The Planning Inspectorate
Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Adroddiad

gan Nicola Gulley MA MRTPI

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 10.08.2021

Report

by Nicola Gulley MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 10.08.2021

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

SECTION 62D

APPLICATION(S) BY

WESSEX SOLAR ENERGY (WSE PEMBROKESHIRE LIMITED)

LAND AT

BLACKBERRY LANE, NASH, PEMBROKESHIRE, SA27 4SJ

Cyf ffeil/File ref: DNS/3245065

Contents

Abbreviations used in this report:

AA	Appropriate Assessment
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BMV	Best and Most Versatile Land
CA	Conservation Area
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CTMP	Construction Traffic Management Plan
DAM	Development Advice Map
DCC	Department for Climate Change
DE&I	Department for Economy and Infrastructure
DNS	Development of National Significance
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMMP	Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan
ES	Environmental Statement
FCA	Flood Consequences Assessment
Future Wales	Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
GGA	Glint and Glare Assessment
Ha	Hectares
HRA	Habitats Regulations Assessment
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
LCA	Landscape Character Areas
LMP	Landscape Management Plan
LDP	Local Development Plan
LIR	Local Impact Report
LPA	Local Planning Authority
LQIA	Land Quality Implications Assessment
LVIA	Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NRW	Natural Resources Wales

The Council	Pembrokeshire County Council
ODRP	Outline Decommissioning and Restoration Plan
PCPA	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
PCNPA	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
PINS(W)	Planning Inspectorate (Wales)
PPW	Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (February 2021)
PROW	Public Rights of Way
PV	Photovoltaic
RVAA	Residential Visual Amenity Assessment
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
SIA	Setting Impact Assessment
SLA	Special Landscape Area
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SPZ	Source Protection Zone
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
S106	Section 106 agreement
TAN	Technical Advice Note
'The 1990 Act'	The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
'The 2015 Act'	The Planning (Wales) Act 2015
'The DNS Regulations'	The Developments of National Significance (Wales) Regulations 2016
'The 2017 EIA Regulations'	The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017
'The Habitats Regulations'	The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
'The Procedure Order'	The Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016
WBFGA	Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015
ZTV	Zone of Theoretical Visibility

DNS Application Ref: DNS/3245065

Site address: Land at Blackberry Lane, Nash, Pembrokeshire, SA72 4SJ

- The application, dated 12 January 2021, was made under section 62D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015).
- The application is made by Wessex Solar Energy (WSE Pembrokeshire Limited).
- The application was confirmed as valid on 24 February 2021.
- A site visit took place on 17 June 2021.
- Hearings were held on 8, 9 & 10 June 2021
- The development proposed is described as a solar park and associated infrastructure across a 34.25ha site. It would be capable of exporting up to 22 MW AC of electricity into the regional electricity grid. The key elements of the proposed development are:
  • Approximate Number of PV Panels (PV Cells): 70,000 of the order of 2210 mm (length) by 1130 mm (width), and 35 mm (depth). The PV Panels would have a height of no more than 3.5 metres from the ground to the top of the PV Panel.
  • Number of Inverters: up to 12
  • Number of Transformers: up to 12
  • Inverter / Transformer Cabin Dimensions (m): 10.4 meters (length) by 2.6 meters (width), and 3.18 metres (height).
  • Control Building Dimensions (m): 7 meters (length) by 3 meters (width), and 4 meters (height).
  • Perimeter / Security Fence (m): 2.5 meters; and
  • Electrical Connection: The PV Cells will require interconnection within the proposed Solar Park site to Inverters that will convert the low voltage DC to low voltage AC. In turn, the Inverters will connect to Transformers that will convert the low voltage AC to higher voltage AC.
  The development would be for a temporary period of up to 40 years.

Secondary Consent Applications:

- No secondary consent applications are being made.

Summary of Recommendation: That planning permission be refused.

Procedural Matters

1. In accordance with Article 5 of The Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016, the applicant notified the Planning Inspectorate (Wales)(PINS(W)) on behalf of the Welsh Ministers of the proposed development on 15 January 2020.

2. Further to the applicant's request, made pursuant to regulation 31(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (2017 EIA Regulations), PINS (W) provided a Screening Direction on 7 February 2020 confirming that the proposal is "Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Development".

3. A Scoping Direction, prepared in accordance with regulation 33 of the 2017 EIA Regulations, was issued on 11 March 2020. As part of the scoping process PINS(W) consulted with the relevant statutory consultation bodies, including Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Cadw, Pembrokeshire County Council (the Council), and non-statutory

consultation bodies, specifically Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA). The responses received from the consultation and non-consultation bodies have been taken into account in the Scoping Direction.

4. Following revisions to the application boundary and the design of the solar panels, a request was made by the applicant for pre-application advice. The advice, which addressed matters in relation to the validity and completeness of application documents, the Environmental Statement (ES) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), was issued by PINS(W) on 28 October 2020.

5. The application was submitted on 12 January 2021. PINS(W) wrote to the applicant: on 22 February 2021 confirming that the submitted ES was complete for the purposes of the 2017 EIA Regulations; and on 24 February 2021 giving official notice of the acceptance of the application under Article 15(2) of the Development of National Significance (DNS) Procedure Order.

6. On confirmation of the validity of the application, PINS (W) undertook the specified consultation and publicity measures required by the Order. The application was publicised in line with the DNS regulations and interested parties were asked to submit representations. In all, eight representations were received during the consultation period.

7. Having considered the representations, the ES and the other application documents, I concluded that it was necessary to hold hearing sessions in respect of the following:
    a. Landscape, ecology, ornithology and transportation
    b. Best and most versatile agricultural land
    c. Planning conditions

8. On the same day as the application was confirmed as valid, the Welsh Government published 'Future Wales: The National Plan 2040' (Future Wales), Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11 (PPW) and confirmed the revocation of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 8: Renewable Energy and the Wales Spatial Plan. To ensure that the policy framework contained in the submitted ES reflected these changes, I asked the applicant to submit an addendum. The Policy Addendum[1] was submitted on 2 March 2021 and published on the DNS website.

9. In addition, through the use of an 'Inspector's Note', I encouraged the applicant to discuss areas of concern with objectors where it was considered that there was scope to narrow any areas of dispute; and to provide an assessment of the proposed development in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 (WBFGA) and PPW[2]. Statements in relation to these matters were submitted on 28 May 2021. In addition, representors who participated in the hearing sessions were invited to provide hearing statements. Such statements were submitted by Wessex Solar Energy ('The applicant'), National Resources Wales (NRW) and the Welsh Government – Department for Climate Change (DCC).

[1] BL016
[2] Inspector's Note, 12 April 2021

The Site and Surroundings

10. The application site is located some 0.7 kilometres to the south east of the settlement of Cosheston, some 2.5 kilometres north of Pembroke and 120 metres south of the boundary with the PCNP. The area surrounding the site is rural in nature and characterised by scattered dwellings, attractive open countryside and woodland.

11. The site comprises 34.25 hectares of across eight fields. The fields, which are currently used for pastoral purposes, are for the most part enclosed by a combination of fencing, mature trees and hedgerows, and bounded on three sides by the A477, Blackberry Lane and an unnamed lane, which I shall refer to as 'Nash Lane'. Topographically, the application site is largely flat with a gentle north-south slope that becomes steeper in the northern section.

12. Vehicular access is afforded via Nash Lane, a narrow rural highway which joins Lower Nash Farm with the A477. Whilst there are a number of public footpaths and public rights of way (PRoW) in the locality, only a small unofficial footpath, located in the north western section, crosses the application site.

13. Although the application site is not subject to any specific designation, the area surrounding the site has a number of ecological, cultural and archaeological designations, including:

- Sir Benfro Forol Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is located approximately 1 kilometre to the west of the application site,
- The Milford Haven Waterway Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located some 650 metres to the north of the site,
- Scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs) at Carew Castle and Carew Cross, which at the closest point are some 1.5 kilometres to the south of the application site and
- The registered historic parks and gardens at Lamphey Bishop's Palace and Lamphey Court, and Upton Castle, the nearest of which is approximately 510 metres to the north east of the site.

14. In addition, there are twenty-three listed buildings within the vicinity of the application site, the closest of which is the Church of St. Mary in Lower Nash which is located 225 metres to the west of the site.[3]

The Proposal

15. The development proposes the construction of a solar park and associated infrastructure across a 34.25 hectare site, which when fully operational, would be capable of exporting up to 22 MW of electricity into the regional electricity grid. The key elements of the proposed development include: approximately 70,000 photovoltaic (PV) panels; up to 12 inverters and associated cabins; up to 12 transformers and associated cabins; a single control building; an on-site access road; and a 2.5 metre high perimeter / security fence. Indicative dimensions for the PV panels and associated structures, which represent the worst-case scenario, are contained in the ES[4].

[3] BL001, Chapter 6, and Letter from Cadw, date 26 March2021
[4] BL001, Chapter 6 and BL003, Figures 6.1 -6.6

16. In addition, a temporary site compound / laydown area measuring some 1600 square metres, which would include an office and welfare accommodation, would be provided to facilitate the construction of the proposed solar park.

