

Planning Statement.

For development comprising of the construction and operation of a ground mounted solar farm alongside associated infrastructure, with the capacity to deliver up to 9.9MW of renewable energy

Land East of Treoes

On behalf of Windel Solar 9 Ltd

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Author: Joe Davis



Document Management.

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Contents.

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Site Description.....	4
Planning History	6
3. Proposed Development.....	7
4. Planning Policy Context.....	9
Bridgend LDP (Adopted June 2011).....	10
Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021).....	11
Other Material Considerations	14
Planning Policy Wales (Ed, 11 published February 2021).....	14
Replacement Bridgend Local Development Plan	17
British Energy Security Strategy (April 2022).....	18
Powering Up Britain (March 2023)	18
Vale of Glamorgan Council Climate Change Challenge Plan 2021–2030 (2019).....	19
Energy Generation in Wales 2022 (October 2023).....	19
Supplementary Planning Guidance	19
Renewable Energy (March 2019)	19
Mineral Safeguarding (April 2018).....	21
Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows & Development (July 2018).....	21
Design in the Landscape (2006).....	21
5. Site Identification.....	22
6. Planning Assessment.....	24
Location.....	27
Design	28
Landscape and Visual Impact.....	28
Arboriculture.....	32
Mineral Safeguarding	34
Aviation Safeguarding and Telecommunication Constraints	35
Planning Balance	35
7. Summary and Conclusion.....	37

Appendices contents.

Appendix 1.....	39
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Pegasus Group has been instructed by Windel 9 Solar Ltd (“the Applicant”) to submit a planning application for development on **Land East of Treoes, Bridgend** (approximate grid reference 295322, 178503) (“the Site/Application Site”).
- 1.2. The planning application proposes a development for the construction and operation of a ground mounted solar farm alongside associated infrastructure with the capacity to generate up to 9.9MW of renewable energy.
- 1.3. The Applicant for the Proposed Development is Windel Solar 9 Limited, a subsidiary of Windel Energy and Recurrent Energy.

Windel Energy

- 1.4. Windel Energy, founded in 2018, is a privately held company that specialises in the development and asset management of renewable energy projects and low carbon disruptive technologies.
- 1.5. Windel have more than 4 gigawatts (GW) of clean, renewable power and battery energy storage in various stages of development. Windel is at the forefront of low carbon technologies including solar, energy storage, and onshore wind.

Recurrent Energy

- 1.6. Recurrent Energy is one of the world’s largest and most geographically diversified utility-scale solar and energy storage project development, ownership and operations platforms. With an industry-leading team of in-house energy experts, we are a wholly-owned subsidiary of Canadian Solar Inc. and function as Canadian Solar’s global development and power services business.
- 1.7. Recurrent Energy has completed the development of 9 gigawatts (GWp) of operating utility-scale solar projects and 3 gigawatt hours (GWh) of energy storage projects across six continents. They have more than 25 GWp of solar and 47 GWh of battery storage projects under development.
- 1.8. The application is supported by the following documents:

Plans and Elevations:

- Site Layout – Drawing No. WIN-SOL-09-DR-03-01-01 R9
- Site Location Plan – WIN-SOL-09-DR-01-01-02 R4
- Landscape Masterplan – P23-2943_EN_009_B
- Technical Drawing Pack, including the following:
 - Typical Panel Details and Elevations – P22-2943.400
 - Typical Switchgear – P22-2943.401A
 - Typical Customer Substation – P22-2943.402
 - Typical CCTV Detail – P22-2943.403



- Typical Fence Detail – P22-2943.404
- Typical Spare Parts Container – P22-2943.405
- DNO Substation Details – P22-2943.406

Reports:

- Planning Statement;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Construction Traffic Management Plan;
- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
- Flood Consequence Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy;
- Heritage Report;
- Archaeological Evaluation Report;
- Economic Benefit Report;
- Ecological Impact Assessment;
- Ornithological Impact Assessment;
- Ecological Management Plan;
- Glint and Glare Assessment;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment;
- Agricultural Land Classification Report;
- Mineral Safeguarding Assessment;
- Noise Impact Assessment.

1.9. The planning application has been subject to the pre-application process with Vale of Glamorgan (VoG) Council and details of this are found in the next section of this Planning Statement. This version of the Planning Statement has been prepared for the purposes of pre-application consultation (PAC).

1.10. This Planning Statement provides information on the development proposal, exploring the relevant planning policy context before providing an assessment of the Proposed Development against the relevant local and national policies (as well as any other relevant material considerations).

1.11. The remaining structure of the Planning Statement is as follows:

- Section 2 provides a description of the Site, and considers its planning history along with applicable constraints;
- Section 3 describes the Proposed Development in detail;
- Section 4 sets out the relevant planning policy;



- Section 5 provides context on site identification;
- Section 6 assesses the scheme against the planning policy context;
- Section 7 summarises and concludes.

2. Site Description

- 2.1. The Application Site including the proposed cable route is approximately 18.8ha in size, with a developable area of approximately 16.5ha. The Site is located to the south east of Court Farm, Treoes, Bridgend.
- 2.2. The Site is located within the administrative area of VoG Council; however, the proposed underground cable connection routes through the administrative areas of Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC).

Figure 2.1 – Aerial photograph showing the Site development parcels in relation to its surroundings



- 2.3. The Site is located approximately 2km south east of the urban edge of the town of Bridgend. Between Bridgend and the Site there lies a further settlement of Treoes (500m to the west of the Site). To the east lies the small settlement of St Marys Hill (550m to the east of the Site). The nearest properties to the Site relate to a cluster of dwellings and outbuildings, approximately 150m to the east. Court Farm and associated outbuildings also lie 270–400m north west of the Site.
- 2.4. The Site consists of a number of agricultural fields of irregular shape and size, separated from one another by hedgerows and the occasional hedgerow tree. The topography of the Site slopes notably from north–east to south–west with levels falling from around 65m AOD down to around 25m AOD. Part of the southern boundary of the Site follows the route of the Nant Ganna Watercourse and is lined with mature riparian vegetation. The surrounding topography within the wider landscape follows similar levels that are found on the Site, rising further steadily to the north–east.

- 2.5. An existing 2.2MW solar energy development lies to the west of the Site and is a notable part of its existing character. This solar development, known as Court Farm solar, is operated by Sybac Solar International (pursuant to planning permission ref: 2015/00026/FUL). It is relevant to note that whilst the Proposed Development will share the same point of connection as the existing solar farm, the two sites are separate developments by different developers and operate independently.
- 2.6. Access to the Site is via existing field access points which run to Court Farm from the north west or via the existing solar farm access track further to the west which connects to an unnamed road to the east of Treoes.
- 2.7. In terms of public rights of way, one footpath (reference S9/42/1) runs through the south eastern parcel of the Site in an east/west direction from the settlement of Treoes through the cluster of buildings to the east.
- 2.8. The Site is currently in agricultural use (predominantly as grazing pasture). An agricultural land classification (ALC) survey has taken place which confirms the quality of the land as Grade 4 (poor quality) to the southeastern parcel, with the remainder of the Site Grade 3b (good to moderate quality). This means that none of the land is Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.
- 2.9. The Site falls within the Upper & Lower Thaw Valley Special Landscape Area (SLA), which represents a local landscape designation covering a large central area of the Borough. The Site and the surrounding area are also located within the National Landscape Character Area (NLCA) 36: Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.10. In terms of heritage, there are no heritage assets on the Site itself. Heritage assets have been identified in proximity to the Site. These include the Grade II Cross Base at St Marys Hill located 270m east of the Site. Grade II listed assets of; Treoes Farmhouse, The Star Inn Public House, Saron Welsh Congregationalist Chapel lie 650–700m to the west of the Site in the village of Treoes. The Grade II listed Church of St Marys and churchyard wall is located 650m to the north east. Furthermore, Scheduled Ancient Monuments of Ringwork & Bailey at Gelligarn and Cross in St Marys churchyard are located 300m north east and 350m north east respectively. Llangan Conservation area lies 470m south of the Site.
- 2.11. There is a grouping of locally listed and non-designated medieval and post-medieval heritage assets located to the east of the proposed Site, around St. Mary Hill Court. These include a house which is included in the local list and on the VoG Council List of County Treasures.
- 2.12. Natural Resources Wales mapping identifies that the main development parcels of the Site are located entirely in Flood Risk Zone 1 from Rivers as well as from Surface Water and Small Watercourses. Parts of the Site's access track and cable route to the south falls within Flood risk Zones 2 and 3, following the course of Nant Ganna watercourse which lies 100m to the south of the Site.
- 2.13. In terms of existing electrical infrastructure, there is an existing electricity substation (Waterton Primary Substation) 1.5km west of the Site. This is located within the boundary of BCBC and is the point of connection for the Proposed Development.

Planning History

- 2.14. The only relevant planning history for the Site was an EIA Screening Request (**Ref: 2014/00434/SC1**) for a 7.5ha solar PV farm, however, this is only a proportion of the north-east parcels of land which form part of the Proposed Development. The Screening Opinion found an EIA was not required but there was no formal planning application has been submitted for this proposal.
- 2.15. Adjacent to the south west of the Site, there is an existing 2.2MW solar farm which was granted planning permission in June 2015 (**Ref: 2015/00026/FUL**). This is known as Court Farm solar and is in operation.
- 2.16. A formal request for pre-application advice was made to VoG Council in respect of this Proposed Development on 9th March 2023 (**Ref: 2023/00036/PRE**). The response sets out the relevant constraints, planning policies and considerations. The advice offered in principle support of the proposals, due to the recognised benefits in de-carbonising energy generation and wider benefits to tackling climate change. The response goes on to provide advice in regard to a range of technical areas, which have been addressed through the relevant technical information submitted as part of this application.
- 2.17. A request was also made under Regulation 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, to determine whether the production of an Environmental Statement would be required. Requests were submitted to both VoG Council (**Ref: 2023/01050/SC1**) and BCBC (**Ref: P/23/686/SOR**). The position outlined in that request was that the development's potential environmental impacts would be addressed through the provision of supporting reports to the planning application; with regard to the Indicative Criteria and Thresholds set out within the Planning Practice Guidance and the screening criteria set out at Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, the impacts were not considered to be 'significant' such as to warrant the submission of a formal Environmental Statement.
- 2.18. The Screening Opinion was issued by VoG on 15th December 2023, confirming that an EIA is not required for the Proposed Development. VoG Council considered the characteristics, location and potential impact of the development is not likely to be significant upon the environment.
- 2.19. The Screening Opinion was issued by BCBC on 19th December 2023. The decision confirmed the proposed development is not likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location and consequently should not require an EIA.

