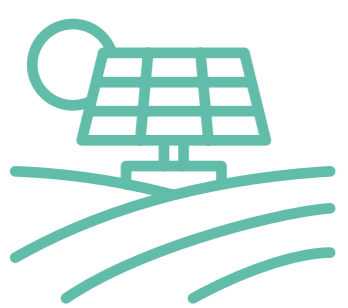


\ Environment

The following considerations will inform the final design of the development to support the planning application.

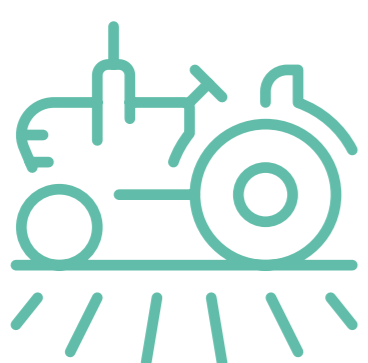


Site selection

Opportunities to deliver large scale solar farms that feed electricity into the grid network are limited due to there being few locations where there are points of connection that can accept energy back into the system.

Grid connection is a critical locational factor in identifying an appropriate solar site. The first stage of the process undertaken by the developer was to identify if the potential point of connection was able to accept energy generation and understand its capacity. In this case, 9.9MW of capacity was identified as the threshold for energy generation in this location connecting to an existing electricity substation (Waterton Primary Substation). The substation is located 1.5km west of the site. This is located within the boundary of Bridgend County Borough Council and is the point of connection for the development.

The site was identified as a location for consideration, in planning and environmental terms, following an assessment of the topology and likely solar generation potential. The environmental and technical considerations are set out below.



Agricultural land classification

The site has been chosen to avoid development on the best and most versatile agricultural land which is most suitable for farming. An assessment has been undertaken of the agricultural land quality, the results of which show the land falls within Grade 3B and 4 land quality. These grades represent moderate and poor-quality

agricultural land and therefore, is not the best and most versatile agricultural land. Solar development allows for sheep grazing below the panels to continue post development.



Landscape and visual impact

To access the impact on the landscape, a detailed Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment has been prepared for the proposal. The site has containment from wider views by the existing topography and existing trees and hedgerow to the field boundaries. Over time, the visual impact from the solar farm will be reduced further with additional tree and hedgerow planting proposed between and around the field parcels, which is incorporated into the Landscape Masterplan.



Ecology

A detailed Ecological Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assess, manage and, where appropriate, mitigate the scheme during construction and operation. The assessment outlines that direct effects on designated sites, priority habitat and protected species will be avoided, with a range of ecological enhancements proposed to protect and enhance local wildlife. These measures include landscape planting to the field boundaries. The enhancements are set out within an accompanying Ecological Management Plan.