17. Access within the site would be afforded via a track leading from Nash Lane. The proposed track would be some 3 metres wide, approximately 2 kilometres long and constructed from compacted stone or aggregate. Details of the indicative route of the access track road and site layout are provided in the ES.

18. It is anticipated that the proposed Solar Park would be operational for 40 years. The framework for the proposed decommissioning scheme is contained in the Outline Decommissioning and Restoration Plan (ODRP). The plan makes clear that a more detailed scheme would be submitted a year before the end of the operational life of the development[5].

19. Although outside the scope of the DNS application, electricity would be exported to the regional grid via an underground cable leading from the proposed on-site control building to the existing substation at Golden Hill. The connection works will be undertaken by Western Power Distribution under statutory powers afforded to distribution network operators by the Electricity Act 1989[6].

20. By way of mitigation, the development has a number of embedded measures in relation to matters such as landscape and visual impact, ecology and ornithology and transportation that are intended to ameliorate the impact of the proposal on the natural and built environment of the surrounding area.

Planning Policy

21. At a national level, Future Wales, PPW and TAN series set out the Welsh Government's policies and principles on different aspects of planning.

22. Future Wales is the first national development plan and sets the direction for development up to 2040. The Plan acknowledges the impacts of the climate emergency and the ecological emergency and provides a strategy for addressing key national priorities including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of communities.

23. With regard to climate change, Future Wales recognises Wales' potential for solar generation, the Welsh Government's support for large scale renewable projects and the role of the planning system in providing a strong lead for renewable energy development. The Plan also recognises the urgent need to reverse biodiversity decline and provide an opportunity to promote green growth and innovation to create sustainable jobs, sustain a more resource efficient economy and maintain healthy, active, sustainable and connected communities.

[5] BL002, Appendix A6.1
[6] BL001, Chapter 16

24. Through policies 17 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure and 18 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance, Future Wales seeks to provide a framework for the management of all renewable and low carbon energy proposals.

25. Policy 17 expresses the Welsh Government's strong support for the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet Wales' future energy needs; and requires that, in determining planning applications, decision-makers give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and the national target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030. In doing so, Policy 17 makes clear that proposals should ensure there are 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.

26. Policy 18 provides detailed criteria for the assessment of proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development. The policy allows for the assessment of the impact of proposals on matters such as: the surrounding landscape, particularly in relation to the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the amenity of nearby communities and individual dwellings; internationally and/or nationally designated sites of ecological importance; statutorily protected built heritage assets; the transport network; noise and reflected light levels; effective decommissioning of the development at the end of its lifetime; and the cumulative effects of existing and consented renewable energy schemes.

27. PPW has been updated to align with the requirements of Future Wales. It seeks to protect and enhance landscapes, habitats, biodiversity, geodiversity and the historic environment in their own right. Among key issues PPW identifies the need to conserve agricultural land grades 1, 2 and 3a, which is the best and most versatile (BMV), as a finite resource for the future[7].

28. In respect of energy, PPW describes the benefits of renewable and low carbon developments, as part of the overall commitment to tackle the climate emergency and increase energy security. In this context it explains that the planning system should integrate development with the provision of additional electricity grid network infrastructure, optimise energy storage and maximise renewable and low carbon energy generation. PPW confirms that Future Wales sets out the Welsh Government's policies for the determination of renewable energy schemes of 10 MW and more under the DNS procedure and restates the Welsh Governments renewable energy targets for 2030.

29. Further guidance is contained within the TAN series. Of particular relevance to the proposed development are TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009), TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010) and TAN18: Transport (2007).

30. At a local level, planning policy is set out in the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council Local Development Plan (LDP) (2013). Of which the most relevant policies are:

[7] PPW, Edition 11, paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59

- Policy SP 1 - *Sustainable Development*, which requires all proposals for new development to demonstrate how positive economic, social and environmental impacts will be achieved and adverse impacts minimised.
- Policy SP 16 - *The Countryside*, which seeks to ensure that proposals for new development are only permitted where they are essential to meet the needs of people who live and work in the countryside and they do not have an adverse effect on the landscape and natural and built environment of Pembrokeshire and adjoining areas.
- Policy GN.1 - *General Development Policy*, which provides a framework for the evaluation of the potential impacts of proposals for new development on: the capacity and character of the site and surrounding area; local amenity; the quality, diversity or character of the landscape or the special qualities of the PCNP; the natural environment; accessibility; and highway safety.
- Policy GN.2 - *Sustainable Design*, which requires, amongst other things, that proposals for new development are of a good design, have had regard to local distinctiveness, character and landscape/townscape context and are resource efficient, climate responsive, flexible and adaptable.
- Policy GN.3 - *Infrastructure and New Development*, which provides a framework for securing necessary infrastructure improvements that are generated by new development.
- Policy GN.4 - *Resource Efficiency and Renewable and Low-carbon Energy Proposals*, which supports proposals for new development which enable the supply of renewable energy through environmentally acceptable solutions.
- Policy GN.22 - *Prior Extraction of the Mineral Resource*, which requires that where new development is permitted in an area of mineral resource, prior extraction of any economic reserves of the mineral is achieved prior to commencement, where it is appropriate in terms of economic feasibility and environmental and other planning considerations.
- Policy GN.37 - *Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity*, which requires proposals for new development to demonstrate a positive approach to maintaining and, wherever possible, enhancing biodiversity, and makes clear that development that would disturb or otherwise harm protected species or their habitats will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the effects are minimised or mitigated through careful design, work scheduling or other appropriate measures.
- Policy GN.38 - *Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment*, which requires that any development that affects sites and landscapes of architectural and/or historical merit or archaeological importance, or their setting, will only be permitted if the character and integrity of the asset is protected or enhanced.

31. Additional guidance of relevance to this application is contained in the adopted Renewable Energy SPG (October 2016), adopted Biodiversity SPG (May 2014), and consultation draft Landscape Character Area Assessment (2019).

The Case for the Applicant

32. Accompanying the submitted application is an ES with a Non-Technical Summary and a number of other documents including a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement and a Non-EIA Assessment. The ES describes the site and its designations, the proposed development, the planning policy context, consultations, site selection and alternatives, the need for the project and its benefits. It also provides chapters that consider the scheme's effect on landscape and visual impact, geology, hydrology and hydrogeology, traffic and infrastructure, climate change, miscellaneous matters and grid connection. Additional evidence was also provided as part of the Consultation Update Statement[8], the Planning Policy Addendum[9] and a hearing statement.

33. Evidence of particular relevance to the determination of the proposal is summarised as follows:

Site Selection and Alternatives

34. Chapter 5 of the ES outlines in detail the approach taken to the site selection process, including the definition of the search area, the two-stage sequential assessment of individual sites, the development of alternative sites and the consideration of alternative land within the application site. The process is supported by studies which look at a range of factors such as the location of electrical connections, environmental and planning designations, existing land use, agricultural land classification, visual impact, topography, access, PRoW and cumulative impacts.

35. The ES explains that: for technical reasons, which related to the proximity to potential grid connection points and the need for local embedded generation, the site search area was limited to the administrative boundary of Pembrokeshire County Council; the initial site search, which took place in 2013, identified seven potential sites for solar park development; these sites were then subject to a localised assessment process which looked at a range of factors including the proximity and availability of grid connections, environmental and planning designations such as the presence of grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, and site viability; only two of the sites identified, the application site and land at Chapel Hill, were considered suitable for solar development; and grid connection applications were submitted for both sites and viable offers received in 2013.

36. The Chapel Hill site was granted planning permission in 2014 and has since been constructed. Whilst, because of viability concerns, work on the application site did not commence in earnest until 2019.

37. Further site investigations, undertaken in 2019, revealed that the application site comprised grade 2, 3a and 3b agricultural land. The ES acknowledges that despite the site being reduced in size, by some 3 hectares, the application site remains, largely, made up of BMV agricultural land. But maintains that, because of capacity issues in the electricity distribution network in Pembrokeshire, there are no suitable alternative sites for the development and that the potential benefits of the proposal outweigh its environmental impacts.

[8] BL016
[9] BL017

Agricultural Land

38. The combination of the Wessex Solar Energy Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Study (February 2020), The Blackberry Lane Solar Park Agricultural Assessment (September 2020) and the Land Quality Implications Assessment (LQIA) (November 2020)[10] provide the evidential basis for the assessment of the quality of the agricultural land within the application site and the long-term impact of the proposed development on soil resources.

39. The application site forms part of a much larger agricultural holding which is used for a range of farming operations including grazing, silage and cereal production. The studies indicated that agricultural land within the site comprises 20.75 hectares of Grade 2, 7 hectares of Grade 3a and 6.5 hectares of Grade 3b agricultural land.