3. Proposed Development

- 3.1. The Proposed Development comprises a ground-mounted solar panels alongside associated equipment and infrastructure. The installed capacity of the solar farm would be up to 9.9MW. The proposed solar development will involve the temporary change of use of the land over a 40 year lifetime, however, due to the time restricted nature of the development, the site will be reinstated and agricultural land use will be retained in the long term.
- 3.2. The Proposed Development comprises a solar farm within field parcels covering 16.5ha of the 18.8ha Site. The equipment and infrastructure consist of:
- Photovoltaic (PV) arrays, based on a simple metal framework and placed into the ground, eliminate the need for substantial foundations. These arrays typically have a maximum height of 2.7m;
 - A series of inverters;
 - A number of transformer and switchgear substations at various locations around the arrays;
 - Boundary fencing (very similar to deer fencing) around the edge of the Site, with gates for access;
 - A Customer Substation building and DNO Substation building;
 - An inward facing CCTV system located at strategic points around the Site;
 - Associated access tracks and cabling connecting transformer and switchgear substations;
 - Storage container(s) for spare parts and for relevant communications and monitoring equipment.
- 3.3. The equipment and infrastructure are shown on the accompanying planning application plans and further explained within the Design and Access Statement.
- 3.4. The point of connection to the grid ~~connection~~ will be taken to the north west of the Site at Waterton Primary Substation within Bridgend. The cable route is approximately 2.2km in length and will be located below ground, predominantly following the route of the highway.
- 3.5. The existing public rights of way (reference S9/42/1) will be retained through the Site, with the footpath route kept free of development other than a single access track connecting to the southern development parcel.
- 3.6. Access would be taken via a single track to the west of the Site via the existing unknown highway on the northeast corner of the settlement of Treoes. This access point connects to a shared internal access track which currently provides access to the existing Court Farm solar development. Further reference to the proposed access can be viewed in the Construction Traffic Management Plan. Once the Proposed Development is constructed, there will be minimal vehicle movements relating to servicing and maintenance of the equipment.

- 3.7. The Site has been carefully chosen (see Section 5 of this report which specifically comments upon the site selection process) taking into consideration environmental and technical constraints and planning policies. The Site is secluded relative to public viewpoints, with few residential properties neighbouring the Site, and will have a limited visual impact upon its surroundings.
- 3.8. Specifically, development has been avoided within field parcels containing sensitive environmental assets, relating to heritage, ecology and flood risk, as further explained within the Design and Access Statement. In addition, relevant stand offs from electrical equipment and watercourses have been incorporated into the indicative site layout to allow for the necessary buffer.
- 3.9. In addition, the Proposed Development will deliver a net benefit to nature through the identified ecological enhancement areas, as set out in the indicative site layout. An in-depth and thorough Ecological Management Plan has been prepared to ensure these net benefits are achieved.

4. Planning Policy Context

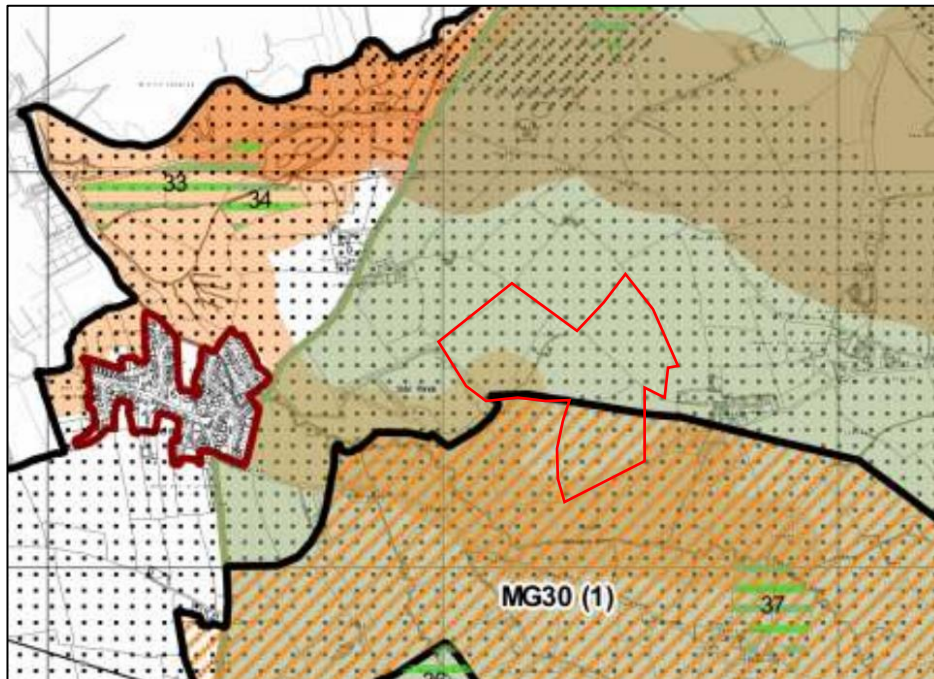
- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2. The Development Plan for the Site constitutes the Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan (LDP) (adopted June 2017). The Council are currently preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan 2021 to 2036, but this is currently at the early pre-deposit preparation and participation stage (Stage 2) and can therefore be afforded very limited weight.
- 4.3. Part of the underground cable route is located within BCBC. The Development Plan for this area is the Bridgend Local Development Plan (adopted June 2011). The Council are currently preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan 2018 to 2033 which is currently under examination (Stage 5).
- 4.4. In terms of national policy, Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (Future Wales, 2021) forms part of the statutory Development Plan.
- 4.5. Relevant material considerations include Planning Policy Wales (PPW, 2021) and accompanying Technical Advice Notes and Circulars and Policy Clarification Letters provide further detailed guidance on a range of issues which may affect development. These, and other relevant material considerations, are set out below.

Adopted Development Plan Policy

Vale of Glamorgan LDP (Adopted June 2017)

- 4.6. VoG Council formally adopted its LDP in June 2017 for the period 2011–2026. The Adopted LDP includes Strategic Policies, Community Network Sections and Policies Maps.
- 4.7. An extract of the LDP Proposals Map is included below at Figure 4.1, with the main development parcels of the Site indicated by the red line. The Site is located within a Mineral Safeguarding (Limestone 1) and Special Landscape Area. The southern parcels of the Site are designated as a Potential Solar Energy Area.

Figure 4.1 – Extract from the Vale of Glamorgan LDP Proposals Map



4.8. The relevant policies are outlined below and are summarised in Appendix 1:

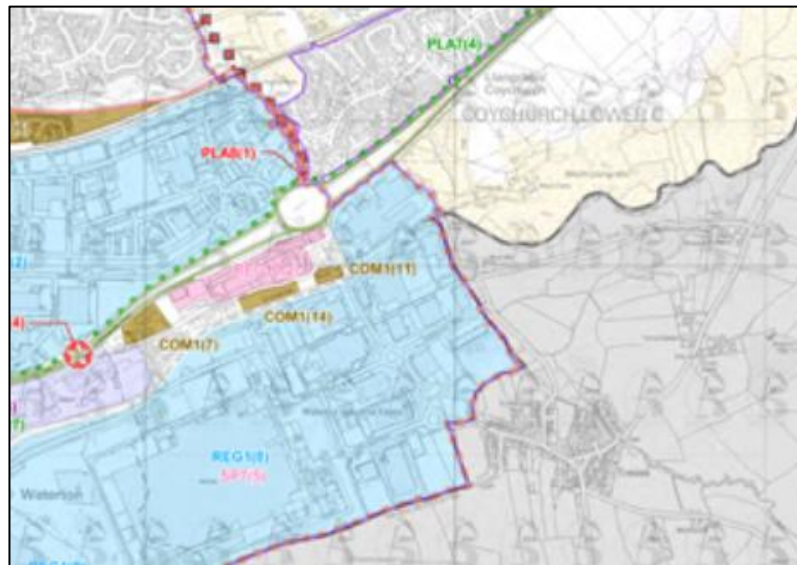
- Policy SP1 – Delivering the Strategy
- Policy SP9 – Minerals
- Policy SP10 – Built and Natural Environment
- Policy MG17 – Special Landscape Areas
- Policy MG22 – Development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas
- Policy MG30 – Local Search Areas for Solar Energy
- Policy MD1 – Location of New Development
- Policy MD2 – Design of New Development
- Policy MD7 – Environmental Protection
- Policy MD8 – Historic Environment
- Policy MD9 – Promoting Biodiversity
- Policy MD19 – Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Generation

Bridgend LDP (Adopted June 2011)

4.9. BCBC formally adopted its LDP in June 2011 for the period 2006–2021. This remains the adopted Development Plan for Bridgend until the adoption of the Replacement LDP.

4.10. Approximately 0.8km of the underground cable route falls within the administrative area of BCBC. An extract of the LDP Proposals Map is included below at Figure 4.2. The cable route runs through Waterton Industrial Estate, an allocated employment site.

Figure 4.2 – Extract from the BCBC LDP Proposals Map



4.11. The relevant policies to the proposed cable route are outlined below and are summarised in Appendix 1:

- Policy SP2 – Design and Sustainable Place Making
- Policy PLA4 –Climate Change and Peak Oil
- Policy SP4 – Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
- Policy SP5 – Conservation of the Built and Historic Environment
- Policy SP8 – Renewable Energy
- Policy ENV18 – Renewable Energy Developments
- Policy REG1 – Employment Sites
- Policy REG2 –Protection of Identified Employment Sites

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

4.12. Future Wales provides a spatial context for facilitating the delivery of development in Wales over the next 20 years and constitutes part of the development plan in line with section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

4.13. Future Wales will be used to guide both public and private investment. Welsh Government’s aim is to ensure investments and developments – whether large or small in scale – contribute to the broader ambitions of the Welsh Government and to the well-being of communities. Therefore, Future Wales will influence how communities develop over the next 20 years and it is important that we have a comprehensive understanding of the positive and negative effects this could have as the plan developed. Future Wales is the national development framework for Wales and has development plan status.

4.14. Page 15 of Future Wales identifies how Future Wales does not contain statements on all land use matters but it provides specific policies on issues which the Welsh Government

considers them to be a national policy at this time, it goes on to state “*deciding where to locate renewable energy generation technology is a spatial issue of such significance that national ambitions are unlikely to be achieved without national planning policies*”.

- 4.15. In the ‘Introduction’ to Future Wales, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience are noted as being one of the “key national priorities” for Wales; indeed Future Wales only includes policies “*on issues where the Welsh Government considers a national priority at this time, or matters which are distinctly spatial and require national leadership. For example, ...deciding where to locate renewable energy generation technology is a spatial issue of such significance that national ambitions are unlikely to be achieved without national planning policies.*” It also acknowledges that Wales faces a climate emergency.
- 4.16. It is clear that delivering renewable energy is one of the Welsh Government’s top national priorities for the next 20 years. Future Wales sets out 11 outcomes that can be achieved by 2040 provided the planning system is focused on the long-term and provides quality development in the right places for the right reasons.
- 4.17. The application proposal would contribute towards outcome 9, 10 and 11, these are:-
- **Outcome 9 – A Wales where people live in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution.** Wales’ natural resources, including its minerals, soils and geodiversity, coast, water, forests and landscape support a range of activities and sectors and are assets of great value in their own right. The environmental, social and cultural value of our resources will be managed, maintained and enhanced, while economic benefits will be utilised sustainably and appropriately by promoting nature-based solutions and a circular economy. Across Wales the risks of flooding and coastal erosion will be effectively managed and mitigated while better resource choices will be reflected in more sustainable places. Places will benefit from reduced pollution and be healthier and more liveable.
 - **Outcome 10 – a Wales where people live in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems.** The variety of flora and fauna found across Wales make Wales a special place. Biodiversity underpins the functioning of healthy, resilient ecosystems and the multiple benefits they provide. While biodiversity has declined in recent decades, we will reverse these losses and enhance the resilience of ecosystems. The planning system will ensure wildlife is able to thrive in healthy, diverse habitats, both in urban and rural areas, recognising and valuing the multiple benefits to people and nature
 - **Outcome 11 – a Wales where people live in places which are decarbonised and climate resilient.** The challenges of the climate emergency demand urgent action on carbon emissions and the planning system must help Wales lead the way in promoting and delivering a competitive, sustainable decarbonised society. Decarbonisation commitments and renewable energy targets will be treated as opportunities to build a more resilient and equitable low-carbon economy, develop clean and efficient transport infrastructure, improve public health and generate skilled jobs in new sectors. New homes will be energy efficient and will help communities adapt to the changing climate.

