycling of materials, the decommissioning of the equipment at the end of its lifespan would result in some solid waste.</p> <p>However, given the scale and nature of the proposed development I do not consider that significant effects are likely in terms of waste generation.</p>	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .
<b>Question 1(e) Pollution and Nuisances</b>		
Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials	No.	N/A

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely to be significant</u> ?
which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?		
Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	<p>Yes, some noise and vibrations are likely during the construction phase, though this would be localised and time limited.</p> <p>There would also be a minimal amount of noise during the operational phase and potential for redirection of light in terms of glint and glare via the reflective surface of the panels. Given the proximity of the site to Cardiff Airport and St Athan's airfield, a glint and glare assessment may be required as part of an application to ensure potential impacts are minimised and mitigated, where possible.</p> <p>Whilst these will be considerations for the decision maker, given the location of the site and the nature of the impacts, I am content that any effects in terms of glint and glare and noise would be localised and unlikely to be of a magnitude that would be significant, such that they would warrant an EIA.</p>	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .
Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to <b>air</b> , or lead to risks of contamination of <b>land</b> or <b>water</b> (including surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea)?	No.	N/A
<b>Question 1(f) Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge</b>		
Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	<p>Yes, some small risk of accident during construction, operation and decommissioning.</p> <p>However, given the scale and type of works involved, such risks are unlikely to be significant.</p>	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
<b>Question 1(g) Risks to Human Health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)</b>		
Will there be any risk to human health during the construction and/or operation of the development	Some small risk in terms of health and safety during the construction phase and routine maintenance but given the scale and nature of the works this is unlikely to be significant.	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .
<b>CRITERION 2. LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT</b>		
<b>Question 2(a) Existing and Approved Land Use</b>		
Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No.	N/A
Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location, which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	Yes, there are a number of PRow in the vicinity of the site including P4/9A/1, P4/4/1 and P4/19/1. There would inevitably be some visual change for users of those routes and potential for cumulative effects in combination with other schemes. However, given the scale of the proposed development and the localised nature of those impacts, I do not consider that they are likely to result in significant environmental effects.	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .
Are there any transport routes which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	Yes. It is acknowledged that there would be impacts generated during the construction phase. The LPA notes that whilst the road leading to the site from the main road to the southwest is relatively narrow, it is not considered that the traffic generation would be significant.  Given those factors, I do not consider that significant effects in this respect are likely.	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .
Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	Yes, the site is currently greenfield land in agricultural use. However, it is of moderate agricultural quality and the nature of the development would be such that the land could be largely restored at the end of the scheme's	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	<p>lifespan. Additionally, it could continue to be used as grazing land after construction. As such, significant effects are unlikely.</p>	
<p>Are there any areas on or around the location occupied by land uses which could be affected by the project, particularly sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities?</p>	<p>Yes. There are a number of settlements, an airfield and an airport in the vicinity of the site that may be subject to visual change. The site is also in a Green Wedge as allocated in the LDP, as well as to the west of an SLA.</p> <p>The impact of the proposal would therefore vary with the seasons, given the differing degrees of tree / hedgerow coverage to screen the development.</p> <p>Given the location of the site and its relationship to those receptors and taking account of the topography of the area and existing vegetation, there could be the potential for cumulative impacts on the site with the Land at Pen Onn nearby solar farm and the decommissioning of the Aberthaw Power Station. However, the separation between these receptors and sites is sufficient enough to state that there would not be a cumulative impact sufficient in EIA terms.</p>	<p>Significant effect <b>unlikely</b>.</p>
<p><b>Question 2(b) Relative Abundance, Availability Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources in the Area and its Underground</b></p>		
<p>Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>Yes. The site lies within a Minerals Safeguarding Area for limestone and is to the immediate west of an SLA. The site is also 1.2 km away from the East Aberthaw Coast SSSI, and NRW notes there is a drain identified along the southern boundary of the site. The impacts on the SSSI would also need to be considered.</p>	<p>Significant effect <b>unlikely</b>.</p>