40. The Agricultural Assessment and LQIA considered in detail the potential impact the construction, long-term use and decommissioning of the proposed development would have on the characteristics of the soil. Overall, the studies concluded that: none of the components or works associated with the construction or decommissioning of the proposal would result in any direct or indirect impacts which would cause a reduction in the current land quality across the application site; the land within the application site boundary would continue to be used for agricultural purposes during the operational phase of the proposed development; retaining permanent grass cover on the application site, when compared to the impact of arable and rotation farming, could result in a long term improvement in land quality; and, research suggests if no development were to take place, land within the application site could experience a reduction in land quality over time due to ongoing agricultural techniques and management.

41. In the applicants view the development of the proposed solar park would not prevent the conservation of BMV agricultural land within the site boundary and may in fact result in an improvement in land quality due to regenerative farming practices[11].

Benefits of the Project

42. In addition to assisting in tackling climate change, the ES suggests that the proposed development would have significant social, economic and supply benefits at both local and national level. These benefits include: a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases, the prevention of emissions of acid gases and local air quality pollutants such as sulphur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds; a total investment of £14 million in the proposed development, a proportion of which would be spent in the local area on civil engineering and electrical contractors and locally sourced materials; the generation of energy from a renewable source which would serve up to 7,825 households on an annual basis; an increase in the diversity and reliability of the UK energy supplies; and at site level, the potential for mitigation measures to improve the existing environmental conditions[12].

[10] BL002, Appendix A5.1 – 5.3
[11] BL001, Chapter 5, paragraph 171
[12] BL001, Chapter 3.6

Landscape and Visual Impact

43. Chapter 8 of the ES provides the landscape and visual impact assessment (LVIA) for the site. The assessment defines the existing landscape/townscape and visual baseline environments; assesses their sensitivity to change; describes the key landscape/townscape and visual related aspects of the proposed development; describes the nature of the anticipated changes and assesses the effects arising during construction and operation. The LVIA is supported by evidence relating to landscape sensitivity, viewpoint analysis, topography, landscape character, landscape mitigation, a zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV), a cumulative ZTV and viewpoint-sheets[13].

44. The findings of the LVIA indicate that the proposed addition of PV solar panels into the fields that form the application site would result in the short-term temporary loss of the existing landscape fabric of the site during the construction of the development, with the land under the PV panels being returned to grassland pasture during the operational period of the scheme. Over the medium to long term the field pattern of the site would be retained, with additional hedgerows and trees planted, and the existing hedgerows strengthened with supplementary planting as necessary. Hedgerows would be managed at an increased height of 4 metres to aid the visual containment of the site.

45. In respect of the effects of the proposal on the character of the host landscape, specifically Landscape Character Area 25 (LCA) - Hundleton and Lamphey, the LVIA found it would be moderate in magnitude and moderate to moderate/minor (not significant) from local viewpoints to the north east of the application site. The effects on the landscape character of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park to the north, particularly LCA 28 – Daugleddau, would be slight in magnitude and would be of a moderate to moderate/minor level and adverse in nature (not significant). Beyond these areas effects on the wider landscape character would be limited and would tend towards negligible**.**

46. With regard to visual effects, any impacts experienced would be greatest for those receptors which are located to the west of the application site. These include receptors to the south east of Cosheston, and the minor road and PRoW users to the north and north east of the site within the boundary of the National Park. Although the PV panels would form new man-made features within the views form these receptors, they would be partially filtered by intervening tree vegetation, resulting in a moderate/slight magnitude of change and moderate levels of effect (not significant). Equally, intervening trees, vegetation and built form would restrict visibility from Mayeston and Cosheston and, as a result, effects would be slight/negligible in magnitude and minor level of effects (not significant). Whilst, receptors travelling along the closest 'A' roads, including the A4075 and A477 to the south of the site, would experience only a slight to negligible magnitude of change and minor to negligible levels of effect respectively. Where open views towards the application site are possible from receptors in the wider landscape, the grain of the landscape would be retained. The visual effects would therefore only be moderate/slight in magnitude and of a moderate level of effect.

47. Overall, the ES concludes that given the long-term but temporary nature of the proposed development, the potential effects from the operational phase of the scheme

[13] BL003, Appendix A8.1 – A8.7 and viewpoints photo-sheets 1- 10

would be reversible whilst the positive residual effects on the landscape fabric, such as improvements to existing hedgerows would be permanent. With regard to the long-term effects on the National Park the LVIA concluded that it would be medium/small scale and limited in extent and only of a slight magnitude.

Residential Visual Amenity Assessment

48. The Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA)[14] was undertaken in accordance with the Landscape Institute Technical Guidance[15]. The assessment identified residential properties within 250 metres of the application site and considered the impact of the proposal on the basis of: an evaluation of the baseline visual amenity; the likely change to the visual amenity of properties; and the magnitude of effects likely to be experienced by receptors. The findings of the assessment concluded that none of the 6 properties identified would experience any adverse impact of a substantial magnitude as a result of the proposed development.

Glint and Glare Assessment

49. The Glint and Glare Assessment (GGA)[16] looked specifically at the potential for significant glint and glare effects in the vicinity of the proposed development. In doing so the assessment identified 290 potential receptors for analysis including 250 residential properties, 10 points along 4 roads, 11 points along 11 footpaths, 9 points at listed buildings, and 10 viewpoints. Quantitative and qualitative assessments were then undertaken to determine the potential glint effects experienced at each receptor throughout the year and to identify any receptors which could not technically experience glint due to their location relative to the site and/or the presence of intervening vegetation, buildings and micro topography, and the extent to which the intervening features screen each receptor from the site.

50. The assessment concluded that the existing screening afforded by vegetation, buildings and topography would eliminate glint effects at the majority of the receptor points analysed. Potential residual glint effects on residential properties, roads, public rights of way, cultural heritage receptors and selected viewpoints were not considered to be significant. As a consequence, no additional mitigation measures have been recommended.

Cultural Heritage

51. The likely significant effects of the proposed development in terms of archaeology and cultural heritage are assessed in Chapter 10 of the ES. The assessment has been informed by: an archaeological desk-based assessment; a geophysical survey; a programme of archaeological trial trenching; and a settings impact assessment (SIA).

52. The archaeological potential of the application site was initially considered through a desk-based assessment and then through a programme of archaeological trial trenching. The investigations identified three areas of archaeological interest within the application site including a potential barrow cemetery of regional importance, a Neolithic / Bronze age enclosure of regional importance and a small enclosure of local

[14] BL002, Appendix A8.5
[15] Landscape Institute, Technical Guidance Note 2/19: Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (March 2019)
[16] ES Addendum (9 February 2021)

importance. In response to the identification of archaeological interest, the design of the proposed development was adjusted to omit the area of archaeological resource from the operational part of the application site, and from arable cultivation, for the lifetime of the scheme. The ES considered that as a result of the mitigation the proposal would have a minor beneficial effect on the areas of archaeological interest over a 40 year period.

53. The potential impact of the proposed development on the setting of historic assets[17] in the surrounding area was considered by the SIA. The findings of the assessment indicated that, in all but one instance, the proposed development would not affect the significance of the heritage assets in the surrounding area due to the presence of intervening topography, other landscape features and/or the landscape mitigation proposed as part of the development. The exception to this is the Church of St Mary, which is a Grade II Listed Building, located approximately 225 metres to the west of the application site. The assessment concluded that because the proposed solar park would be visible from the elevated parts of the churchyard, particularly during winter months, it would have an adverse impact on the setting of the heritage asset. To ameliorate this, additional mitigation, in the form of landscaping, has been proposed to protect the setting of the Church.

54. The potential for effects to the setting of the Church of St Mary as a result of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the development were assessed and it was found that they could lead to momentary distraction from the experience of the Church and churchyard. However, given the brief duration of these effects, the significance was judged to be minor adverse, reducing to negligible within 2 to 5 years, and then for the remainder of the operational phase of the development.

Ecology and Ornithology

55. Chapter 9 of ES addresses the assessment of likely significant effects on ecology and nature conservation arising as a result of the proposed development. In doing so, the chapter describes the assessment methodology, which includes a summary of the baseline conditions for the proposed solar park site and immediate surroundings, the value of the ecological resources, the mitigation measures and biodiversity enhancements built into the proposal and the likely significant effects associated with the proposed solar park development, after these measures have been applied.

56. Analysis of existing baseline information indicated that: there are a number of statutory designated sites located within 10 kilometres of the site including 2 SPAs, 5 SACs, 10 SSSIs, 2 wildlife trust reserves located within 3 kilometres of the proposed development site, alongside 21 Ancient Woodlands which are also located within 3 kilometres of the site; the main habitats recorded on the application site and surrounding area during the survey were improved grassland, arable farmland, semi-natural broadleaved woodland, tall ruderal vegetation, trees, hedgerows, drains and small streams and a swale. In addition, a number of protected species including invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, birds, bats, otters, water voles, badgers, roe deer, polecats and European hedgehogs were found within 3 kilometres of the application site.