4.18. Future Wales sets a clear direction of how Wales should be investing in infrastructure and development for the greater good of Wales and its people – the provision of renewable energy is firmly embedded to this future direction. In terms of the specific policies, **Policy 17** (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure) states the following:

“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.”

4.19. The amplification to Policies 17 and 18, at page 96 of Future Wales, identifies how “Wales is abundant in opportunities to generate renewable energy and the Welsh Government is committed to maximising this potential. Generating renewable energy is a key part of our commitment to decarbonisation and tackling the climate emergency”. It goes on to set out the ambitious targets which have been set for renewable energy generation, including 70% of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030.

4.20. Policy 17 recognises the wealth of current and emerging renewable energy technologies that can contribute towards our energy and decarbonisation targets. It also demonstrates the Welsh Government’s support in principle for all renewable energy projects and technologies. Proposals should ensure there is no significant unacceptable detrimental impact on the surrounding natural environment and local communities and that the development delivers positive social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits.

4.21. On the issue of alternatives, page 97 of Future Wales states (inter alia) “The Welsh Ministers have considered alternatives to the need for new large-scale electricity generation infrastructure, including building-mounted installations and energy efficiency measures. Although we believe that these measures have an important part to play in meeting our energy, decarbonisation and climate change targets, they will not enable us to meet these objectives on their own”.

4.22. Turning to the regional approach, Future Wales locates the application site within the east catchment area. The published document, at page 171, sets out how the provision of

renewable energy is vital for the south east to play its role in decarbonising. It states (inter alia) (own emphasis underlined and in bold) "*It is vital the region plays its role in decarbonisation and supports the realisation of renewable energy. Policies 17 and 18 set out Future Wales' approach to renewable energy generation across Wales. There is strong potential for wind, marine and solar energy generation and Strategic and Local Development Plans should provide a framework for generation and associated infrastructure. The Welsh Government wishes to see energy generation, storage and management play a role in supporting the South East economy.*"

Other Material Considerations

- 4.23. There are a number of material considerations to take into account as part of considering the planning application in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act. These consist of Planning Policy Wales, Other National Guidance/ Strategies and any local Supplementary Planning Guidance and documents.

Planning Policy Wales (Ed, 11 published February 2021)

- 4.24. The publication of Future Wales has necessitated revisions to Planning Policy Wales to ensure that the content of the two documents are aligned. In particular, some of the policy context in Planning Policy Wales has been clarified and made more explicit to support Future Wales. Other changes to Planning Policy Wales are essentially factual, reflecting updates to legislation, policy and guidance which impact on the planning system and planning policy changes which have been made since the previous edition was published.
- 4.25. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) provides the policy framework for the effective preparation and delivery of development plans. This is supplemented by topic based Technical Advice Notes (TANs) and circulars. PPW, the TANs and the circulars are material to decisions on individual planning applications.
- 4.26. Welsh Government's main outcomes for the planning system reflect their vision of sustainable development which means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals. Overall, this means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 4.27. PPW is based on a plan approach and the presumption in favour of development proposals which accord with its key principles and the policy objectives of sustainable development (within the planning system). PPW sets out five key principles which underpin Welsh Government's approach to sustainable development; these are as follows.
- **Growing our economy in a sustainable manner** – The planning system should enable development which contributes to long term economic wellbeing, making the 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.

- **Facilitating accessible and healthy environments** – Our land use choices and the places we create should be accessible for all and support healthy lives.
- **Creating & 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.

- 4.28. Section 3 of PPW sets out the priority for strategic and spatial choices. Paragraph 3.1 considers that (own emphasis in bold) *“Effective strategic placemaking requires early collective consideration of placemaking issues at the outset, in the formulation of a development plan, or when developing specific proposals. The policy issues should not be considered in isolation from one another.”*
- 4.29. In regard to Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, Paragraph 3.59 sets out that: *“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.”*
- 4.30. Paragraph 3.61 under the heading of ‘Supporting Infrastructure’ identifies how adequate and efficient infrastructure such as electricity is critical for economic, social and environmental sustainability. Paragraph 3.63 goes on to state: *“Development should be located so that it can be well serviced by existing or planned infrastructure. In general, this will involve maximising the use of existing infrastructure or considering how the provision of infrastructure can be effectively co-ordinated to support development plans. Infrastructure choices should support decarbonisation, socially and economically connected places...”*
- 4.31. Section 5 sets out the economic components of placemaking and Welsh Government vision here is to achieve productive and enterprising placemaking and well-being. Welsh Government outcomes for productivity and enterprise include:
- manages water resources naturally;
 - reduces overall pollution;
 - resilient to climate change;
 - makes best use of natural resources;
 - prevents waste;
 - adaptive to climate change;
 - fosters economic activity;
 - embraces smart and innovative technologies;

- good connections;
- appropriate development densities;
- minimises the need to travel;
- not car dependent; and
- vibrant and dynamic.

4.32. Page 74 of PPW identifies how places which are productive and enterprising contributes to the seven goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which includes the following. These include the following goals most relevant to the proposals here:

4.33. A **Resilient Wales** is supported by our agriculture and tourism industries and through the beauty of our natural, built and historic environment. Tourism development, which can finance preservation activities, needs careful management to ensure continued enjoyment by future generations. Sustainable agricultural practices can also assist in nature conservation and enhancement. Wales' topography also lends itself to renewable energy generation.

4.34. A **Healthier Wales** can be achieved through the reduction in emissions and air pollution as a result of generating energy from non-carbon sources. Greater distribution of our economic wealth can also help alleviate poverty which is a key determinant of health.

4.35. Above all, a **Globally Responsible Wales** is promoted by reducing the carbon footprint through integrated public transportation infrastructure, encouraging globally responsible business and the promotion of renewable energy over carbon-emitting sources and resource choices through which multiple benefits can be realised.

4.36. Development should **prevent** problems from occurring or getting worse such as the generation of carbon emissions, poor air quality and waste and the depletion of our natural resources which will need to be managed for many years to come.

4.37. Page 75 of PPW sets out the Welsh Government trends and issues in the productive and enterprising places, these include:

- ensuring that there is sufficient employment land to meet the needs and requirements of a range of future employment scenarios (including increased automation and the significant contribution of SMEs to the Welsh economy) whilst ensuring that an over-supply of employment land does not prevent the release of land for other uses;
- supporting and enabling training, education, infrastructure, construction and manufacturing capacity to support progress towards a circular economy; and
- supporting and enabling renewable, low carbon globally responsible material choices and their efficient and most appropriate use, so as to prevent waste and ensure finite resources are not unnecessarily diminished.

4.38. Subsection 5.4 on economic development includes Paragraph 5.4.2 which recognises that: *"Economic land uses include the traditional employment land uses (offices, research and development, industry and warehousing), as well as uses such as retail, tourism, and public*

services. The construction, energy, minerals, waste and telecommunications sectors are also essential to the economy and are sensitive to planning policy."

- 4.39. Section 5.7 of PPW specifically relates to Energy. Paragraph 5.7.3 identifies how the planning system plays a key role in delivering clean growth and the decarbonising of energy, as well as being crucial in building resilience to the impacts of climate change.
- 4.40. Paragraph 5.7.6 identifies how ***"The planning system should secure an appropriate mix of energy provision, which maximises benefits to our economy and communities whilst minimising potential environmental and social impacts. This forms part of the Welsh Government's aim to secure the strongest economic development policies, to underpin growth and prosperity in Wales, recognising the importance of decarbonisation and the sustainable use of natural resources, both as an economic driver and a commitment to sustainable development"***.
- 4.41. Paragraph 5.7.7 goes on to state how the benefits of renewable and low carbon energy, as part of the overall commitment to tackle climate change is of 'paramount importance' to the Welsh Government.
- 4.42. Renewable energy targets are discussed at paragraph 5.7.14 of PPW, the Welsh Assembly will seek that: -
- for Wales to generate 70% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030; and
 - for one Gigawatt of renewable electricity capacity in Wales to be locally owned by 2030.
- 4.43. Subsection 5.9 provides support for renewable and low carbon development. Paragraph 5.9.1 states *"Local authorities should facilitate all forms of renewable and low carbon energy development. In doing so, planning authorities should seek to ensure their area's full potential for renewable and low carbon energy generation is maximised and renewable energy targets are achieved."*
- 4.44. Paragraph 5.9.14 sets out how *"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"*. Paragraph 5.9.15 goes on to identify how 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"*.

Replacement Bridgend Local Development Plan

- 4.45. BCBC are currently preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2018 to 2033. The Deposit Consultation RLDP is currently undergoing independent examination (Stage 5)

following public consultation closing in July 2021. Given the stage of the RLPD, the following policies are considered to attract some weight, which are listed in full at Appendix 1:

- ENT2: Protection of Employment Sites
- SP13: Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy
- SP17: Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
- SP 18: Conservation of the Historic Environment

British Energy Security Strategy (April 2022)

- 4.46. In April 2022 the Government released the updated policy paper: British Energy Security Strategy. This sets out the need, in accordance with the net zero strategy, to move towards the UK electricity being powered by low-carbon sources by 2035. This added urgency was made due to the unpredictable market of international energy and Britain's need to move towards self-reliance in the energy sector.
- 4.47. The paper identifies a timeline for a variety of renewable resources, including solar. The key goal within this is by 2035 it is the UK Government's aim to have up to 70 GW of solar energy, this is a five-fold increase from the current supply of 14GW.
- 4.48. Specifically, the Government is proposing to ***"consult on amending planning rules to strengthen policy in favour of development on non protected land, whilst ensuring communities continue to have a say and environmental protections remain in place"***.
- 4.49. Further it outlines that the Government will ***"continue supporting the effective use of land by encouraging large scale projects to locate on previously developed land, or lower value land, where possible, and ensure projects are designed to avoid, mitigate, and where necessary, compensate for the impacts of using greenfield sites"***.
- 4.50. Finally, it set out that the Government will ***"support solar that is co-located with other functions (e.g. agriculture, onshore wind generation, or storage) to maximise the efficiency of land use"***.

Powering Up Britain (March 2023)

- 4.51. In March 2023, the Government released an updated guidance document: Powering Up Britain. This sets out a blueprint for the future of energy in the UK, bringing together the Government's Energy Security Strategy and Net Zero Growth Plan.
- 4.52. Further to the goal set out in the Net Zero Growth Plan, the Government now the ambition ***"to fully decarbonise the power system by 2035"***. In order to do so it is explained that ***"moving to a power system that relies primarily on low carbon technologies is a crucial step towards delivering, cheaper, cleaner, domestic energy and addressing our underlying vulnerability to international fossil fuel prices."***
- 4.53. With regards to the role of solar energy within this movement to decarbonising the economy, the Powering Up Britain document reiterates the goal of the Energy Security Strategy, in which the Government aims to have a five-fold increase in solar energy, up to 70 GW, by 2035.

