Planning, Design & Access Statement

Land at The Coppice
Penrhos
Llanymynech
Powys
SY22 6QB

Proposed ground mounted solar PV panels, substation and all associated works

R & E J Bowker

June 2026

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Contents

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement is prepared and submitted in connection with a full planning application made to Powys County Council ("The Local Planning Authority") for the proposed construction of ground mounted solar PV panels, an electrical substation and all associated works at Land at The Coppice, Penrhos, Llanymynech, Powys, SY22 6QB ("the Application Site").

1.2 The proposed development forms an extension to the existing solar installation immediately adjacent to the application site (to the west), which received full planning permission from Powys County Council on 26 January 2023 under planning application reference 22/1603/FUL.

1.3 The proposal will contribute towards local and national renewable energy generation targets, support the transition to a low-carbon economy, and provide long-term economic resilience for the Applicant's agricultural enterprise.

1.4 This statement should be read in conjunction with the other plans and documentation submitted as part of the full planning application, listed below:

- Completed Full Planning Application Form
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report
- Drawing No: 81777 / GH / 001– Site Location Plan
- Drawing No: 81777 / GH / 002– Existing Block Plan
- Drawing No: 81777 / GH / 003– Proposed Block Plan
- Drawing No: 81777 / GH / 004– Biodiversity Enhancement Plan
- Drawing No: 81777 / GH / 100– Proposed Solar Panels
- Drawing No: 81777 / GH / 101– Proposed Substation and Switch Room

1.5 This statement provides a balanced overview of the planning issues associated with the proposed development and is designed to aid the Planning Officer in making their recommendation.

1.6 The information set-out within this statement confirms that the proposal can be delivered on-site without giving rise to any unacceptable or adverse impacts in planning-terms.

1.7 In accordance with the requirements of Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended), this statement also acts as a Design & Access Statement, given the application proposes a form of 'Major Development'. This statement:

- Explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
- Demonstrates the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
- Explains the policy or approach adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in the development plan have been taken into account; and
- Explains how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

2.0 The Application Site and Background

2.1 The application site is located approximately 1.5 miles north-west of Arddleen within a predominantly rural landscape characterised by agricultural land, farmsteads and scattered residential dwellings.

2.2 The site comprises part of an existing grazing field and is enclosed by established hedgerows and mature vegetation. These existing landscape features provide effective screening from surrounding roads and neighbouring properties, limiting visibility of the development within the wider landscape.

2.3 The site is presently used for agricultural purposes and forms part of a larger farm holding. The proposed development is located within a less productive area of the farm and will continue to facilitate agricultural use through biodiversity-led land management and seasonal sheep grazing between the proposed solar PV arrays.

2.4 Agriculture continues to face significant economic pressures, making diversification increasingly important to the long-term viability of rural businesses. The proposed solar development will provide a stable and reliable income stream, strengthen the resilience of the farming enterprise whilst supporting continued agricultural use of the land.

2.5 The development will also contribute towards improving energy security through the generation of renewable electricity, reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels and supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy.

2.6 The Welsh Government has declared ambitions to create a sustainable, low-carbon economy and has committed to significantly increasing renewable energy generation across Wales. Renewable energy developments are recognised as an essential component in achieving national carbon reduction targets and enhancing energy security.

2.7 The proposal directly supports national and local planning objectives by:

- Increasing renewable electricity generation from indigenous energy sources;
- Contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
- Improving energy security and resilience;
- Supporting rural economic diversification;
- Delivering biodiversity enhancements alongside energy generation

2.8 The development will make a positive contribution towards Wales' transition to a net-zero economy and aligns with the objectives of Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales and wider UK energy policy.