[17] BL002, Appendix A10.4

57. The ES indicated that, although no significant effects are anticipated, the development could, potentially, impact on valuable ecological features during its construction, operational and decommissioning phases. These impacts include matters such as: the direct loss of habitats and the species that utilise them; direct mortality of protected/notable species during site clearance and construction of the access routes and invertor cabins; direct and indirect disturbance from construction activities including noise from equipment and vehicles, dust and lighting; habitat fragmentation caused by perimeter fencing; and pollution caused by the use of hazardous materials and the release of waste.

58. The potential ecological constraints / impacts were taken into consideration at an early stage and as such the 'mitigation hierarchy[18]' of avoidance, mitigation, compensation and, where possible, habitat enhancement has been built into the design of the proposed development.

59. Avoidance/Mitigation measures include:

- Retaining and safeguarding all hedgerows, drains, trees and woodland with a minimum 5 metres stand-off from construction works where possible and no construction works are to be undertaken within the root protection area of any trees or hedgerows;
- Ensuring that there is no habitat fragmentation by installing 'badger gaps' at the base of the perimeter fencing, to allow badgers and other species to maintain full access across the site post development;
- Safeguarding badgers and small mammals during the construction phase by ensuring excavations are fenced/covered overnight (or an egress point such as a ramp is provided). Excavations will be inspected each morning to ensure no animals have become trapped; and
- Preparing a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure that best practice methods are adhered to in order to limit the generation of litter, dust, noise, vibration and pollution prevention. The CEMP will also include details of briefings and instructions to contractors regarding the biodiversity present on the site as appropriate, and
- The undertaking of a pre-construction badger survey.

60. Compensation measures proposed seek to address the small-scale loss of low-quality improved grassland, arable habitat and tall ruderal habitat necessary to accommodate the installation of the access track include:

- The cessation of fertiliser and pesticide use across the site and the sewing of a fine grass and wildflower seed mix within the central section of the site (below the panels) and the sewing of a species rich wildflower seed mix within the buffer zones. In doing so, it is anticipated that the compensation will provide 34 hectares of high-quality species rich grassland.

61. The enhancement measures proposed for the development include:

[18] PPW, paragraph 6.4.21

- The planting of an additional 622 metres (approximately) of species rich hedgerow and the filling of existing gaps within the retained hedgerows to be planted up with a species rich, native mix. This approach is intended to strengthen the connectivity and continuity of the hedgerow network and increase their value as commuting and foraging routes;
- Arisings resulting from hedgerow management will be collected and assembled into small refuges at the base of hedgerows. This will provide additional cover for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals;
- The planting of an additional 785 metres (approximately) of new native trees and an additional 180 metres (approximately) of new native woodland;
- The erection of 5 bird boxes, 1 barn owl box and 5 bat boxes on boundary trees of a suitable size; and
- A Landscape and Ecological Mitigation Plan (LEMP)[19] which sets out how the retained, enhanced and newly created habitats will be managed for wildlife and biodiversity over the lifetime of the development will be implemented.

62. Overall, the ES concludes that no significant effects are anticipated for designated sites, habitats or species as a result of the proposed development and the habitat creation/enhancement measures and that changes to habitat management, as a result of the proposal, are likely to see a net gain in biodiversity.

Traffic and Infrastructure

63. The potential traffic and infrastructure impacts associated with the proposed solar park are considered in Chapter 13 of the ES. The chapter explains, amongst other things, the proposed method of transporting heavy plant and equipment to and from the site, the assessment methodology and existing baseline conditions, any 'unknowns or uncertainties' relating to access and traffic at the time of the preparation of the ES, the potential effects of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases and details of the mitigation measures proposed to address any adverse effects.

64. Access to the application site from the M4 (junction 48) would be afforded via the A48 (to Carmarthen), the A40 (to St Clears), the A477 (to Lower Nash) and Nash Lane. The proposed site access is located off the eastern side of Nash Lane and is approximately 200 metres north of the A477 / Lower Nash priority junction.

65. The ES confirmed that: the proposed route can be accessed safely, but that larger vehicles such as low loaders of up to 16.6 metres may require a banksman to allow access to the single track section of the access lane; the level of visibility splays from the site access onto Nash Lane in both directions are commensurate with anticipated speeds; a suitable passing place exists for commercial vehicles at the entrance to the lane from the A477; and there is a layby on the A477, to the west of the A4075 junction, where commercial vehicles can wait if Nash Lane is in use.

66. In terms of traffic generation, the ES found that the volume of traffic movements generated by the construction workforce, the delivery of heavy plant, equipment and materials, and the operation / decommissioning of the proposed development would be

[19] BL002, Appendix A9.4

short term, minor/negligible in nature and not have a significant impact on highway safety. However, the ES recognises that in order to minimise the impact of the construction phase, activities will need to be managed through the provision of an agreed CEMP and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). The CTMP will address matters such as traffic management, approved routes, traffic movement hours, parking, the cleanliness of the existing roads and the use of 'marshalled' deliveries to ensure that there are no conflicts between vehicles on the lane accessing the site.

67. Overall, the ES concluded that the environment and amenity of the area surrounding the application site would not be unduly affected by traffic resulting from the development, and the existing infrastructure would be able to safely accommodate the traffic movements associated with the development of the proposed Solar Park. As such, the potential impacts of the scheme were not considered to be significant.

Planning Policy, Sustainability and Well-being

68. For the reasons outlined in the Planning Statement[22] and the Policy Addendum[23], the proposed development shows a high level of conformity with the policy framework provided by Future Wales, PPW and the Pembrokeshire County Council LDP. In addition, the findings of the Planning Policy Addendum[24] indicates that the scheme performs well against the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) and the placemaking aims of PPW.

Overall Conclusions

69. The applicants submitted Planning Statement (December 2020)[25], explains that the proposed development is compliant with the higher-level requirements of Future Wales and PPW. Taken together, the objectives and policies within the national planning policy framework are considered to support and indeed encourage the development of renewable energy projects, such as that proposed, where projects do not have an unacceptable impact on their surrounding environment.

70. Moreover, it is contended that the proposed development is compliant with the requirements of the relevant policies of the LDP. Specifically where these policies relate to matters such as landscape, biodiversity, infrastructure and renewable and low carbon energy.

71. As a consequence, the statement concludes that, due to the need for the development of renewable energy projects and its clear compatibility with both national and local planning policy, it is considered that the proposed Solar Park is an acceptable proposal.

[20] BL002, Appendix A.13.1
[21] BL009
[22] BL006
[23] BL016
[24] BL017
[25] BL006

Consultation Responses

72. In total 8 responses were received in respect of the DNS public consultation exercise. The main points are summarised as follows.

Natural Resources Wales

NRW acknowledge the contents of the ES in respect of landscape and visual impact, pollution prevention, geoscience, protected species and sites, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures. The submitted representation makes clear that although NRW have some concerns with the proposal these could, should the application be approved, be satisfactorily resolved through the imposition of planning conditions relating to:

- The addition of the further landscape planting and mitigation measures outlined in this letter, which include hedge planting within the field and behind the access track to restrict views from the minor lane leading to the Church of St Mary;
- The implementation of the development in line with the measures detailed in the document titled; 'Blackberry Lane Solar Park: Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, dated December 2020, by Wessex Solar Energy Ltd, and
- The implementation of the development in line with the measures detailed in the document titled: 'Blackberry Lane Solar Park: Code of Construction Practice, incorporating: Part 1 - General Environmental Management Plan / Part 2 - Construction Environmental Management Plan, dated December 2020, by Wessex Solar Energy.

Department for Economy and Infrastructure, Welsh Government

73. The Department for Economy and Infrastructure (DE&I) has expressed concerns in relation to the effective operation of the trunk road junction with Nash Lane and the absence of appropriate supporting information. The representation outlines the basis for these concerns, which relate specifically to: the potential for vehicular conflict at the Nash Lane junction with the A477; the failure of the CTMP to make detailed reference to the provision for passing bays, widening and the identification of adequate layover locations as part of an overall mitigation strategy; and the use of banksmen to coordinate the management plan and direct traffic on the trunk road.

74. To address these concerns the DE&I has identified the need for the submitted CTMP to be amended to: include the traffic management details outlined in chapter 8 of the ES; have regard to the Welsh Government's Trunk Road Traffic Sensitivity Document; and for the site construction programme to take account of existing seasonal traffic flows on the A477.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

75. The PCNPA noted that the ES: contains a LVIA which reflects the comments made by the authority at the scoping stage; that the LVIA provides a detailed assessment of the landscape and visual effects of the proposal on the National Park, including cumulative impacts; and the selection of viewpoints which accompany the LVIA are representative of the potential impacts of the proposal on the National Park. The Authority acknowledged that, whilst the ES found that there would be residual adverse impacts

on the National Park which should be taken into account in determining the application, these impacts could be mitigated by extensive planting along the existing hedgerows within and enclosing the application site.

76. Therefore, subject to the securing of appropriate landscape mitigation as part of any approval, PCNPA raise no objection to the proposed development.