- 4.54. The Government also sets out the need for ground mounted solar, explaining it ***“is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation and is readily deployable at scale. Government seeks large scale solar deployment across the UK, looking for development mainly on brownfield, industrial and low/ medium grade agricultural land.”***

Vale of Glamorgan Council Climate Change Challenge Plan 2021–2030 (2019)

- 4.55. Having declared a climate emergency in 2019, The Climate Change Challenge Plan 2021–2030 outlines the eighteen challenges that the Council aim to meet as part of an effective response to the climate emergency and that are being addressed through Project Zero. This includes reducing the Council’s carbon emissions to net zero before the Welsh Government target of 2030 and support the implementation of the Welsh Government’s new Low Carbon Delivery Plan.
- 4.56. Included within the programme for change is a range of renewable energy initiatives, including to ***“reduce the amount of energy we all use and lead by example sourcing our energy from clean and renewable sources and working across all sectors to bring new technology, innovation and investment to the Vale.”***

Energy Generation in Wales 2022 (October 2023)

- 4.57. The report provides the most up-to-date reflection of Wales energy generation which is used to measure progress against renewable energy generation targets.
- 4.58. The report reaffirms the Welsh Government’s target for Wales to meet the equivalent of 70% of its annual electricity consumption from Welsh renewable electricity generation by 2030, and 100% by 2035.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

Renewable Energy (March 2019)

- 4.59. The Renewable Energy SPG provides further local policy guidance and is a material consideration in decision making. The document provides advice to assist and guide applicants in designing renewable energy development in line with adopted Development Plan to meet the Welsh Government’s aim through the promotion of renewable energy.
- 4.60. Section 7 sets out a range of planning considerations for large scale renewable energy developments, these are summarised below:
- **Vehicular access and wider transport network** – notes vehicle access is an essential for all forms of renewable energy development. To minimise the potential impacts a proposed development can have on the transport network, a Traffic Management Plan should be prepared to determine the most appropriate times and routes for construction traffic.
 - **Landscape and visual impacts** – details how a Design and Access Statement (DAS) should be submitted which explains how the landscape and visual considerations have been taken into account in the design of the scheme. The DAS should be informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and Cumulative landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (CLVIA).

- **Noise pollution** – advice relates primarily to wind and biomass plants.
- **Ecological impacts** – notes solar farms can present an opportunity to enhance habitats, for example, the inclusion of hedgerows to the boundaries of developments. Developers are encouraged to consider strengthening existing hedges through planting gaps using suitable species appropriate to the locality.
- **Drainage** – highlights how applications should be supported by an Environmental Management Plan prior to the construction of the development to mitigate any potential risk caused by the proposal. Developments will also need to minimise the potential flood risk and surface water run-off.
- **Historic environment** – where necessary, trial trenching and an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken prior to and during the construction phase of proposed schemes. Applicants should seek to locate development away from heritage designations and their settings to ensure the historic fabric is preserved in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- **Agricultural land** – notes how solar farms can be considered as farm diversification schemes, but policy also seeks to protect best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Given the nature of solar farm developments, agricultural land can still offer some benefit through the use of low intensity grazing.
- **Aviation and telecommunication constraints** – focuses on wind turbines and their risk to air traffic safety.
- **Shadow flicker** – focuses on wind turbines which can cast a shadow that flicks on and off as the blades rotate when sun passes.
- **Wind Speed** – relates to wind turbines.
- **Land capacity** – notes that to maximise the solar radiation gained from the land, a site needs to be facing due south as the UK receives the highest amount of solar irradiation in the southern and western areas of the country. Regarding the Vale of Glamorgan, it is geographically well-placed to receive a significant amount of solar radiation making it a good opportunity area for solar development. The SPG identifies the best areas for potential solar energy to aid future development of this resource. Furthermore, to produce a viable amount of energy from solar schemes 2.5 to 3ha of land is required on average to produce 1MW of energy. Additionally, a sites proximity to a suitable national grid connection will also need to be considered when identifying a suitable land.
- **Glint/glare of solar arrays** – states developers should submit glint and glare assessments to ensure the safety of development and reduce its impact on the landscape.
- **Security** – highlights that where facilities are located in areas prone to crime or in isolated areas consideration needs to be given to security further advice can be obtained from Police Design Out Crime Officers.

Mineral Safeguarding (April 2018)

- 4.61. The Mineral Safeguarding SPG provides assistance with the consideration of planning applications within Minerals Safeguarding Areas. The SPG provides further guidance relayed to the requirements and criteria of LDP Policy MG22. The document has been considered as part of the submitted Mineral Safeguarding Assessment.

Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows & Development (July 2018)

- 4.62. This SPG provides guidance on how to fully consider trees and hedgerows as part of new development proposals. The document has been considered as part of the submitted arboricultural information.

Design in the Landscape (2006)

- 4.63. The Design in the Landscape SPG provides practical advice and guidance on how design issues affecting the landscape are best addressed in new development proposals within the Vale of Glamorgan. The SPG was prepared to accompany the Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan which has since been superseded by the adopted LDP. The following design guidance policies are considered broadly relevant:

- DG1 Towards Sustainable Development
- DG5 Mitigation of Large Scale Detractors
- DG16 Woodlands and Hedgerows
- DG17 Design and Management for Nature Conservation
- DG22 Planting: General Guidance

5. Site Identification

- 5.1. As set out within the Energy Security Strategy above, there is a need, in accordance with the net zero strategy, to move towards the UK electricity being powered by low-carbon sources by 2035. A number of options to meet this target are presented in the Strategy, including ground mounted solar.
- 5.2. Opportunities to deliver large scale solar farms that feed electricity to the National Grid are limited due to there being few locations where there are points of connection (POC) that can accept energy back into the system.
- 5.3. Grid connection is an important locational factor in identifying an appropriate Site. The first stage of the process undertaken by the applicant 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 available export capacity was identified at Waterton Primary which the applicant sought to secure whilst identifying suitable local land to utilise for development.
- 5.4. The next step was to identify land appropriate for the location of solar PV array of sufficient scale to maximise the amount of energy that can be generated and accepted. As part of identifying land consideration of national and local planning policy was key.
- 5.5. Whilst it is recognised that there is the preference for brownfield sites for ground mounted solar schemes, there are no brownfield locations of sufficient scale within proximity of the point of connection. The next option was to identify 'low value' land, which is interpreted to be land with fewest constraints, which, therefore, has the capacity to accommodate a solar farm within acceptable environmental parameters, as further considered in Section 6. A further consideration is to identify a Site in as close proximity as possible to the point of connection so as to minimise any environmental impact of the cabling as well as making the connection more viable due to the close proximity of the grid connection point.
- 5.6. The land parcels identified as part of the Site Location Plan were identified as potential locations for consideration, in planning and environmental terms, following an assessment of the topology and likely solar generation potential. An initial feasibility study was undertaken on the parcels which identified environmental and technical constraints as identified below:
 - Firstly, an initial review of the Site from a landscape and visual context identified the Site as lying within the Upper 7 Lower Thaw Valley SPA and NLCA 36: Vale of Glamorgan. It also identified local properties, footpaths and public viewpoints and their likely impact visually from the development. It was concluded at this initial stage that there were limited public viewpoints from which the Site could be seen due to the Site being visually contained within the topography and landscape with opportunities for additional planting and screening. As such, landscape and visual matters were not considered to be a constraint to development.
 - Initial ecological review took place, which considered any designations. No designations of significance were identified and, hence, subject to a Preliminary Ecological Assessment, ecological matters were not considered to be a constraint.

- Any heritage assets were taken into consideration, which identified 26 Grade II Listed Buildings, six scheduled monuments and a Conservation Area within a 3km radius of the Site. The Proposed Development was deemed to have only temporary slight harm to heritage assets, which would form part of wider views and can be mitigated through sensitive landscaping. In terms of archaeology, further proportionate investigation during the preparation of any planning application was recommended. In heritage terms, it was determined that this matter was not, based on the information available, a constraint to development.
- It was identified at the initial stage that the majority of the Site was in Flood Zone 1, with a small area of the access track and cable route lying within Flood Zone 3. Due, however, to the land in Flood Zones 3 existing on the fringes and occupying a small proportion of the Site, this was not considered to be a significant constraint. Further, no ground mounted solar or associated equipment is to be located within the Flood Zone 3 area.
- Agricultural Land Classification was taken into consideration as part of the desk-based assessment which identified the Site is fully within areas of Grade 3b and 4. In light of this initial desk based feedback, it was considered that subject to on site testing, this is not considered to be a constraint to the development proposal.
- The potential effect of glint and glare on nearby receptors was taken into consideration at an initial stage, including distance from any airfields. It was identified that Cardiff Airport is the nearest (located approximately 15km to the southeast of the Site), with no impacts anticipated. Subject to a Glint and Glare Assessment, it was considered that glint and glare matters were not a likely constraint to development.
- Finally, the potential cumulative impact with the neighbouring existing solar farm was a matter for consideration particularly in respect of landscape and visual matters, however, given the limited public viewpoints for both sites and scale of development, it is considered that the addition of the Proposed Development will not have a detrimental cumulative impact on the surrounding area.

5.7. To conclude, the process for identifying the land has largely been led by the location of the point of connection, which is the substation included located within a viable distance of the development proposals. There were no alternative brownfield options for this proposal in close proximity to the point of connection. It can be seen that through the identification of the point of connection and the site assessment that took place at an early stage, land east of Treoes was considered to be of 'low value' in respect of environmental and technical constraints, with the potential to be acceptable in planning terms and consequently suitable Site for the Proposed Development.

6. Planning Assessment

6.1. The purpose of the Planning Assessment is to consider the proposals against the Development Plan and other material considerations to demonstrate that the proposal is acceptable in planning terms. The Planning Assessment considers all the key considerations thematically, as set out below.

- Principle of development and wider benefits;
- Other relevant matters including:
 - Location;
 - Design;
 - Landscape and Visual Impact;
 - Ecology and Green Infrastructure;
 - Heritage and Archaeology;
 - Arboriculture;
 - Transport and Access;
 - Flood Risk and Drainage;
 - Agriculture;
 - Glint and Glare;
 - Noise;
 - Mineral Safeguarding; and
 - Aviation Safeguarding and Telecommunication Constraints.

Principle of Development and Wider Benefits

6.2. The following paragraphs summarise recent Government and local strategies that are seeking to reduce CO₂ emissions and decarbonise the energy sector, as well as set out the clear benefits and valuable contribution the scheme can make to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

National Policy Considerations

6.3. Both on a national and local scale a climate emergency has been recognised. On a national scale, the Government's aim to achieve a decarbonised economy by 2050, as well as on a local scale, with both VoG Council and BCBC declaring a climate emergency in July 2019 and June 2020 respectively.

6.4. One key aim of the Government's Net Zero Strategy is to obtain all electricity from renewable or low carbon resources by 2035. A clear aspect of this aim is the increase in production of renewable sources of energy. The Welsh assembly recognises this, with both Future Wales the PPW aiming for Wales to have 70% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy sources by 2030. The recently published Energy Generation in Wales by

the Welsh Government sets out adopted energy targets for 2035, including the generation of the equivalent of 100% of Wales' annual electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2035.