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely</u> to be <u>significant</u> ?
	<p>The nature and type of development proposed would be such that there would be no permanent sterilisation of the limestone resource.</p> <p>A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would assist in minimising any potential impacts on the SSSI and neighbouring SLA. Significant effects in these respects are therefore unlikely.</p>	
<b>Question 2(c) Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment</b>		
<p>Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology, or are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora, which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>Yes. The site is surrounded by hedgerows and according to NRW, there may be European Protected Species (EPS) on / in the vicinity of the sites. The site is also within 1.2 km of East Aberthaw Coast SSSI. The Screening request submitted by the applicants notes that Phase 1 Habitat and Breeding Bird Surveys have been undertaken, however no detailed studies or findings have been provided to comment on. The Screening request does note some key mitigation that would be required, and it is proposed that this will be included in the CEMP.</p> <p>Furthermore, as noted above, there is potential for cumulative effects in combination with other proposed and consented development, notably the proposed Land at Pen Onn Solar Farm, which is 1.7 km north of the site as well as the decommissioning of the East Aberthaw Power Station. The information currently available is insufficient to conclude that significant in-combination effects would be unlikely.</p>	<p>Significant effect <b>unlikely</b>.</p>



5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely to be significant</u> ?
Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes, NRW have identified a drain running along the southern boundary of the site. However, given the type of development and works proposed, the fact that a CEMP could be readily secured by condition and the potential scale of any impacts, I do not consider significant effects to be likely.	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .
Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	<p>Whilst there are no national landscape designations in the vicinity of the site, it is located adjacent to the SLA.</p> <p>Given the location of the site and its relationship to nearby settlements and other receptors, in combination with the topography and existing vegetation, the proposal is likely to be clearly visible from adjoining public vantage points. However, I share the LPA's view that taken alone, the effects of the proposal would not be likely to be significant in EIA terms.</p> <p>However, as noted above, there is potential for cumulative effects in combination with other proposed developments in the area. Again, the topography and separation between the proposals leads me to conclude that significant in-combination effects would be unlikely.</p>	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .
Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	The proposal would be visible from surrounding settlements and other receptors including Cardiff Airport. The LPA notes that given the height of the proposal, coupled with topography, the land is likely to be clearly visible from adjoining public vantage points.	Significant effect <b>unlikely</b> .

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely to be significant</u> ?
	<p>Whilst the visual impact of the scheme will be a factor for the decision maker and in particular the cumulative effects with other development, I do not consider it likely that the magnitude of visibility would be significant.</p>	
<p>Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>Yes. There are a number of listed buildings (including Fonmon Castle) and scheduled ancient monuments (including Penmark Castle) within 3 km of the site. Cadw notes that the proposed development will not have a direct impact on the settings of any of these designated historic assets due to the topography</p> <p>Given the sensitivities in the area, additional advice was sought regarding the potential for cumulative impacts of the other known developments in the area. Cadw notes that they do not believe that the cumulative change will be significant in EIA terms, and I concur with this view.</p>	<p>Significant effect <b>unlikely</b>.</p>
<p>Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Is the project location susceptible to subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

5 Detailed Screening Questions		
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects <u>likely to be significant</u> ?
Has there already been a failure to meet environmental quality standards that is relevant to the project?	No.	N/A

**Statement of reasons**

The application site is located to the west of Cardiff Airport, north of the settlement of Rhoose and east of Fonmon. The site is predominantly within the Green Wedge designation of 'Between East Aberthaw and Rhoose' and is immediately west of the Nant Llancarfan Special Landscape Area. There are a number of listed buildings (including Fonmon Castle) and scheduled ancient monuments (including Penmark Castle) within 3 km of the site. The proposed development is a solar farm of some 35 MW capacity, along with associated access and infrastructure. Due to local topography and the presence of existing vegetation, the effects of the scheme alone on the landscape and the settings of designated historic assets are unlikely to be significant. Furthermore, whilst there are a number of consented and proposed schemes in the vicinity of the application site (e.g. the decommissioning of East Aberthaw power station and the proposed Land at Pen Onn Solar Farm), the topography, vegetation screening and separation distances between this proposal and Land at Pen Onn (of approximately 1.7 km), I believe the cumulative impact would not be significant in EIA terms. As such, I consider that the proposal is not EIA development and an EIA is not required.

6 Outcome of assessment		
(ii)	If a SO/SD has been provided do you agree with it?	N/A
(iii)	Is EIA required?	No
<b>Outcome</b>		<b>Action</b>
Schedule 2 development – threshold exceeded/ criterion met or Sensitive Area <b>and unlikely</b> to have significant effects		Issue direction stating EIA Required ( <b>Letter 1</b> )
<b>Name and Job Title of Assessor</b>	Adeline Wilcox, Planning Officer	
<b>Date of Assessment</b>	08/04/2022	