Department for Climate Change, Welsh Government

77. Representations received from Department for Climate Change (DCC) explained in detail their objection to the proposed development in the long term national agricultural interest. These objections relate specifically to:

- The potential loss of 27.75 hectares of confirmed BMV agricultural land, which is considered to be a matter of national significance.
- The failure of the application to give considerable weight to protecting BMV agricultural land because of its special importance.
- The inadequacy of the site selection process, particularly in relation to the definition of the search area, and the failure to justify the site selected for the development on the basis of overriding need.
- The absence of evidence to demonstrate that once developed, the return of the application site to agriculture as BMV agricultural land is practicable; and
- The adequacy of the Land Quality Implications Assessment (ES Vol2 – BL014 REF).

Cadw

78. Cadw's primary concern was the potential impact the proposed development would have on the setting of the listed Church of St Mary, and the archaeological remains located within the application site.

79. In terms of St Mary's, it was noted that the proximity of the application site and gaps in the existing hedgerows would mean that there would be some intervisibility with the application site which would potentially result in a slight adverse impact on the setting of the Church. But that any impact could be effectively mitigated by a landscaping scheme which would extend the existing hedges and remove any gaps.

80. With regard to the archaeological remains, Cadw's response noted that: a potential pre-historic barrow cemetery, a Neolithic or Bronze Age enclosure and an undated enclosure had been identified within the boundary of the application site; the areas in which these sites are located have been removed from the proposed development and will be fenced during the construction of the proposed development, in order to prevent accidental damage to them; and that these are appropriate measures to preserve these archaeological sites.

81. Subject to appropriate landscape mitigation Cadw raise no objection to the proposed development.

Other Representations

82. J and L Morris, who are residents of the area, have objected to the proposed development on several grounds including the following:

- The proposed development would result in the loss of grade 2 and 3a agricultural land, which is a prime food production asset, and should be sited on less valuable grade 3b agricultural land, which is prevalent in the County.
- The visual impact of the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the visitor economy of the area.
- The proposal would have an adverse impact on the natural environment of the site and surrounding area; and insufficient consideration has been given to the impact on the wildlife found close to the site of the former Upper Nash Farm Shop and Café.
- The development would have an adverse effect on the designated Source Protection Zone (SPZ).
- The proposal would have an adverse impact on highway safety at the 'fingerpost junction' between the A477 and the A4075 and, during the construction phase, the Upper Nash exit on the A477. Concern was also expressed about the impact the proposal would have on the safety of users on the cycle path located on the north side of the A477.
- In order to ensure effective decommissioning of the site, the developer and/or landowner should make secure provision for the cost of these works and the reinstatement of the land to its original condition.
- There is over-development of solar generation around Cosheston, as there are already 2 large existing solar parks in the area and allowing another would effectively surround the settlement with solar parks.
- The proposal would not provide any benefits for the community in terms of employment or revenue.
- No meaningful consideration was given to the identification of alternative sites for solar generation.
- Wessex Solar energy have failed to carry out adequate public consultation and as such all decisions relating to the development should be put on hold, until the current pandemic is over and the public can be properly consulted.
- Concerns were also raised about the credentials and accountability of this company as a developer.

83. Other residents, M and D Robinson and M and S Corbett , raised similar issues in their objections expressing concern about the scale of the development, its impact on visual amenities of the area and the loss of agricultural land.

Local Impact Report

84. The Council's Local Impact Report (LIR) provides, amongst other things, a description of the planning history of the site, the relevant national and local policies, an analysis of the likely impact of the development in relation to transportation, landscape and visual impact, the natural and historic environment, and socio-economic matters and recommendations for planning conditions, should permission be granted, and, if considered necessary, planning obligations. The main points are summarised below.

Planning History

85. The LIR explains that the application site has no planning history that is relevant to the application. But that there are two solar parks and a wind turbine within 3 kilometres of the application site.

Local Planning Policy

86. The LIR sets out the wording of the LDP policies the Council considers to be the most relevance to the proposed development. In addition, reference is also made to relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents including those relating to renewable energy, biodiversity, and landscape character area assessment.

Transportation

87. The LIR indicates that the volume of construction traffic accessing and egressing the application site is likely to have a detrimental impact on Nash Lane and the A477 during the construction phase of the development. To ameliorate this, it is suggested that Nash Lane should be widened to 5.5 metres from its junction with the A477 (T) in total, or in agreed sections, for approximately 200 metres to the entrance of the application site and that the carriageway be reconstructed to a level suitable for the loading proposed by this development.

88. The report concludes that subject to mitigation measures, secured by condition, the proposal is unlikely to result in a detrimental highway impact, albeit a minor negative impact cannot be entirely discounted during the construction phase and would comply with GN.5 of the LDP.

Landscape and Visual Impact

89. The LIR explains that the ES considers the landscape and visual effects of the proposed development and includes a LVIA which is considered by the Council to be both well prepared, thorough and consistent with the industry standard.

90. The report describes in detail the landscape, topography, physical features and geography of the application site and the surrounding area and considers the potential impact the proposed development would have on: the special qualities of the PCNP; the LCA at Daugleddau, Hundleton and Lamphey[26]; the amenity of local residents; the users of footpaths and minor roads; and the visual qualities of the landscape when viewed in conjunction with existing renewable energy developments in the wider area.

91. Overall, the LIR concludes that the proposed development would not have a significant detrimental impact on local amenity in terms of visual impact (albeit there would be a minor negative effect on visual amenity) and it would only have a minor negative effect on landscape character, quality or diversity including the National Park. As such the proposed development would be compatible with the site and surroundings and comply with Policy GN.2 of the LDP.

[26] Landscape Character Area Assessment SPG (Consultation Draft)

Nature Conservation

92. The LIR indicates that much of the site is made up of species poor improved grassland and that it is not anticipated that there would be a loss of any high value ecological habitat. Moreover, it is suggested that, subject to the implementation of the submitted ecological management scheme and consideration of matters identified in relation to badgers, bats, the Manx shearwater, trees and hedgerows, lighting, the CEMP, the Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan (EMMP) and the LEMP, the development should result in an overall biodiversity enhancement for the site.

93. The report concludes that, subject to the aforementioned issues being satisfactorily addressed, the proposal would not result in unacceptable impact and would accord with policies GN.1 and GN.37 of the LDP and the Biodiversity SPG.

Historic Environment

94. The LIR recognises that within a short distance of the application site there are a number of listed buildings, SAMs and the Cosherton Conservation Area (CA). But agrees with conclusions of the ES that, although there might be some distant views of the application site from these heritage assets, the development would not have an adverse impact, either directly or indirectly on their significance or the character and appearance of the CA. The exception to this is the Church of St Mary at Lower Nash which, because of the views of the application site from the churchyard, would be adversely affected by the proposal. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that with appropriate landscape mitigation the impact could be effectively addressed.

95. The report concludes that, subject to the mitigation described, the proposal would have no more than a slight adverse effect in the first years of operation, reducing to negligible after 5 years. However, it is acknowledged that during the construction and decommissioning phase of the development there would be a short term minor adverse effect to the significance of the Church.

96. In addition, the LIR notes that three areas of archaeological interest have been identified within the boundary of the application site; and to protect these assets they would be excluded from the development, subject to a 10 metres buffer and be surrounded by demarcation fencing. The slight / minor adverse effects recorded in respect of the Church means that the proposed development is not technically compliant with policy GN.38 of the LDP.

Social and Economic Effects

97. The LIR explains that the proposed development would have positive social and economic effects on the economy of Pembrokeshire and South West Wales. The project is considered to fit both with the Council's economic development strategy and the Swansea Bay City Deal. The Proposal is therefore compliant with policy GN.4, SP 1 and SP 16 of the LDP.

Planning Conditions

98. Without prejudice the LIR sets out eight planning conditions which, in addition to the standard time limit for the commencement of development, are considered necessary and reasonably related to the development. The conditions relate to the provision of a CTMP, improvements to the highway access from the A477, details of hard and soft

landscaping measures, the provision of a CEMP, external lighting, the de-commissioning and restoration of the site, submission of details in relation to the inverter/transformer cabins, control building, cabins, security fence (including any CCTV), access track and PV panels and a requirement for the development to be carried out in accordance with the EMMP and the LEMP.

Other Matters

99. A number of other matters which relate to pollution, mineral resources, agricultural land classification, HSE consultation zone and water and drainage are also addressed in the LIR. Subject to appropriate mitigation and consents the proposed development would not give rise to any significant effects in relation to these matters.

Matters Not in Dispute Between the Main Parties

100. Although no statements of common ground have been submitted, there is broad agreement between the main parties that matters in relation to landscape and visual impact, cultural heritage, ecology and ornithology and highway safety can be satisfactorily mitigated.

Appraisal of the Main Issues

101. The main considerations are the effect of the proposed development on:

- The landscape and visual qualities of the surrounding area;
- Cultural heritage;
- The ecology and ornithology of the site and surrounding area;
- Highway safety; and
- BMV agricultural land.