- 6.5. In addition to the Government's Net Zero Strategy, the release of the British Energy Security Strategy in April 2022 increased the emphasis on renewable energy generation, including solar. The UK Government set the goal of increasing the reliance on solar energy by 5 times, from 14 GW to 70 GW, by 2035.
- 6.6. Future Wales is the highest tier of development plan in Wales and local development plans *"are required to be in conformity with Future Wales and must be kept up to date to ensure they and Future Wales work together effectively."* (p.8 and p.15). In addition, Future Wales provides (at p.10) that *"The specific purpose of Future Wales is to ensure the planning system at all levels is consistent with, and supports the delivery of, Welsh Government strategic aims and policies."* This is a legal requirement, as the local development plan must be in conformity with Future Wales under s.62(3A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 6.7. Policy 17 of Future Wales is clear that achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience is one of the **"key national priorities"** for Wales, and Future Wales recognises the need for Wales to focus on generating the energy it needs to support its communities and industries over the next twenty years. The Proposed Development is for a solar farm which will power approximately 2,600 homes each year and displace around 3,850 tonnes of CO₂ per year, and 154,000 tonnes during the lifetime of the development.¹ Therefore, through Policy 17, Future Wales supports the principle of the proposal and its potential to contribute to the national priorities of decarbonisation and climate-resilience.
- 6.8. At paragraph 1.2, the PPW identifies its primary objective as being to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural being of Wales as required by the Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015. There is no dispute that the Proposed Development will increase Wales' installed renewable energy capacity, contributing to meeting local and national renewable energy targets, reducing reliance on energy generated from fossil fuels and thus actively facilitating the transition to a low carbon economy.
- 6.9. As stated previously, the Proposed Development has evolved following detailed pre-application consultation with the VoG Council and statutory consultees. Details of how the project team have continuously refined the scheme's design to encompass the Council's and other stakeholder feedback is provided in the Design and Access Statement and as such are not repeated here. The Proposed Development will be refined further where required through the PAC process.
- 6.10. Policy 17 of Future Wales states that decision-makers should give **'significant weight'** to the urgent need to meet the target of generating 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030. This is part of Wales' international commitment to combating climate change. Policy 17 dictates that applicants must present the benefits to the local community

¹ Renewable UK Wind Energy Statistics adapted via Statista UK



brought about by the development in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements.

- 6.11. The benefits include the wider benefits of renewable energy which include security of energy supply and reduced energy costs for the consumer. Social benefits of the project are to be realised through reduced energy bills and security of supply which will reduce Wales' exposure to the volatility of the wholesale energy markets. These are important factors in addressing fuel poverty, which disproportionately effects low-income households across Wales and contributes to economic inequality. The proposal would reduce reliance upon overseas energy sources. The energy production would help to meet the national and local need for energy and therefore the development would fulfil an important social role.
- 6.12. In terms of environmental benefits, the Proposed Development will contribute towards achieving this goal through the 9.9 MW output. This amount of renewable energy will save approximately 3,800 tonnes of CO₂ per annum and power 2,600 homes per annum during the operational life of the development. Net benefits to nature will also be achieved on Site, as set out within the submitted Ecological Management Plan. The Proposed Development has minimal impact on the surrounding area, and where there is, this is mitigation is proposed. This is discussed in more detail in the relevant subsequent themes in this section of the planning statement.
- 6.13. Further, in terms of economic benefits, the development proposal represents a significant financial investment. The economic benefits of the Proposed Development both during construction and operational phases are set out in detail within the submitted Economic Benefit Statement. There will be a number of people employed over the course of the 12-month construction period, with the proposals supporting up to 280 temporary jobs, both direct jobs on-site and in the wider supply chain. The construction phase will also make a significant contribution to economic output, with the gross value added generated by jobs supported during the construction phase could be up to £16.6million. Collectively, this will provide a significant contribution to the local economy.

Local Policy Considerations

- 6.14. The increasing need for renewable energy is also identified on a local level, within the VoG LDP. Policy MD 19, Low Carbon and Renewable Energy Generation, of the LDP offers in principle support for the generation of renewable energy where it can be demonstrated there is no unacceptable impact on the listed criteria. As will be demonstrated in response to relevant themes, the Proposed Development can meet the policy tests and, therefore, the development is in accordance with these aspects of Policy MD 19 of the LDP.
- 6.15. The VoG Renewable Energy SPG provides further local policy guidance and is a material consideration in decision making. The document provides advice to assist and guide applicants in designing renewable energy development in line with adopted Development Plan, supporting the Welsh Government's aim in promoting of renewable energy. The SPG includes a range of planning considerations for renewable energy projects which have been considered during the development of the proposals and discussed below where relevant.
- 6.16. Approximately 0.8km of the underground cable route falls within the administrative area of BCBC. The solar farm will generate renewable energy and the proposed cable route will link the solar farm to the point of connection in Bridgend at Waterton Primary Substation. The

PPW at Paragraph 3.63 is clear that development should be located so that it can be well serviced by existing or planned infrastructure, including maximising the use of existing infrastructure or considering how the provision of infrastructure can be effectively co-ordinated to support development plans, including supporting decarbonisation. The proposed cable route here enables the connection of renewable energy to existing grid infrastructure in support of decarbonising electricity generation.

- 6.17. The BCBC LDP at PLA4 encourages the development of renewable energy, whilst LDP Policy SP8 offers in principle support for renewable energy generation where it can be demonstrated there are no significant adverse impacts on the environment and local communities. This is reflected in the emerging BCBC Replacement LDP Policy SP13 which supports renewable energy proposals which contribute to meeting national and local renewable energy targets. The cable route represents key infrastructure for the distribution of renewable energy to the grid network, with the LDP providing clear in principle support for the generation of renewable energy and associated infrastructure. The delivery of such infrastructure is of critical importance to delivering both local and national renewable energy targets.
- 6.18. LDP Policy ENV18 and emerging Replacement LDP Policy SP13 goes on to list a range of criteria renewable energy proposals should meet. The proposed cable route is considered to fully accord with these criteria, being located below ground with no adverse impacts on local amenity, the wider PRoW network, electromagnetic disturbance and mineral resources. Matters related to nature conservation and heritage are discussed below where relevant.
- 6.19. Part of the cable route runs through Waterton Industrial Estate, an allocated employment site covered under BCBC LDP Policy REG1 and protected under Policy REG2. Comparable protection is offered under BCBC Replacement LDP Policies REG1, REG2 and ENT2. Whilst the cable route runs through this employment allocation, it will be located underground predominantly under the highway, and as such, will not result in the loss of existing or proposed industrial land or buildings. The development is therefore appropriate within the employment designation.
- 6.20. To conclude, the principle of development is clearly acceptable subject to set out through the need for renewable and low carbon energy both on a national scale and a local scale. The Proposed Development contributes to achieving ambitious targets and improve energy resilience. Discussion of the relevant themes within the following subsections demonstrate the acceptability of the scheme from a design and technical perspective alongside compliance with relevant Development Plan policies.

Location

- 6.21. As highlighted in Chapter 5 of this Planning Statement relating to Site Identification, the Site was selected based on a number of considerations including: the point of connection whereby electricity can be fed back into the National Grid; land that is technically feasible for solar PV array in close proximity to the point of connection; and availability of land that is environmentally unconstrained. Following this feasibility stage, further environmental and technical work took place, which identified more detailed considerations, which have been taken account of as part of the design process and, where needed, mitigation measures have been introduced.

- 6.22. Also of relevance here is VoG LDP Policy MG30, with the Site partially located within a defined local search area solar energy. Within this designated solar energy generation schemes will be permitted provided there are no unacceptable effects on amenity, heritage assets or the environment. The Site has therefore been identified as an appropriate location for solar development by the Council. As per Policy MD19 discussed above, the Proposed Development can meet the policy tests, which is demonstrated in response to the relevant themes – notably noise, heritage and ecological considerations.
- 6.23. The Proposed Development is in accordance with LDP Policy MG30 and represents an appropriate location for renewable energy generation.

Design

- 6.24. The proposed design of the PV array was developed over a period of time, which has taken into account many factors, including environmental and technical considerations. The design will be further developed through feedback from the stakeholder and public consultation. The detail of which is set out in the Design and Access Statement.
- 6.25. In terms of how the design responds to the relevant policies, it is considered that the Proposed Development adheres to Policy MD2 of the VoG LDP and BCBC LDP Policy SP2. In response to Policy MD2, it is considered the design is of high quality which positively contributes to the context and character of the surrounding natural environment and landscape interest. The proposals respond positively to the context, safeguard existing amenity and incorporate extensive landscaping features to both protect and enhance existing landscape features and improve biodiversity. The Design and Access Statement provides further details on design, and it is, therefore, considered the development proposal is compliant with relevant policies.

Landscape and Visual Impact

- 6.26. The VoG LDP at Policy MG17, Special Landscape Areas, seeks to protect special landscape areas, with development proposals permitted where they would cause no unacceptable harm to the landscape character of the area. LDP Policy SP10 reflects this, seeking to preserve and enhance special landscape areas, whilst Policy MD19 seeks no unacceptable impacts on areas of landscape importance.
- 6.27. LDP Policy MD2 provides guidance on landscape design, with point (10) highlighting how sensitive landscaping should be incorporated, including the retention and enhancement of biodiversity interests.
- 6.28. This application is accompanied by an LVIA and Landscape Masterplan. The proposals are located within the designation NLCA 36: Vale of Glamorgan and Upper and Lower Thaw Valley SLA. The LVIA confirms that apart from the loss of a small area forming a minor portion of the wider NLCA, all of the key defining characteristics would remain and prevail with the scheme in place.
- 6.29. In terms of the Lower Thaw Valley SLPA, the layout of the proposals has been carefully considered, with hedgerow management, new hedgerow and tree planting proposed to minimise landscape and visual effects, in accordance with LDP Policies MG17, SP10 and MD19. The number of trees and length of hedgerow proposed will be greater than those that are existing, in accordance with Policy MD2. The Proposed Development promotes land

management practices which protect and enhance the environment, which include improved grassland, continued grazing management, a high number of additional trees and relaxed management of hedgerow for biodiversity interest. The inherent purpose of solar and renewable energy is an environmental scheme of importance to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The Proposed Development would result in a low magnitude of change as the Site covers a small area of the wider SLA and the inherent qualities of the SLA would be retained and enhanced, and the Key Policy and Management Issues are incorporated into the scheme, resulting in a minor adverse effect.

- 6.30. In terms of general visibility, visual containment of the Site is provided by the steeply rising topography to the north and tree cover with the River Nant Ganna valley and surrounding settlement. The entire Site is not intervisible with itself, and it is therefore not possible to view the entirety of it within a single field of view thus reducing the perceived scale of the development from the wider landscape. Views from the majority of locations within the surrounding network of public footpaths would be considerably screened.
- 6.31. The proposed scheme would be seen in context with the adjacent solar farm in place, generally framed and screened by tree cover and nearby settlement. Once the proposed green infrastructure is established, the proposals could be increasingly screened from view. The Proposed Development would have some very limited and localised visual effects, but these would not result in long term unacceptable visual harm given the landscape context.
- 6.32. In overall terms, the LVIA concludes the scheme would result in some net beneficial effects with regard to the landscape elements that currently define the landscape character of the Site. The elements that currently contribute to defining the character of the Site, namely trees, shrubbery and hedgerows at the boundaries, would all be strengthened and form more prominent elements in the medium and longer term. Any change to the landscape character or visual amenity would be highly localised, and the underlying landscape would be conserved.
- 6.33. As such, in landscape and visual terms the Proposed Development is considered appropriate within the surrounding landscape on which it lies and would not materially harm the landscape in accordance with local policy. On the contrary, it is considered that collectively these proposals could enhance the Site and result in a beneficial effect in landscape terms. The Proposed Development is, therefore, considered to be compliant with the relevant policies identified above.