2.9 An aerial view of the application site is provided below, with the site indicated within the red star:

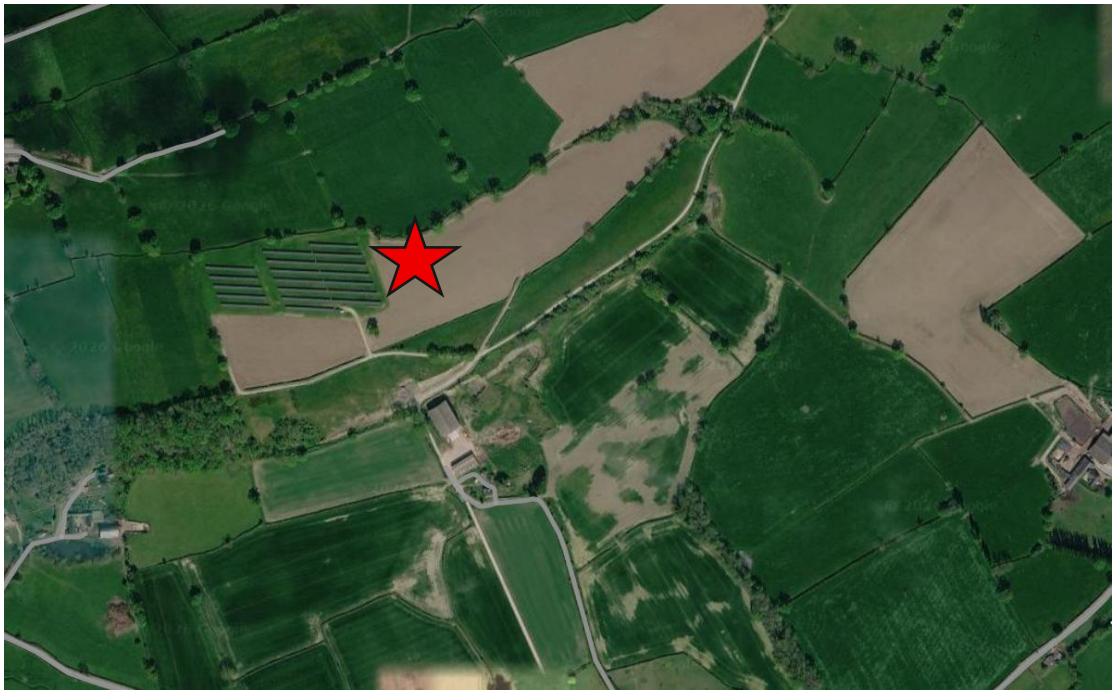

Figure 1: Site location and context

2.10 The application site lies immediately adjacent to an existing solar installation which was granted planning permission by Powys County Council on 26 January 2023 under application reference 22/1603/FUL.

2.11 The approved development has established renewable energy infrastructure at Coppice Farm and demonstrates the site's suitability for solar energy generation. The proposed development represents a logical extension to the existing renewable energy infrastructure and will utilise the established grid connection already available on-site.

3.0 The Proposed Development

2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the installation of a 1.148MW ground mounted solar array. The proposed development will include a ground mounted racking system which will be attached to the PV panels including a DNO substation, switch room, underground cabling and all ancillary works.

2.2 The development will be located on agricultural land forming part of the wider farm holding at The Coppice, Penrhos. The site has been selected due to its suitability for solar energy generation, proximity to existing grid infrastructure, its location within a less productive area of the farm, and its position adjacent to an existing solar installation.

2.3 The site is to be laid out as per the site block plan and will include the following elements:

- A 1.148MW solar photovoltaic array;
- Ground-mounted steel support frames and racking systems;
- An LV Switch Room and DNO Substation;
- Inverters and associated electrical equipment;
- Underground cabling connecting to the existing on-site export connection;
- Ancillary infrastructure required for the operation and maintenance of the development.

2.4 The solar panels will be mounted on metal support frames secured by shallow driven piles, minimising disturbance to the ground and allowing the site to be restored at the end of the operational life of the development.

2.5 The arrays will be arranged in south-facing rows to maximise solar gain and efficiency. The panels will have a minimum ground clearance of approximately 1 metre and a maximum height of approximately 3 metres above ground level.

2.6 Inverters will be mounted on the framework adjacent to the solar arrays. Electricity generated by the panels will be collected and transferred via underground cabling to the proposed substation and switchgear equipment before connecting to the existing export infrastructure.

2.7 The external transformer will be positioned on a concrete base within a secure fenced enclosure. An adjacent GRP kiosk will accommodate the switchgear and ancillary electrical equipment.