Landscape Character and Visual Amenity

102. PPW[27] makes clear that all the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, that their special characteristics should be protected and enhanced whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places. In doing so PPW requires that: international responsibilities and obligations for landscapes continue to be met; statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed; the value of all landscapes for their distinctive character and special qualities are protected; and ensuring the opportunities landscapes provide for tourism, outdoor recreation, local employment, renewable energy and physical / mental health and well-being are taken into account and multiple well-being benefits for people and communities secured.

[27] PPW, subsection 6.3

103. The ES includes an LVIA, which considers the impact of the proposed development on the fabric of the site, landscape character, visual receptors and the special qualities of the PCNP[28] during the construction, operation and decommissioning stages of the scheme. The LVIA is informed by a ZTV and supported by a series of 'typical' viewpoints from where photomontages showing the appearance of the site have been prepared.

104. No significant concerns in respect of the LVIA have been raised by any of the main parties, and I agree that the assessment conforms with best practice[29] and is both comprehensive and robust. As such the LVIA, together with other relevant evidence and my observations at the site visit, will inform my assessment of this aspect of the proposal.

Landscape Character

105. The application site comprises eight fields, set out in a largely linear form and enclosed by a combination of mature hedgerows, trees and woodland. Topographically, the site rises up gently from its southern boundary close to the A477 northwards towards the boundary with Paskeston Road and the National Park. Despite the proximity to a busy trunk road, the application site retains a sense of rural tranquillity.

106. The development proposes the erection of a large-scale solar park with 70,000 PV panels to be laid out in densely packed south facing solar arrays which run east to west across the site. The proposed inverter and transformer cabins would be dispersed throughout the site and, for the most part, would be located close to existing/proposed hedgerows.

107. As part of the 'embedded mitigation', a landscaping scheme is proposed which requires the planting of an additional 622 metres of new hedgerows through-out the site, the gapping up of existing hedgerows, the planting of 965 metres of woodland/tree belts both along the northern boundary and on an east to west orientation across the central and eastern fields, the sowing of the site with a rich grass mixture that includes native wildflowers and the use of the land as a pasture for the grazing of sheep. In order to ensure the effective screening of the site, it was agreed by the parties during the Hearing 1 that the existing and proposed hedgerows across the site would be maintained at a minimum height of 4 metres throughout the operational life of the development.

108. The construction of a solar park, will inevitably, have an adverse impact on the landscape character of the application site through-out the lifetime of the development. However, it is clear that subject to the implementation of the proposed landscaping scheme and the use of the land as pasture for the grazing of sheep, the development would have some benefits for the future use of the site. These benefits would result in the significant screening of the proposed development, the strengthening of the pattern of field boundaries through the provision of new and improved hedgerows, trees and woodland and the grazing of sheep which would

[28] BL003, Appendix A8.1 – A8.7 and viewpoints photo-sheets 1- 10
[29] Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Third Edition (2013)

maintain the agricultural use of the site. In my view the impact of the proposal on the application site would be localised in nature.

109. The ES indicates that when observed from the identified viewpoints the proposed development would, for the most part, have a small and medium effect on the character of the landscape. I concur, based on my observations I found that the views of the application site from these vantage points would largely be screened, individually or in combination, by the topography of the site and the surrounding area, the proposed landscape mitigation measures and existing landscape features. As such, I do not consider that the proposal would have a significant effect on the character of the wider landscape.

110. The exception to this are viewpoints 1 and 4, which offer closer views of the application site from the site entrance on Nash Lane and from Paskeston Road. I note that the ES found that the proposed development would have a large-scale effect on the character of the landscape from these points. Whilst I agree that the impact on landscape character from these viewpoints would be more pronounced, for the reasons I explain later in my assessment I do not consider that the effect would be more than localised.

111. The potential impact of the proposed development on the LCA 25 – Hudleston and Lamphey, LCA 28 - Daugleddau and the special qualities of the National Park are considered in detail in Chapter 8 of the ES[30]. The conclusions indicate that whilst there would be some visibility from LCA 25, principally from the north eastern and southern parts of the character area, over the long-term these effects would not be significant. Similarly, the ES found that although LCA 28 would experience some limited effects to the southernmost part where the eastern and central PV panels would be noticeable, over the long-term the effects would not be significant. In respect of PCNP, the ES explains that although the proposed solar park would have some effects on the special qualities[31] which contribute to the scenic beauty of the National Park, these would be limited to small scale effects on 'remoteness, tranquillity and wildness' and medium scale effects on landscape character within the area up to 2 kilometres north of the application site. The long-term effects on the designation were judged to be medium/small scale and limited in extent. Based on the submitted evidence and my observations at the site visit, I agree that whilst there may be some short-term effects on LCA 25, LCA 28 and PCNP these would be limited in nature and would be reduced by the planting and improvement of hedgerows, trees and woodland across the application site.

112. The operational, approved and 'in planning' solar schemes relevant to the proposed development are outlined in Chapter 8 of the ES[32] and shown in Figures 8.7 and 8.8[33]. The ES indicates that 6 possible renewable energy schemes are located within 3 kilometres of the application site. This includes a scheme for 2 wind turbines which was subject to a screening opinion in 2013 and are considered unlikely to be

[30] BL001, sub section 8.8.3 and 8.8.5
[31] The special qualities of PCNP include Coastal Splendour, Richness of habitats and biodiversity, diverse geology, Islands, diversity of landscape, accessibility, distinctive settlement character, space to breathe, rich historic environment, remoteness, tranquillity and wilderness, cultural heritage and diversity of experience and combination of individual qualities.
[32] BL001, sub-Section 8.8
[33] BL003

progressed. There are no 'in planning' proposals. Of the schemes, those at West Farm and Golden Hill are existing solar parks, whilst the remainder are for small wind farm developments. The ES concluded that although there is, theoretically, some cumulative impact in respect of the application site and the existing developments, in practice the visibility is reduced by the frequency of hedgerows and trees within the landscape making in combination views of the sites infrequent.

113. I agree with the findings of the ES that whilst some view of the application site with the existing solar and wind farm developments may be possible, these views would, because of the surrounding landform and mature landscape be discrete and limited in nature. Moreover, although I note the proximity of the sites to the A477, I do not consider that in-succession views, between existing or proposed renewable energy developments, are likely to be observed or experienced by people travelling in either an easterly or westerly direction along the trunk road.

Visual Amenity

114. The application site is located in the open countryside between the small rural settlements of Lower Nash and Paskeston and forms an intrinsic part of the landscape close to the northern boundary with PCNP. The area surrounding the site is characterised by narrow rural lanes and a scattering of dwellings and agricultural buildings spread throughout the surrounding countryside. The largely rural nature of the area means that the receptors are primarily those people associated with the dwellings, the Church, those travelling through the area on foot, bicycle and private/commercial vehicles and visitors to the area.

115. The primary access to the site from the A477 would be afforded via Nash Lane. The entrance to the site would be via the existing agricultural gate, which is located at a point where the alignment of the highway bends sharply to the west towards Lower Nash Farm and the Church of St Mary[34]. Concerns have been expressed by NRW that the proposed layout of the site entrance would, because of the absence of a landscape screen, allow views into the application site and have a detrimental effect on the visual qualities of the area. Whilst the applicant doesn't share these views, they have indicated that should it be considered necessary a new hedgerow could be planted at this point.

116. Based on my observations, I consider that the presence of Lower Nash Farm, an operational agricultural business, and the Church of St Mary at the terminus of the lane, together with the proximity of the A477, which includes an integrated cycle path, means that the lane is subject to regular use by a range of people using bicycles and private/commercial vehicles. When this use is considered in conjunction with the alignment of the highway, it is clear that the people travelling its length would be forced to slow down at a point close to the entrance in order to negotiate the bend and, in doing so, would be afforded clear and unrestricted views of the site compound and the fields of solar arrays beyond. Although localised, I consider that this would have a significant impact on the visual qualities of Nash Lane. In order to ameliorate this situation, I concur with the views of NRW that a short length of new hedgerow

[34] BL003, Viewpoint photo-sheet 1

planted close to the site entrance would be necessary to screen views of the development.

117. The northern boundary of the application site is located close to the narrow, heavily wooded highway of Paskeston Road, which is located just within the boundary of the National Park. When viewed from the elevated junction leading to the small rural settlement of Paskeston[35], people using the highway at this point would, when proceeding slowly through the junction, be afforded a clear view of the solar arrays sited on the low-lying fields below. I am mindful however, that the presence of woodland trees around the junction, which over-shadow the highway, together with the southern facing orientation of the solar arrays and the proposed landscape mitigation measures would ensure that the proposal would not be a prominent feature, have an adverse impact on the special qualities of the National Park or the experience of people in this area.

118. In respect of the Church of St Mary, I note that the SIA[36] found that, when looking east from the elevated parts of the churchyard views of the application site would be afforded through the small gaps in the existing hedgerow that forms the field boundary of the site. These views were considered to have an adverse impact on the experience of people visiting the Church and churchyard. In order to address this issue, the submitted application proposes landscape mitigation works which require the 'gapping up' of the existing hedgerow along the field boundaries of the site. The improved hedgerow would then be allowed to grow to a minimum of 4 metres in height and, as such, would provide effective screening of the application site within 2 to 5 years of the works taking place. Based on my observations and subject to the mitigation proposed, I agree that the development would not have an adverse impact on the churchyard or the experience of receptors.