Ecology and Green Infrastructure

- 6.34. The VoG LDP Policy MD9, Promoting Biodiversity, requires proposals to conserve and where appropriate enhance biodiversity interests. Policy MD19 also requires proposals to have no unacceptable impacts on nature conservation interests. These factors are reflected in BCBC LDP Policy SP4 and the emerging Replacement LDP Policy SP17.
- 6.35. Submitted with this application is an Ecological Impact Assessment. In terms of baseline conditions, the report identified that the Site is not located within any statutory or non-statutory designated site for nature conservation, with one statutory designated site, Coedymwstwr Woodlands Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), within 2km of the Site. As identified from an early stage, habitats within the Site comprise Modified Grassland which is of 'low' value. The Standing Open Water and Native Hedgerow are of 'local' value.

6.36. The species survey identified that:

- Four ponds were identified within 250m, with one present on Site, of 'good suitability' for Great Crested Newts. An eDNA survey of Pond 1 returned negative results, indicating that GCN were not present at the time of survey, with the species considered absent from the Site.
- The Site is considered to be of low value in relation to bats, with the hedgerows on Site providing a commuting and foraging resource to a low diversity of locally common species.
- In terms of badgers, the native hedgerows offer potential for foraging and sett creation, with the open grassland habitats providing further foraging opportunity. No badger activity or any signs of badger such as setts, snuffle holes, latrines or hair were recorded during the walkover or botanical updating survey with the Site overall considered to be of low value for badger.
- The Site is considered to be of low value for reptiles given Modified Grassland habitat. Connectivity to the surrounding habitats is considered moderate through a system of hedgerows and pasture fields. It is unlikely that an important assemblage of reptiles, in terms of either species richness or abundance, is present on Site.
- The hedgerows are of moderate suitability for dormice but connect to woodland connectivity to the surrounding landscape that may contain high suitability habitat for dormice. No field signs attributed to hazel dormouse were identified, with the Site overall considered to be of local value for hazel dormice.
- Habitat suitability for water vole and otter is considered poor, including the Nant Gana river. No field signs of water vole or otter were identified during the walkover, with the Site considered to be of low value to both species.
- The Site has the potential to support a number of priority species including hedgehog, brown hare and common toad. However, no evidence of such species was recorded on Site.

6.37. An Ornithological Impact Assessment has also been undertaken to survey and assess breeding birds. 12 Species of Conservation Concern were recorded during the breeding bird survey, 11 of these species were identified as using the Site. The assessment of potential effects of the development concluded that, subject to appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures, there would be no adverse effects on bird assemblages at the Site.

6.38. The Ecological Impact Assessment identifies there are a range of inherent and embedded mitigation elements included as part of the project design, which avoid or reduce the potential for adverse ecological impacts. Further survey work, mitigation measures and avoidance measures have been recommended.

6.39. Further, it sets out that additional environmental protection measures are proposed, including all habitat enhancement measures and habitat management to be implemented through a Biodiversity Management Plan. Further compensation measures include native landscape planting to the local area and the incorporation of bat and bird boxes as per the recommendations.

- 6.40. To conclude, the Proposed Development has been designed to avoid direct effects on designated sites, priority habitats and protected species insofar as practical and due to its nature, no significant adverse effects are anticipated during the construction and operational phases on any ecological features.
- 6.41. In addition, the Proposed Development achieves a net benefit to nature as set out within the submitted Ecological Management Plan.
- 6.42. When considering the proposal against the policy context, the impact of the proposal complete with mitigation measures is compliant with the Development Plan policies identified above.

Heritage and Archaeology

- 6.43. VoG LDP Policy SP10, Built and Natural Environment, and Policy MD8 – Historic, Environment, collectively ensure development proposals protect the qualities of the built and historic environment. The criteria of Policy MD19 include having no unacceptable impacts on cultural heritage interests. BCBC LDP Policy SP5 and emerging Replacement LDP Policy SP18 seek conservation of the built and historic environment.
- 6.44. Submitted with this application is a Heritage Statement and Archaeological Evaluation Report. The Heritage Statement identifies that in terms of the baseline conditions, there are no designated heritage assets located within the Site nor is it located within a Conservation Area. Within the 3km study area 26 Grade II Listed Buildings, six Scheduled Monuments and one Conservation Area.
- 6.45. The assessment confirms that whilst the proposals may be visible from a number of designated historic assets within the environs of the Site, and/or co-visibility would occur, the resulting change would temporarily cause slight harm to the setting of the scheduled monuments of Churchyard Cross at Church of St Canna Churchyard Cross at Church of St Mary and Ringwork & Bailey at Gelligarn, the Grade II Listed buildings of Church of St Canna, The Old Rectory Churchyard Wall of the Church of St Mary, Church of St Mary and Llangan Conservation Area. The Site would form a minor part of wider views and would therefore temporarily cause slight harm to the significance of those assets. It should be noted such impacts are temporary in nature and will be reduced over time as the landscaping scheme becomes established.
- 6.46. In terms of archaeological features, cropmarks that were recorded in the Site's southern most field were also highlighted in the geophysical survey carried out over the Site and are considered likely of prehistoric origins. There is, therefore, considered to be high potential for prehistoric archaeology within this portion of the Site. There is considered to be low potential for later archaeology within the Site with the geophysical survey detecting only potential agricultural features; the wider study area contains assets relating to the agricultural industries that dominate the area.
- 6.47. To conclude, the assessment identified no significant effects in respect of archaeology and cultural heritage receptors (above and below ground) that would arise from a development of the nature and on the scale proposed.

Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Development is compliant with the relevant Development Plan policies identified.

Arboriculture

- 6.48. Policy SP4, Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment, of the VoG LDP identifies the need for development proposals to conserve and, wherever possible, enhance the natural environment.
- 6.49. Accordingly, appropriate tree surveys have taken place on site to identify the number and quality of arboricultural features. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment accompanies this planning application has identified 34 trees, 8 tree groups and 42 hedgerows, all of varying quality. In terms of the impact of the proposal, it will not require the complete removal of any trees, tree groups or hedgerow, as the proposed layout has sought to avoid this.
- 6.50. In summary, the proposed solar farm development is not anticipated to result in any significant arboricultural impact on retained trees, groups or hedgerows at the Site. It is suggested as part of the conclusion that an Arboricultural Method Statement should be prepared and approved to ensure careful implementation and result in low potential for any negative impact on trees.

Transport and Access

- 6.51. Criteria 6 of Policy MD2 of the VoG LDP requires that development proposals should *'have no unacceptable impact on highway safety nor cause or exacerbate existing traffic congestion to an unacceptable degree'*.
- 6.52. A Construction Traffic Management Plan has been prepared, which accompanies the planning application. This document sets out the access proposals and determines the number of trips likely during the construction period and considers its impact. It is relevant to note, as mentioned above in relation to planning history, energy related development has taken place adjacent to the proposed Site, which has been helpful in establishing acceptable routes and access points for the Proposed Development.
- 6.53. The CTMP concludes that whilst additional traffic on the highway network will be generated during the construction phase, the most appropriate primary routes have been identified to minimise impact on the local highway network, therefore, the routing plan provided is considered appropriate.
- 6.54. In term of construction access, the CTMP outlines there will be a single access point, which are shown to provide sufficient space to allow for the largest anticipated vehicle associated with the construction programme. These are suitable to accommodate the trips forecast to be generated and appropriate mitigation is suggested where needed. Further, it outlined, local highway network is considered to be suitable to accommodate the traffic movements associated with the development proposals.
- 6.55. The CTMP concludes overall that there are no valid highway or transportation reasons which would prevent the Proposed Development of the Site and the proposal is, therefore, in accordance with Policy MD2 of the VoG LDP.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.56. The VoG LDP Policy MD7 relates to environmental protection requires development proposals to demonstrate that they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people,

residential amenity, property and/or the natural environment, which includes flood risk and its consequences.

- 6.57. As demonstrated in the accompanying Flood Consequence Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy, which considered the latest flood risk maps and an assessment of ground conditions, the development parcels of the Site represent a greenfield area located within Flood Zone 1. Accordingly, the Site is therefore at low risk of flooding and is compliant with the policy requirements.
- 6.58. There is a small area of Flood Zone 3 identified on the south west portion of the Site which will include a small section of the proposed access track and cable route. Access and egress should not be needed during an extreme flood event, whilst the cable route will be located below ground. No vulnerable infrastructure is located within areas predicted to be at risk of flooding from any source.
- 6.59. In terms of the proposed drainage strategy, having assessed the suitability of different Sustainable urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), infiltration trenches located alongside the discrete areas of vulnerable infrastructure are proposed on Site as an appropriate land drainage option. Surface water runoff will be conveyed to the proposed gravel trenches with private storm water drains. These measures ensure runoff rates and associated flood risk on the Site and elsewhere do not increase.
- 6.60. Overall, the development is not considered to be at significant risk of flooding and a Surface Water Drainage Strategy will be implemented to ensure flood risk elsewhere is not impacted. Therefore, the proposal accords with the requirements of the Development Plan and national policy with residual risk to the Site fully mitigated and as such considered low risk.

Agriculture

- 6.61. VoG LPD Policy MD19 notes renewable energy schemes should not result in unacceptable impacts in terms of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. The PPW states that in decision making 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.
- 6.62. The accompanying Agricultural Land Classification Survey supporting the application has identified that the Site comprises of a mixture of Grade 3b (northern parcels) and 4 (southern parcel), with the Site therefore not representing the Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land. Therefore, the proposal is consistent with the policy requirements.
- 6.63. The solar farm will directly assist to reduce carbon emissions as set out previously. Further a solar farm can enable the ground underneath to recover, particularly land that has been intensively farmed, while providing income for the farming business. The solar farm is a temporary form of development (circa 40 years) and over this time, the soil can regenerate, which will help to improve quality of agricultural land in the future. All of which will assist to sustain farming for future generations.
- 6.64. The recent publishing of Powering Up Britain sets out that ground-mounted solar development should be located on brownfield, industrial or low/medium grade agricultural

land. The grading set out above, shows that this Site is suitable for development, in line with this Government published guidance.

- 6.65. The proposal, therefore, meets with the requirements of the Development Plan and national policy.

Glint and Glare and Noise

- 6.66. Policies MD2 and MD19 of the VoG LDP requires development to avoid unacceptable impacts on residential amenity, including noise and light pollution. These factors are also considered under BCBC LDP Policy ENV18. As such, both glint, glare and noise have been considered here.
- 6.67. As part of the planning application a Solar Photovoltaic Glint & Glare Study has been prepared and submitted. The study considered possible impact from glint and glare upon surrounding road safety and residential amenity from the proposed PV panels. The overall conclusions have identified that the Proposed Development is not predicted to produce significant impacts upon residential amenity and road safety in the surrounding area.
- 6.68. Included within the planning application is an Operational Noise Assessment for the Proposed Development. The report presents calculations of the operational noise levels and an assessment of the noise levels associated with the future operation of the solar farm at the surrounding residential receptors. It concludes that the scheme will generate low levels of noise at surrounding properties, commensurate with a 'No Observed Effects Level' during the most sensitive early morning and evening periods.
- 6.69. Therefore, both in terms of glint and glare and noise, the proposal is considered to be compliant with the Development Plan.