2.8 Electricity generated by the proposed solar array will be exported to the local electricity network via the existing grid connection infrastructure serving the adjacent approved solar development. Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) has confirmed the availability of a grid connection for the

development, and a connection agreement has been prepared to facilitate the export of electricity generated on site. The proposed connection will utilise underground cabling between the solar array and the point of connection, minimising visual impact and avoiding the need for significant additional infrastructure.

2.9 The total construction period is typically 6 weeks. The materials will be stored off site and will be transported at phased intervals during the construction period to control vehicle movements.

2.10 No permanent lighting is proposed as part of the development.

2.11 The application site was selected following consideration of a range of technical, operational and environmental factors. The chosen site benefits from:

- Good solar exposure with minimal overshadowing;
- Access to an existing grid connection;
- Suitable access for construction and maintenance;
- Existing boundary vegetation providing natural screening;
- The absence of statutory landscape, ecological, archaeological or heritage designations; and
- A location within a less productive area of the agricultural holding, adjacent to the existing solar arrays.

2.12 The development has been designed to allow the continuation of agricultural use through the establishment of wildflower and pollinator-rich grassland together with seasonal sheep grazing beneath and around the solar arrays.

2.13 An extract of the Proposed Block Plan is provided below within Figure 2:

Figure 2: Extract of Proposed Block Plan

4.0 Planning Policy Context

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this submission comprises the following:

- National Development Framework: Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (introduced in February 2021); and

- The adopted Powys Local Development Plan (2011-2026) (adopted in April 2018).

National Planning Policy

4.2 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 was adopted in February 2021 and replaced the Wales Spatial Plan (WSP). It provides a framework for the future spatial development of Wales. Future Wales comprises the first development plan of its kind within Wales. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including

sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of our communities.

4.3 Future Wales sets out its overarching ambitions based on the national planning principles and national sustainable placemaking outcomes set out in Planning Policy Wales by means of 11 outcomes. As set out on Page 52 of Future Wales, the 11 Outcomes are collectively a statement of where the Welsh Government aspire Wales to be in 20 years' time, as follows:

'A Wales where people live:
1... and work in connected, inclusive and healthy places
2... in vibrant rural places with access to homes, jobs and services
3... in distinctive regions that tackle health and socio-economic inequality through sustainable growth
4... in places with a thriving Welsh Language
5... and work in towns and cities which are a focus and springboard for sustainable growth
6... in places where prosperity, innovation and culture are promoted
7... in places where travel is sustainable
8... in places with world-class digital infrastructure
9... in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution
10... in places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems; and
11... in places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient'.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Growing our economy in a sustainable manner – the planning system should enable development which contributes to long term economic well-being, making best use of existing infrastructure and planning for new supporting infrastructure and services.

- Making best use of resources - The efficient use of resources, including land, underpins sustainable development. The planning system has a vital role to play in making development resilient to climate change, decarbonising society and developing a circular economy for the benefit of both the built and natural environments and to contribute to the achievement of the wellbeing goals.

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

- Creating and sustaining communities - The planning system must work in an integrated way to maximise its contribution to well-being.

- Maximising environmental protection and limiting environmental impact - Natural, historic and cultural assets must be protected, promoted, conserved and enhanced. Negative environmental impacts should be avoided in the wider public interest. This means acting in the long term to respect environmental limits and operating in an integrated way so that resources and/or assets are not irreversibly damaged or depleted.

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

"When considering the search sequence and in development plan policies and development management decisions considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because of its special importance.

Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development, and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades is unavailable, or available lower grade land has an environmental value recognised by a landscape, wildlife, historic or archaeological designation which outweighs the agricultural considerations. If land in grades 1, 2 or 3a does need to be developed, and there is a choice between sites of different grades, development should be directed to land of the lowest grade."