119. Concerns were also expressed by local residents that the visual impact of the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the visitor economy of the area. However, no oral or written evidence has been submitted to substantiate or further explain the exact nature of these concerns. In respect of this issue, I am conscious that the evidence presented by the applicant in their statement for Hearing 1 makes clear that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the visual qualities of the area or the experience of people when viewed from primary visitor attractions/destinations, local services catering for tourists, such as cafés and public houses, or the main transport corridors in the area surrounding the application site[37]. In the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary, I concur with the applicant's assessment in this matter.

120. In light of the above, and subject the implementation of the agreed landscape mitigation scheme, I conclude that the proposed development would not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape character, the special qualities of the PCNP or visual qualities of the application site or the surrounding area. As such I consider the proposal would accord with the requirements of Policy 18 of Future Wales, PPW and Policies SP16 and GN.1 of the adopted LDP.

[35] BL003, Viewpoint photo-sheet 4
[36] BL002, Appendix A10.4
[37] Applicant – Hearing 1 Statement, paragraphs 2.3.4 – 2.3.10

Cultural Heritage

121. An assessment of the likely significant effects of the proposed development on archaeology and cultural heritage is contained in Chapter 10 of the ES. This assessment has been informed by the findings of an archaeological investigation of the site and a SIA in relation to the Church of St Mary, which is a Grade II Listed Building. The findings indicated that there are three areas of archaeological significance within the site and that the proposed development would, because of the intervisibility between the Churchyard and the application site, have an adverse impact on the setting of the Church of St Mary.

122. In order to address these issues the design of the proposed development was amended prior to submission to: omit the area of archaeological resource form the operational part of the application site for the lifetime of the scheme; and include provision for additional landscaping within the hedgerows that form the western field boundaries of the site. I note that Cadw have indicated that subject to the mitigation detailed in the submitted application they raise no objection to the proposed development. Having reviewed the evidence and observed the relevant matters on site, I agree that subject to the proposed mitigation the development would not have an adverse impact on the areas of archaeological significance or the setting of the Church.

123. In light of the above, and subject to the implementation of the proposed landscape mitigation measures, I conclude that the proposed development would not have a long-term adverse impact on the areas of archaeological significance or the setting of the Church of St Mary. The proposed development would therefore accord with the requirements of Policy 18 of Future Wales and PPW. I am however mindful, that because of the nature of the mitigation, the development would have a short-term impact on the setting of the listed church and as such would be contrary to Policy GN.38 of the adopted LDP.

Ecology and Ornithology

124. PPW[38], makes clear that the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increasing the resilience of ecosystems, at various scales, by ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to both protect against loss and to secure enhancement. In doing so, PPW outlines the requirement for development proposals to consider the need to: support the conservation of biodiversity; contribute towards meeting international responsibilities and obligations for biodiversity and habitats; ensure statutorily and non-statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed; safeguard protected and priority species and existing biodiversity assets; and secure enhancement of, and improvements to, ecosystem resilience by improving diversity, condition, extent and connectivity of ecological networks. Further guidance is contained in Policy 9 of Future Wales which provides a framework for the management and enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure.

[38] PPW, subsection 6.4

125. Chapter 9 of the ES provides a baseline assessment of the application site and surrounding area, explains the mitigation measures and biodiversity enhancements built into the proposal and the likely significant effects associated with the development after these measures have been applied. In addition, the application is supported by a draft LEMP and CEMP which, amongst other things, provide details of the landscape and ecological mitigation strategy, code of construction practice, general environmental management procedures and construction environmental management plan for the site.

126. The baseline information indicated that: there are 40 statutory designated sites located within 10 kilometres of the site; the site contains a mixture of habitats; and a number of protected species were found within 3 kilometres of the application site.

127. The ES found that, although no significant effects are anticipated, there is potential for the impacts of the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the proposed development to effect valuable ecological features, habitats and species within the application site and surrounding area. The potential ecological constraints / impacts were taken into consideration at an early stage in the development of the scheme and as such the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoidance, mitigation, compensation and habitat enhancement has been built into the design of the proposed development and will be set out in detail in the LEMP to be agreed by the Council prior to the commencement of development.

128. None of the main parties have raised any objections to the ES and I have no reason to disagree with these conclusions. Moreover, on the basis of the evidence presented, I consider that the approach taken to the assessment of the ecology and ornithology in the ES is rigorous and conforms with best practice guidance[39].

129. The application site includes a mixture of arable and improved grassland, semi-natural broadleaved woodland, tall ruderal vegetation, trees, hedgerows, a swale, drains and a small stream. Two small seasonally wet drainage ditches run along the hedgerows and field boundaries in the northern part of the site, with a small spring located in the western section. The combination of these features, make an important contribution to the function and connectivity of the habitat in the site with the surrounding/wider area, including with the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC.

130. Concerns have been expressed about the possibility for silty run-off from the site to enter the small stream during the construction phase of the development and the potential for this to have an adverse impact on water quality and habitats within the application site and surrounding area. In order to avoid this situation, the applicant is proposing to include a requirement within the CEMP for regular monitoring to take place during the early construction phase of the development to identify and address any potential for run-off within the site. This approach has been agreed with the main parties and would in my view satisfactorily address concerns.

131. The site and surrounding area provide a habitat for a range of species including small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds. The ES explains that the proposed

[39] Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (2018).

development has been designed to take account of the biodiversity and ornithological characteristics of the site. In this respect 'embedded' in the scheme are a series of measures intended to ensure ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement. Following the closure of the consultation period the applicant, in discussion with the Council, agreed to extend these measures to include the creation of hibernacula opportunities within the site. These measures will be secured by condition and included in the LEMP[40].

132. In order to ensure that appropriate regard is given to the presence of badgers and other small mammals during the construction phase of the development, the ES outlines a requirement for a pre-commencement survey to be conducted immediately prior to any works taking place on site. The survey is intended to assess how the site is being used by badgers at that time and determine if any setts have been constructed within the site and surrounding area that could be impacted by the proposal. In order to provide clarity about the geographical extent of the survey, it was agreed by the main parties during Hearing 1 that the LEMP should contain a requirement for the survey to take place across the site and extend to a distance of 30 metres from all works.

133. In addition, in order to safeguard the badgers and small mammals that use the application site during the construction phase of the development a number of 'best practice' measures will be implemented. These will include: the fencing off of man-made excavations, trenches or pits relating to the development; the capping of temporarily exposed open pipework; daily inspections to ensure no mammals have become trapped overnight; and the provision of regular gaps in the perimeter fence to ensure that badgers and other small mammals continue to have access to the application site for foraging and commuting.

134. To ensure that no disturbance is caused to any of the species present or using the site and the surrounding area, the applicant has confirmed that no external lighting would be used during the construction, operation or decommissioning of the site.

135. The suggested approach to the management of badgers and other small mammals has been agreed with the main parties and in my view, subject to appropriate provisions within the LEMP, would provide appropriate and robust safeguarding measures.

136. The application site is located some 1.9 kilometres away from the Pembrokeshire Bat Sites and Bosherston Lakes SAC. The ES suggests that, whilst there is no specific evidence of bats roosting within the application site and surrounding area, the fields are used by bats for moderate foraging, habitat commuting and, because of the presence of trees and woodland on the boundary, potentially roosting. To ensure that bats using the site and surrounding area are not adversely affected, the ES proposes a series of mitigation measures, including the provision of bat boxes and the retention of trees, which, when considered in conjunction with the other habitat enhancement measures proposed, would increase the availability of suitable commuting and foraging habitat and provide long term benefits for bats.

137. The Council's LIR expresses concern that insufficient consideration has been given to the potential risk of collision between bats and the PV panels. This issue was discussed during the course of Hearing 1 and, although the concerns were noted, the main

[40] BL016

parties agreed that given the static nature of the panels and the absence of any empirical evidence to the contrary, the proposed solar park would not present a collision risk for bats. I have no reason to disagree with these conclusions.

138. The Skomer, Skokholm and the Seas off Pembrokeshire SPA is located just off the coast of South West Wales. The SPA supports the largest concentration of breeding seabirds in Wales amongst which are the Manx shearwater, a designated protected species. The Islands Conservation Advisory Committee of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales, through the LIR, have expressed concern that during adverse weather conditions the young Manx shearwaters may mistake the surface of the PV panels for the sea and land on the arrays. If this happens the birds are likely to struggle to take off and may become stranded.