Mineral Safeguarding

- 6.70. As defined within the VoG LDP Proposals Map, the Site is located within a Mineral Safeguarding (Limestone 1). Policies SP9 and MG22 of the LDP seek to safeguard minerals from further from permanent development that would unnecessarily sterilise them or hinder their future extraction. Policy MG22 sets out criteria which must be demonstrated in areas of known mineral resource.
- 6.71. Submitted with this application is a Mineral Safeguarding Assessment. Available evidence suggests that the VoG has an extensive limestone landbank which is likely to last far beyond the life of the current development plan at current rates of production. The report confirms that the Proposed Development is temporary in nature, having a finite life of 40 years, following which the proposed infrastructure would be removed and the land restored to its previous state. In addition, the installation of ground mounted solar panels does not require extensive or deep ground intrusion and are capable of easy removal. The development would not give rise to extensive earthworks which could facilitate the incidental extraction of any mineral and the nature of the proposal would also ensure that, should mineral reserves exist at the Site, they would not be permanently sterilised as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 6.72. As such, the proposals accord with point (3) of LDP Policy MG22 which states "*The development would have no significant impact on the possible working of the resource by reason of its nature or size*" as the temporary nature of the proposals would not

permanently sterilise any mineral resources. Therefore, in terms of minerals, the proposal is considered to be compliant with the Development Plan.

Aviation Safeguarding and Telecommunication Constraints

- 6.73. VoG LPD Policy MD19 notes renewable energy schemes should not result in unacceptable impacts in terms of aviation safeguarding and electrical, radio and other communication systems. Electromagnetic disturbance is also considered under BCBC LDP Policy ENV18. As confirmed within the Renewable Energy SPG, aviation and telecommunication constraints are focused on wind turbines and their risk to air traffic safety as opposed to solar development as proposed. The Site here does not lie close proximity to an airfield, with the nearest airfield (Cardiff Airport) located approximately 15km to the south east of the Site. The submitted Glint & Glare Study also confirms there are no significant impacts on aviation activity.
- 6.74. Therefore, both in terms of aviation and telecommunications impacts, the proposal is considered to be compliant with the Development Plan.

Planning Balance

- 6.75. To summarise, the above planning assessment has demonstrated the following:
- This planning application is in broad compliance with the Development Plan and national planning policy and guidance. Policy compliance strongly supports planning permission being granted;
 - The development and operation of the solar farm would give rise to a wide range of environmental and economic benefits which amount to a very substantial weight in favour of planning permission being granted, which include:
 - o The Proposed Development will generate up to 9.9MW of renewable energy. This amount of renewable energy will save approximately 3,800 tonnes of CO₂ per annum and power 2,600 homes each year during the operational life of the development;
 - o The Proposed Development could support 280 additional temporary jobs in the wider economy during the 12-month build phase, as well as provide a significant contribution in gross value added terms for the local economy; and
 - o The Proposed Development results in a net benefit to nature above the existing levels on Site;
 - The impacts associated with the development at this location are limited, and the proposal is in compliance with relevant issue specific planning policies in the Development Plan, so do not weigh against the development.
- 6.76. In consideration of compliance with the Development Plan and other planning policy requirements and the significant benefits associated with the Proposed Development, it is clear that this development is, on balance, acceptable in planning terms.
- 6.77. The imperative need to deliver contributions from low carbon energy is a fundamental part of the UK and Welsh Government's commitment to Net Zero by 2050. The application



proposal contributes towards these requirements. Taken overall, the balance of planning consideration weighs heavily in favour of the benefits which would arise from this scheme.

7. Summary and Conclusion

- 7.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Windel Solar 9 Ltd in support of the accompanying planning application for solar development at land east of Treoes.
- 7.2. The Site is located within the administrative areas of Vale of Glamorgan Council and Bridgend County Borough Council.
- 7.3. The Proposed Development would involve the construction and operation of a ground mounted solar farm along with associated infrastructure within the Application Site. The solar farm will have the capacity to deliver up to 9.9MW of renewable energy into the local distribution network.
- 7.4. The development supports the Welsh Assembly's and UK Government's intention move to a low carbon economy, which represents a substantial benefit.
- 7.5. The Development Plan for the area relevant to this application comprises the following development documents:
- Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (2021)
 - Vale of Glamorgan Local Development Plan (Adopted 2017)
 - Bridgend Local Development Plan (Adopted 2011)
- 7.6. National planning policy and guidance is 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.
- 7.7. 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.
- 7.8. The significant benefits associated with this proposal, primarily through the generation of renewable energy to provide enough low carbon electricity to power 2,600 homes every year provides a valuable contribution towards meeting the challenging obligations of the Government regarding renewable energy generation, and also in the form of economic investment and ecological and landscape enhancements, are factors which weigh heavily in favour of this development.
- 7.9. This statement therefore demonstrates that, upon considering the following matters, this proposal, on balance falls well within the scope of acceptability:
- Broad compliance with the Development Plan and national planning policy guidance;
 - The significant benefits associated with the scheme; and
 - The minor harm to designated heritage assets, as well as other relatively limited impacts associated with the development.



- 7.10. Accordingly, this proposal represents sustainable development and, as such, this planning application should be approved without delay.

Appendix 1 – Planning Policy

Table 1 – Summary of Vale of Glamorgan LDP Policies Relating to the Application Site

Policy	Summary
Policy SP1 – Delivering the Strategy	<p><i>“The strategy will seek to improve the living and working environment, promote enjoyment of the countryside and coast and manage important environmental assets. This will be achieved by:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Providing a range and choice of housing to meet the needs of all sectors of the community;</i> <i>2. Promoting a range of employment sites intended to meet the needs of the Vale of Glamorgan and the wider capital region;</i> <i>3. Reinforcing the role of Barry, service centre settlements and primary settlements as providers of cultural, commercial and community services;</i> <i>4. Promoting sustainable transport;</i> <i>5. Delivering key infrastructure linked to the impacts of development;</i> <i>6. Protecting and enhancing the built, natural and coastal environment;</i> <i>7. Promoting opportunities for sustainable tourism and recreation; and</i> <i>8. Favouring development that promotes healthy living.”</i>
Policy SP9 – Minerals	<p><i>“The local and regional need for the provision of a continuous supply of minerals will be achieved through:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Maintaining a minimum of 10 years land bank of hard rock throughout the plan period; including extended time periods to complete permitted extraction at existing sites;</i> <i>2. Favouring proposals which promote the sustainable use of minerals and encourage the use of secondary and alternative resources;</i> <i>3. The safeguarding of known resources of sandstone, limestone, sand and gravel (where these occur outside settlements), from permanent development that would unnecessarily sterilise them or hinder their future extraction; and</i> <i>4. Safeguarding wharf facilities for the landing of marine dredged sand & gravel.”</i>
Policy SP10 – Built and	<p><i>“Development proposals must preserve and where appropriate enhance the rich and diverse built and natural environment and heritage of the Vale of Glamorgan including:</i></p>

<p>Natural Environment</p>	<p>1. The architectural and / or historic qualities of buildings or conservation areas, including locally listed buildings;</p> <p>2. Historic landscapes, parks and gardens;</p> <p>3. Special landscape areas;</p> <p>4. The Glamorgan Heritage Coast;</p> <p>5. Sites designated for their local, national and European nature conservation importance; and</p> <p>6. Important archaeological and geological features.”</p>
<p>Policy MG17 – Special Landscape Areas</p>	<p>“The following areas are designated as special landscape areas:</p> <p>1. Castle Upon Alun;</p> <p>2. Upper & Lower Thaw Valley;</p> <p>3. Ely Valley & ridge slopes;</p> <p>4. Nant Llancarfan;</p> <p>5. Dyffryn basin & ridge slopes;</p> <p>6. Cwrt-yr-Ala basin.</p> <p>Within the special landscape areas identified above, development proposals will be permitted where it is demonstrated they would cause no unacceptable harm to the important landscape character of the area.”</p>
<p>Policy MG22 – Development in Minerals Safeguarding Areas</p>	<p>“Known mineral resources of sandstone, sand and gravel and limestone are safeguarded as shown on the proposals map. New development will only be permitted in an area of known mineral resource where it has first been demonstrated that:</p> <p>1. Any reserves of minerals can be economically extracted prior to the commencement of the development;</p> <p>2. Or extraction would have an unacceptable impact on environmental or amenity considerations; or</p> <p>3. The development would have no significant impact on the possible working of the resource by reason of its nature or size; or</p> <p>4. The resource in question is of poor quality / quantity.”</p>
<p>Policy MG30 – Local Search</p>	<p>“Local search areas for solar energy are shown on the Proposals map. In these areas proposals for solar energy generation schemes up to 50 mw</p>

Areas for Solar Energy	<i>will be permitted provided there are no unacceptable effects on amenity, heritage assets or the environment.”</i>
Policy MD1 – Location of New Development	<p><i>“New development on unallocated sites should:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Have no unacceptable impact on the countryside;</i> <i>2. Reinforce the role and function of the key settlement of Barry, the service centre settlements, primary settlements or minor rural settlements as key providers of commercial, community and healthcare facilities;</i> <i>3. Where appropriate promote new enterprises, tourism, leisure and community facilities in the Vale of Glamorgan;</i> <i>4. In the case of residential development, support the delivery of affordable housing in areas of identified need;</i> <i>5. Have access to or promote the use of sustainable modes of transport;</i> <i>6. Benefit from existing infrastructure provision or where necessary make provision for new infrastructure without any unacceptable effect on the natural or built environment;</i> <i>7. Where possible promote sustainable construction and make beneficial use of previously developed land and buildings;</i> <i>8. Provide a positive context for the management of the water environment by avoiding areas of flood risk in accordance with the sequential approach set out in national policy and safeguard water resources; and</i> <i>9. Have no unacceptable impact on the best and most versatile agricultural land.”</i>
Policy MD2 – Design of New Development	<p><i>“In order to create high quality, healthy, sustainable and locally distinct places development proposals should:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Be of a high standard of design that positively contributes to the context and character of the surrounding natural and built environment and protects existing features of townscape or landscape interest;</i> <i>2. Respond appropriately to the local context and character of neighbouring buildings and uses in terms of use, type, form, scale, mix, and density;</i> <i>3. Where appropriate, provide new or enhanced areas of public realm particularly in key locations such as town centres, major routes and junctions;</i>

	<p>4. Promote the creation of healthy and active environments and reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour. In the case of retail centres, developments should provide active street frontages to create attractive and safe urban environments;</p> <p>5. Provide a safe and accessible environment for all users, giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users;</p> <p>6. Have no unacceptable impact on highway safety nor cause or exacerbate existing traffic congestion to an unacceptable degree;</p> <p>7. Where appropriate, conserve and enhance the quality of, and access to, existing open spaces and community facilities;</p> <p>8. Safeguard existing public and residential amenity, particularly with regard to privacy, overlooking, security, noise and disturbance;</p> <p>9. Provide public open space, private amenity space and car parking in accordance with the council's standards;</p> <p>10. Incorporate sensitive landscaping, including the retention and enhancement where appropriate of existing landscape features and biodiversity interests;</p> <p>11. Provide adequate facilities and space for the collection, composting and recycling of waste materials and explore opportunities to incorporate re-used or recyclable materials or products into new buildings or structures; and</p> <p>12. Mitigate the causes of climate change by minimising carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions associated with their design, construction, use and eventual demolition, and include features that provide effective adaptation to, and resilience against, the current and predicted future effects of climate change."</p>
<p>Policy MD7 – Environmental Protection</p>	<p>"Development proposals will be required to demonstrate they will not result in an unacceptable impact on people, residential amenity, property and / or the natural environment from either:</p> <p>1. Pollution of land, surface water, ground water and the air;</p> <p>2. Land contamination;</p> <p>3. Hazardous substances;</p> <p>4. Noise, vibration, odour nuisance and light pollution;</p> <p>5. Flood risk and consequences;</p> <p>6. Coastal erosion or land stability;</p>