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

"In 2019 the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in order to co- ordinate action nationally and locally to help combat the threats of climate change. The planning system plays a key role in tackling the climate emergency through the decarbonisation of the energy system and the sustainable management of natural resources. The transition to a low carbon economy not only brings opportunities for clean growth and quality jobs, but also has wider benefits of enhanced places to live and work, with clean air and water and improved health outcomes.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets a legal target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Wales by at least 80% in 2050. The Act also requires a series of interim targets (for 2020, 2030 and 2040) and carbon

budgets. The budgets set a limit on the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions in Wales over a 5-year period to serve as stepping stones and ensure progress is made towards the decadal targets.

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

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

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

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

4.12 Paragraph 5.9.19 of PPW adds:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Local Planning Policy

4.21 The Powys Local Development Plan (2011-2026) was adopted in April 2018 and is the prevailing development plan for the county of Powys excluding areas of the county within the Bannau Brecheiniog National Park. As such, it is a material consideration for planning applications within the Powys LPA area, including the current application. Whilst the LDP is now time expired (as of 01/04/2026), it is nevertheless noted that the vast majority of its policies are still a major material planning consideration of significant weight; especially when considering proposals for new renewable energy generation.

4.22 The adopted LDP contains a number of land-use planning objectives for the county within the plan period (2011-2026). Objective 5 of the LDP relates to 'energy and water' and confirms the Council will look to *'support the conservation of energy and water and to generate energy from appropriately located renewable resources where acceptable in terms of the economic, social, environmental and cumulative impacts'*.

4.23 Of principal relevance within the Powys LDP, Policy RE1 (Renewable Energy) is deemed to be of most pertinence to this application.

4.24 Policy RE1 reads as follows:

"Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development will be permitted subject to the following criteria:

1. Within or close to the Strategic Search Areas (SSAs), proposals for wind energy greater than 25MW will be permitted subject to criteria 3 to 5; all other proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will only be permitted where they can demonstrate they would not prejudice the purpose of the SSA.

2. Within the Local Search Areas (LSAs), proposals for solar PV between 5 – 50MW will be permitted subject to criteria 3 to 5; all other proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will only be permitted where they can demonstrate they would not prejudice the purpose of the LSA.

3. Proposals for all types of renewable and low carbon energy development and associated infrastructure either on their own, cumulatively or in combination with existing, approved or proposed development, shall comply with all other relevant policies in the LDP.

4. Satisfactory mitigation shall be in place to reduce the impact of the proposal and its associated infrastructure. Proposals shall make provision for the restoration and after-care of the land for its beneficial re-use.

5. Where necessary, additional compensatory benefits will be sought by agreement with applicants in accordance with Policy DM1 - Planning Obligations.

4.25 The following LDP Policies are also considered to be of relevance:

- SP6: Distribution of Growth Across the Settlement Hierarchy
- SP7: Safeguarding of Strategic Resources and Assets
- DM2: The Natural Environment
- DM4: Landscape
- DM13: Design and Resources
- T1: Travel, Traffic and Transport Infrastructure

4.26 The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on Renewable Energy (2019) is also of relevance to the assessment of this application.

5.0 Main Planning Considerations

Principle

5.1 The principle of new renewable energy development is supported strongly at a national scale in policy and legal commitments to achieve a reduction in carbon emissions. Key UK and Welsh Government Policy and legislation is summarised within Section 4 of this statement and confirms the immediate and pressing need for deployment of renewable energy generation, derived from legally binding obligations for renewable energy development. This development would provide significant assistance in achieving the obligations as part of the transition to a low carbon economy.

5.2 A key objective of the Powys LDP is to ensure Powys makes a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gases. LDP Policy RE1 confirms in-principle support for renewable energy development, subject to consideration of impacts.

5.3 Subsequent to the adoption of the LDP, Powys County Council declared a 'climate emergency' in July 2019 and is developing plans to become a net carbon zero Council by 2030. Powys County Council's replacement LDP is currently in development, but this includes provision to plan positively for the provision of renewable energy generation.