	<p>7. The loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land; or</p> <p>8. Any other identified risk to public health and safety.</p> <p>Where impacts are identified the Council will require applicants to demonstrate that appropriate measures can be taken to minimise the impact identified to an acceptable level. Planning conditions may be imposed or legal obligation entered into, to secure any necessary mitigation and monitoring processes.</p> <p>In respect of flood risk, new developments will be expected to avoid unnecessary flood risk and meet the requirements of TAN15. No highly vulnerable development will be permitted within Development Advice Map (DAM) zone C2. Development will only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding where it can be demonstrated that the site can comply with the justification and assessment requirements set out in TAN15.”</p>
<p>Policy MD8 – Historic Environment</p>	<p>“Development proposals must protect the qualities of the built and historic environment of the Vale of Glamorgan, specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Within conservation areas, development proposals must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area; 2. For listed and locally listed buildings, development proposals must preserve or enhance the building, its setting and any features of significance it possesses; 3. Within designated landscapes, historic parks and gardens, and battlefields, development proposals must respect the special historic character and quality of these areas, their settings or historic views or vistas; 4. For sites of archaeological interest, development proposals must preserve or enhance archaeological remains and where appropriate their settings.”
<p>Policy MD9 – Promoting Biodiversity</p>	<p>“New development proposals will be required to conserve and where appropriate enhance biodiversity interests unless it can be demonstrated that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The need for the development clearly outweighs the biodiversity value of the site; and 2. The impacts of the development can be satisfactorily mitigated and acceptably managed through appropriate future management regimes.”
<p>Policy MD19 – Low Carbon and Renewable</p>	<p>“Proposals for the generation of low carbon and renewable energy will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is no unacceptable impact on the interests of:</p>

Energy Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best and most versatile agricultural land; • Aviation safeguarding; • Electrical, radio or other communication systems; • Landscape importance; • Natural and cultural heritage; • Nature conservation; • Residential amenity; and • Soil conservation. <p><i>In assessing such proposals, the cumulative impacts of renewable energy schemes will be an important consideration. Where necessary, proposals should be informed by a landscape and visual impact assessment.</i></p> <p><i>Favourable consideration will be given to proposals that provide opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy and / or heat generation to be utilised within the local community."</i></p>
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Table 2 – Summary of Bridgend County Borough Council LDP Policies Relating to the Application Site

Policy	Summary
Policy SP2 – Design and Sustainable Place Making	<p><i>"All development should contribute to creating high quality, attractive, sustainable places which enhance the community in which they are located, whilst having full regard to the natural, historic and built environment by:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) Complying with all relevant national policy and guidance where appropriate;</i> <i>2) Having a design of the highest quality possible, whilst respecting and enhancing local distinctiveness and landscape character;</i> <i>3) Being of an appropriate scale, size and prominence;</i> <i>4) Using land efficiently by:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(i) being of a density which maximises the development potential of the land whilst respecting that of the surrounding development; and</i> <i>(ii) having a preference for development on previously developed land over greenfield land;</i> <i>5) Providing for an appropriate mix of land uses;</i>

	<p>6) Having good walking, cycling, public transport and road connections within and outside the site to ensure efficient access;</p> <p>7) Minimising opportunities for crime to be generated or increased;</p> <p>8) Avoiding or minimising noise, air, soil and water pollution;</p> <p>9) Incorporating methods to ensure the site is free from contamination (including invasive species);</p> <p>10) Safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure;</p> <p>11) Ensuring equality of access by all;</p> <p>12) Ensuring that the viability and amenity of neighbouring uses and their users/occupiers will not be adversely affected;</p> <p>13) Incorporating appropriate arrangements for the disposal of foul sewage, waste and water;</p> <p>14) Make a positive contribution towards tackling the causes of, and adapting to the impacts of Climate Change; and</p> <p>15) Appropriately contributing towards local, physical, social and community infrastructure which is affected by the development.”</p>
<p>Policy PLA4 – Climate Change and Peak Oil</p>	<p>“All development proposals will be required to make a positive contribution towards tackling the causes of, and adapting to the impacts of Climate Change and Peak Oil issues by:</p> <p>1) Having lower carbon energy requirements by reducing energy demand, and promoting energy efficiency;</p> <p>2) Utilising local materials and supplies (including food) wherever feasible;</p> <p>3) Encouraging the development of renewable energy generation;</p> <p>4) Having a location and layout which reflects sustainable transport and access principles, thereby reducing the overall need to travel;</p> <p>5) Having a design, layout and landscaping which:</p> <p>(i) helps wildlife and habitats to adapt to the changing climate;</p> <p>(ii) assists cooling of the urban environment, including the use of passive building techniques where appropriate;</p> <p>6) Using resources more efficiently, and minimising waste water use and pollution;</p> <p>7) Avoiding or minimising the risk from flooding and/ or adapting to the increased risk of flooding, coastal erosion and warmer annual mean temperatures; and</p>

	<p>8) Promoting sustainable building methods and drainage systems where appropriate.”</p>
<p>Policy SP4 – Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment</p>	<p>“Development which will conserve and, wherever possible, enhance the natural environment of the County Borough will be favoured.</p> <p>Development proposals will not be permitted where they will have an adverse impact upon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The integrity of the County Borough’s countryside; • The character of its landscape; • Its biodiversity and habitats; and • The quality of its natural resources including water, air and soil. <p>Areas having a high and/or unique environmental quality will be protected and the following strategically important areas within the County Borough will specifically be protected from inappropriate development which directly or indirectly impacts upon them.”</p>
<p>Policy SP5 – Conservation of the Built and Historic Environment</p>	<p>“Development should conserve, preserve, or enhance the built and historic environment of the County Borough and its setting.</p> <p>In particular, development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that they will not have a significant adverse impact upon the following heritage assets:</p> <p>SP5(1) Listed Buildings and their settings;</p> <p>SP5(2) Conservation Areas and their settings;</p> <p>SP5(3) Scheduled Ancient Monuments;</p> <p>SP5(4) Sites or Areas of Archaeological Significance;</p> <p>SP5(5) Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens; or</p> <p>SP5(6) Locally Significant Buildings and Areas of Historical Importance”</p>
<p>Policy SP8 – Renewable Energy</p>	<p>“Development proposals which contribute to meeting national renewable energy and energy efficiency targets will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the environment and local communities.”</p>
<p>Policy ENV18 – Renewable Energy Developments</p>	<p>“Proposals for renewable energy developments will be permitted provided that:</p> <p>1) In the case of wind farm developments of 25MW or more, they are within the boundary of the refined Strategic Search Area and required to meet the indicative generating capacity;</p>

	<p>2) <i>The availability of identified mineral resources or reserves will not be sterilised;</i></p> <p>3) <i>Appropriate monitoring and investigation can demonstrate that the development will not have any significant impacts on nature conservation;</i></p> <p>4) <i>Appropriate arrangements have been made for the preservation and/or recording of features of local archaeological, architectural or historic interest;</i></p> <p>5) <i>They can be safely accessed to permit regular maintenance without detriment to the environment or the public rights of way network;</i></p> <p>6) <i>They will not detrimentally affect local amenity by reason of noise emission, visual dominance, shadow flicker, reflected light, the emission of smoke, fumes, harmful gases, dust, nor otherwise cause pollution to the local environment.</i></p> <p>7) <i>They will not lead to electromagnetic disturbance to existing transmitting and receiving systems (which includes navigation and emergency services), thereby prejudicing public safety;</i></p> <p>8) <i>Local receptors of heat and energy from the proposal are identified and, where appropriate, are connected to/benefit from the facility; and</i></p> <p>9) <i>Provision has been made for the removal of all infrastructure from, and reinstatement of the site following termination of the use."</i></p>
<p>Policy REG1 – Employment Sites</p>	<p><i>Land is allocated and protected for industrial and business development falling within the uses specified, at:</i></p> <p><i>REG1(8) Waterton Industrial Estate (Uses B1, B2 and B8)</i></p>
<p>Policy REG2 – Protection of Identified Employment Sites</p>	<p><i>"Proposals which result in the loss of existing or proposed industrial land or buildings on sites identified in Policy REG1 will not be permitted. Exceptions will need to be justified on one of the following grounds:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>In appropriate locations, a limited number of those uses regarded as complementary and/or ancillary to the main use of the land for industrial purposes; or</i> 2. <i>2. In appropriate locations, those sui generis employment uses which are regarded as being suitably located on industrial land."</i>

Table 3 – Summary of emerging Bridgend County Borough Council Replacement LDP Policies Relating to the Application Site

Policy	Summary
Policy ENT2: Protection of Employment Sites	<p><i>"In order to protect the employment function of existing business and employment sites, development will be permitted at the following sites where:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) it falls within Use Class B1, B2 or B8;</i> <i>b) in appropriate locations, it provides an ancillary facility or service that supports the primary employment use; or</i> <i>c) It is an appropriate waste management facility compatible with existing industrial and commercial activities."</i>
Policy SP13: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development	<p><i>"1) Renewable and low carbon development proposals which contribute to meeting national and local renewable and low carbon energy and energy efficiency targets will be permitted where:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>a) it can be demonstrated that there will be no unacceptable impacts on the natural and historic environment or local communities (such as noise and air pollution) and that no other unacceptable cumulative impacts will arise;</i> <i>b) Satisfactory mitigation can be put in place to minimise the impacts of renewable and low carbon proposals and its associated infrastructure; and</i> <i>c) Proposals make provision for the appropriate restoration and aftercare of the land for its beneficial future re-use."</i>
Policy SP17: Conservation and Enhancement of the Natural Environment	<p><i>The County Borough has a rich and varied biodiversity with a broad range of species, habitats and unique, rich landscapes. In particular, these include the nationally important Glamorgan Heritage Coast, the outstanding historic landscapes of Kenfig and Merthyr Mawr Warren, and other regionally and locally important areas. Development which will conserve and, wherever possible, enhance the natural environment of the County Borough will be favoured. Development proposals will not be permitted where they will have an adverse impact upon:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) The integrity of the County Borough's countryside;</i> <i>2) The character of its landscape;</i> <i>3) Its biodiversity and habitats; and Kenfig National Nature Reserve</i> <i>4) The quality of its natural resources including water, air and soil.</i>
SP18: Conservation of the Historic Environment	<p><i>"The County Borough has a rich and diverse built heritage and historic environment. Development proposals must protect, conserve, and, where appropriate, promote or enhance the significance of historic assets, including their settings. In particular, there is a general</i></p>

presumption in favour of the preservation or enhancement of the significance of historic assets and their settings including:

- 1) World Heritage Sites*
- 2) Scheduled Monuments*
- 3) Archaeologically Sensitive Areas and Archaeological Remains*
- 4) Listed Buildings Jennings Building, Porthcawl 209*
- 5) Conservation Areas*
- 6) Historic Parks and Gardens*
- 7) Historic Landscapes*
- 8) Historic assets of special local interest"*

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Newcastle

Third Floor, Gainsborough House,
34-40 Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 6AW
T 0191 917 6700
E Newcastle@pegasusgroup.co.uk
Offices throughout the UK & Ireland

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