5.4 At the national level, PPW confirms that considerable weight should be attached to the need to produce more energy from renewable and low carbon sources in order for Wales to meet its carbon and renewable targets. The Welsh Government is aiming to generate at least 70% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030, whilst it has a legally binding target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050. In June 2019 the Welsh Government confirmed its target to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in response to recommendations by the Committee on Climate Change. The Energy Generation in Wales 2018 report identifies how, of all electricity generated in Wales, 25% is from renewable sources, up from 22% in 2017. In terms of its own electrical consumption target of 70% by 2030, Wales reached the milestone of 50% electrical consumption being generated by renewable energy by 2018. In terms of progress toward the 70% target, the renewable energy installation rates have significantly cut as a result of reductions in government subsidies and “There remain significant challenges to meeting the 70% target by 2030, notably the lack of available price support for renewable generation, as well as network constraints and network unavailability in some areas restricting the ability for new projects to connect”.

5.5 Renewable energy installation rates have significantly cut as a result of reductions in government subsidies and “There remain significant challenges to meeting the 70% target by 2030, notably the lack of available price support

for renewable generation, as well as network constraints and network unavailability in some areas restricting the ability for new projects to connect".

5.6 The proposal will generate renewable electricity for export to the national grid; with a connection to the grid being available within the site's vicinity. As outlined within Welsh Government national planning policy, there is an overarching need for new renewable and low carbon generation within Wales. It is therefore clear that the principle of a solar PV development is wholly supported within national planning policy.

5.7 Also of relevance is the adjacent existing solar site, which was granted full planning consent by the Local Planning Authority in 2023. The approving of the adjacent site by the Council, within an almost identical planning policy context, does set a precedent in this case, and demonstrates that the principle of ground-mounted solar PV development in this location is acceptable.

5.8 In light of the above, the Applicant contends that the principle of development in this case is wholly acceptable within the current Welsh and Powys planning policy contexts.

Design & Visual/Landscape Impact

5.9 The application site is located within the Guilsfield Rolling Farmlands Area of LANDMAP and is elevated as being of high value in terms of the 'visual and sensory' classification.

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

'Extensive area of well-defined traditional farming landscape, high aesthetic qualities and limited intrusion by modern development = High'.

5.11 The proposed development has been designed to respond sensitively to its landscape setting. The site is enclosed by established hedgerows and mature vegetation, providing strong visual containment. Public visibility will be largely limited to areas immediately adjacent to the site, with existing vegetation and field boundaries offering effective screening within the wider landscape setting. Views from more distant locations are restricted by topography and vegetation, while potential views from the road to the north are mitigated by hedgerows, trees and surrounding farm buildings.

5.12 The proposed solar array will be viewed in the context of the adjacent approved solar development and existing agricultural infrastructure. As a result, the proposal will appear as a logical extension to the existing renewable energy development at Coppice Farm.

5.13 Given the scale of the proposal, the low-profile nature of the solar panels and the existing landscape screening, it is considered that the development would

not result in any significant adverse effects on the character or appearance of the surrounding landscape.

5.14 As such, the proposals are considered to be acceptable with regards their landscape visual impact in accordance with the requirements of Technical Advice Note 12 and Powys LDP Policies SP7, DM4 and DM13.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

5.15 As discussed in the previous section, the site benefits from substantial screening provided by existing hedgerows, trees and surrounding vegetation, as well as the local topography, which together significantly limit visibility from neighbouring properties and public vantage points.

5.16 The proposed solar array is a passive form of development that does not generate significant levels of noise, vibration, odour or artificial lighting during its operational phase. No permanent lighting is proposed as part of the development.

5.17 Following completion of the construction phase, vehicle movements associated with the development will be limited to occasional maintenance and inspection visits. As such, the proposal will not result in any material increase in traffic movements that could adversely affect the amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

5.18 There are no neighbouring residential properties located within close proximity to the application site which have the potential to be adversely impacted in terms of amenity levels. Furthermore, the separation distances to nearby residential properties, together with the existing landscape screening, ensure that the development will not give rise to any significant adverse impacts on residential amenity in this instance, in accordance with the requirements of Powys LDP Policy DM13.

Ecology & Biodiversity

5.19 The application site comprises an area of improved agricultural grassland, which is noted to be of low ecological value. Indeed, the site is currently grazed intensively by the Applicant's livestock, which means the site is unlikely to be in use by any protected or priority species. There are also no known ponds within a 300m radius of the application site, meaning it is unlikely Great Crested Newts would be present in the area.

5.20 Thus, it is considered there is a low potential for any protected species to be impacted or effected by the proposed development in this case.

5.21 There are also no designated ecological sites within close proximity to the application site, meaning impacts upon protected sites are unlikely.

5.22 The development has been sensitively designed and sited to ensure no existing mature trees or hedgerows will need to be removed in order to facilitate the proposals on the site.

5.23 The application proposes net-benefits for biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales by way of the proposed erection of 2x Woodcrete bat boxes and 1x Woodcrete bird box on existing mature trees to the north of the application site, on land owned by the Applicant. Given the low ecological baseline of the application site, it is considered the proposed NBB measures (as per Drawing No: 81777 / GH / 004) will result in an ecological enhancement on the site. Please refer to the accompanying Green Infrastructure Statement for further details.

5.24 Given the above, the proposed development does not have the potential to cause any adverse or harmful impacts upon local ecology and biodiversity in this instance, in accordance with the requirements of PPW, Technical Advice Note 5 and Powys LDP Policies SP7 and DM2.

Heritage

5.25 The nearest designated heritage asset is located approximately 425m to the south-west of the application site, at Llwyn Farmhouse.

5.26 As part of the assessment of the adjacent solar development approved under application reference 22/1603/FUL, the Council's Built Heritage Officer concluded that:

'Due to the topography and the well-established trees on the hill behind the above listed buildings, there is limited to no inter-visibility between the two. Therefore, the impact may be considered negligible.'

5.27 The proposed development is located further from the heritage asset than the previously approved solar array and benefits from the same landscape characteristics, including intervening topography and mature vegetation which limit inter-visibility.

5.28 The proposed development is located further from the heritage asset than the previously approved solar array and benefits from the same intervening topography and mature vegetation which restrict inter-visibility. Having regard to the conclusions of the Council's Built Heritage Officer in relation to application 22/1603/FUL, it is considered that the proposal would have a negligible impact on the setting and significance of nearby heritage assets.

Highway Safety

5.29 The construction of the solar development would result in the temporary generation of construction and staff related vehicle trips over an estimated 12 week construction period. The site benefits from excellent access from the

existing farm drive, which would be utilised to access the proposed solar site (as was the case for the existing solar site also). The site is located approximately 1 mile from the A483 trunk road. Construction vehicles will use this existing farm access, which is suitable to accommodate their movements, then use the existing farm tracks to access the application site.

5.30 Given the temporary nature of construction traffic associated with the proposed development, and the fact minimal traffic will be associated with the development in its operational phase, it is considered the proposals will not result in any adverse highway safety impacts in this case.

Flooding and Surface Water Drainage

5.31 The application site is located within Flood Zone 1 of the Flood Map for Planning (FMfP) and as such, flood risk is not an applicable planning constraint in this instance.

5.32 The proposed development is modest in scale and will not introduce significant areas of impermeable surfacing. The use of a screw pile mounting system ensures that ground permeability is maintained, allowing natural drainage patterns to continue unaltered.

5.33 The proposed development will not result in any significant increase in surface water runoff or flood risk. No extensive areas of impermeable surfacing are proposed, and surface water will continue to drain naturally into the ground. Any drainage requirements associated with the development will be designed in accordance with Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) principles and will be subject to approval by the Sustainable Drainage Approval Body as part of the SAB application process.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the installation of a 1.148MW ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array and associated infrastructure at The Coppice, Penrhos, Llanymynech.

6.2 The proposal represents a sustainable form of development that will contribute towards local and national renewable energy generation targets, improve energy security and support the transition to a low-carbon economy. The development will also provide long-term economic benefits to the farming enterprise through a viable form of farm diversification.

6.3 The application site has been carefully selected and benefits from existing landscape screening, an established grid connection and proximity to an existing approved solar development. The assessment contained within this statement demonstrates that the proposal would not result in any unacceptable impacts on landscape character, visual amenity, neighbouring amenity, heritage assets, highways, drainage or flood risk.

6.4 The proposed development represents sustainable development, and it is respectfully requested that planning permission be granted by the Local Planning Authority without delay.