139. To address this concern, the applicant has agreed, in discussion with the main parties, that provision will be made in the LEMP for: regular systematic checks of the site to be carried out by an experienced / trained person during mid-August to mid-October for an initial period of two years; any birds found at the site would be carefully captured and taken to an appropriate place for welfare care or release as appropriate. Should no young birds be found during the two-year period no further site checks would be recommended in future years. However, if young Manx shearwater are found, then a detailed, long-term monitoring programme will be agreed between the applicant and the Islands Conservation Advisory Committee of the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales. On the basis of the oral and written evidence presented by the main parties, I am content that the approach suggested would provide a robust mechanism for safeguarding the Manx shearwater in this location.

140. Overall, I am satisfied that the proposed development would have no unacceptable effect on valuable ecological features, habitats and/ or protected species and, as such would accord with the requirements of Policy 18 of Future Wales and Policy GN.37 of the adopted LDP. The measures beneficial to biodiversity that have been incorporated within the scheme and those that would be secured through the recommended conditions are significant, as is the extent to which conditions would avoid or mitigate any potential harmful impacts. Accordingly, and mindful of the Section 6 duty[41] I consider that, in line with the requirements of Policy 18, the proposal includes biodiversity enhancement measures to provide a net ecological benefit.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

141. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended[42], imposes a requirement to consider the potential effects of a development proposal on the national site network. In this case the network includes: Pembrokeshire Bat Sites / Bosherton Lakes SAC, Pembrokeshire Marine / Sir Benfro Forol SAC, Yerbeston Tops SAC, Limestone Coast of South Wales SAC, Bristol Channel Approaches SAC, Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries SAC, West Wales Marine SAC, Castlemartin Range SPA; and Skomer, Skolkholm and the Seas off Prembrokeshire SPA.

[41] Section 6 of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 imposes an enhanced biodiversity
[42] By the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

142. The submitted application was accompanied by a Shadow Habitat Regulations Assessment (Shadow HRA)[43]. Of the nine sites only Pembrokeshire Bat Sites / Bosherton Lakes SAC, was considered to have the potential to be affected by the proposed development. The initial screening exercise undertaken in respect of Pembrokeshire Bat Sites / Bosherton Lakes found that the proposed development would have no significant effect on the qualifying features of the SAC. As a consequence, an appropriate assessment is not required.

143. None of the main parties have raised any objections to the shadow HRA and I have no reason to disagree with these conclusions.

Highway Safety

144. As I outlined earlier, vehicular access to the application site would be afforded via the existing agricultural access located at the midpoint of Nash Lane, some 200m north of the A477/Lower Nash priority junction. Access to the application site from the wider highway network would be afforded from the M4 (junction 48) the A48 (to Carmarthen), the A40 (to St Clears) and the A477 (to Lower Nash).

145. The ES provides an explanation of the existing baseline conditions in respect of traffic and infrastructure, the potential impact the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the development would have on the highway network and details of the mitigation measures necessary to address any adverse effects. In addition, the submitted application is supported by a draft CTMP[44], which is intended to guide the delivery of staff, materials and equipment to and from the application site during the construction phase of the development in a manner that minimises nuisance and disturbance to the existing road network.

146. The findings of the LIR indicated that without mitigation the intense nature of deliveries to the application site during the construction phase of the development, would, when considered in conjunction with the limited capacity of Nash Lane to accommodate traffic, have an adverse impact on highway safety. These concerns were supported by representations from DE&I which outline objections in relation to: the need for passing bays, widening and layover areas; the use of the A477/Lower Nash priority junction as a dwell area for vehicles; and the widening of the A477/Lower Nash priority junction to eliminate the need for vehicles to cross into the opposing carriageway.

147. Prior to the commencement of[45], and during Hearing 1 the applicant in discussion with DE&I and the Council, agreed a series of measures intended to resolve the aforementioned concerns. These measures include:

- A pre-commencement survey of the A477/Lower Nash priority junction and a subsequent scheme for any upgrading or widening works deemed necessary;
- The retention and maintenance of the shared use path;

[43] BL003, Appendix A.9.3
[44] BL011
[45] BL016

- Three banksmen to be located along the site entrance, the entrance to Nash Villa and A477/ Lower Nash junction during the construction phase of the development;
- Details of a traffic management scheme to include positive traffic control and a temporary speed reduction order on the A477 during the construction phase of the development;
- A commitment to a pre and post construction condition survey along Nash Lane; and
- The provision and agreement of a construction schedule and details of the off-site management of vehicle movements including layover areas.

148. Based on the oral and written evidence presented, and subject to a condition requiringthe inclusion of the aforementioned measures in the CTMP for the site, I am satisfied that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact along Nash Lane or on the wider highway network. As such the proposed development would accord with Policy 18 of Future Wales, PPW and Policy GN.1 and GN.3 of the adopted

BMV Agricultural Land

149. The application site comprises 34.25 hectares of agricultural land set over eight fields and enclosed by a combination of hedgerows, trees and woodland. The site forms part of the much larger agricultural holding of Lower Nash Farm.

150. Chapter 5 of the ES explains that 20.75 hectares of the application site is made up of grade 2 and grade 3a BMV agricultural land. This means that the proposal exceeds the 20 hectares threshold over which the development of BMV agricultural land for alternative uses is considered to be nationally significant. The ES is supported by the Wessex Solar Energy Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Study (February 2020), The Blackberry Lane Solar Park Agricultural Assessment (September 2020) and the LQIA (November 2020) [46].

151. PPW explains that agricultural land of grades 1, 2 and 3a is the best and most versatile, and should be conserved as a finite resource for the future. The guidance makes clear that, when considering the search sequence and development management decisions, considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because of its special importance and that grades 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land should only be developed if there is an overriding need for the development and either previously developed land or land in lower agricultural grades are unavailable[47]. Further guidance in relation to BMV agricultural land is contained in TAN 6 – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)[48] which suggests that once agricultural land is developed, even for 'soft' uses such as golf courses, its return to agriculture as BMV land is seldom practicable. In addition, local guidance contained in the Renewable Energy SPG makes clear that it is preferable to avoid placing solar farms on BMV agricultural land.

[46] BL002, Appendix A5.1 – 5.3
[47] PPW, Edition 11, paragraphs 3.58 and 3.59
[48] TAN 6, paragraph 6.2.2

Search Area and Site Selection Process

152. As I outlined earlier, the ES explains that for technical reasons, which relate to the proximity to potential grid connection points and the need for local embedded generation, the site search area was limited to the administrative boundary of Pembrokeshire County Council.

153. The initial search, undertaken in 2013, included a high-level mapping exercise which restricted the search to sites within a 2 kilometer radius of a suitable grid connection, in this case the 132kV substation at Golden Hill. As part of this process seven potential sites for solar park development were identified. These sites were then subject to a localised assessment process which looked at a range of factors including environmental and planning constraints such as the presence of grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, existing land uses, the proximity and capacity of a grid connection, the solar resource, site capacity and land ownership. Only two of the sites identified, the application site and land at Chapel Hill, were considered suitable for solar development. Grid connection applications were submitted for both sites and viable offers received in 2013.

154. During Hearing 2 the applicant explained that, because of changes to the feed in tariff scheme, after obtaining the grid connection offer the development of the application site was put on hold and didn't recommence until 2019. At this point, detailed investigations in relation to a range of matters, including agricultural land classification, were carried out.

155. The findings of the Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Study, indicatedthat instead of the site being made up largely of grade 3 agricultural land, as had originally been thought, the site comprised a mixture of grade 2, 3a and 3b land. Further studies, the Agricultural Assessment and the LQIA, confirmed that 83% of the site was BMV agricultural land and provided a strategy for ensuring the effective management of land quality during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the development. An approach which it is suggested would ensure that the development did not have a significant negative effect on the quality of the BMV agricultural land within the site.

156. The applicant accepts that the proposal would result in the temporary development ofBMV agricultural land. But maintains that the requirements of national planning policydo not place a moratorium on the development of BMV agricultural land for uses such as that proposed, which it is considered are necessary to assist in addressing the climate emergency and providing future energy security. As such, it is considered that the inclusion and identification of the application site in the selection process was appropriate.

157. Concerns have been expressed by DCC about the adequacy of the approach taken to the definition of the search area and the site selection process. It was suggested that the definition of the search area should not have been restricted to the Council's administrative boundary but should, because the scheme is for a DNS and any energy generated would feed into the national grid, have included the whole of Wales. In addition, DCC maintain that the initial selection process should have identified that the application site included a substantial area of BMV agricultural land and, once this was

established, further analysis of alternative sites should have been undertaken. In support of their objection, DCC have submitted maps of 4 potential development sites close to the application site which it is contended should have been included in the site selection process.

158. The additional alternative sites were discussed during Hearing 2 and it was agreed bythe main parties that none of the areas of land identified where suitable for the development of a solar park.

159. Although I note the concerns of DCC, I am mindful that PPW does not provide detailed guidance on how a search area for the development of a solar park should be defined or how potential sites should be selected. Rather, the approach to be taken is one for individual developers to determine based on the requirements of national planning policy and consideration of the relevant practical, social, economic and environmental issues. Equally, I am conscious that PPW does not place a requirement on developers to revisit the site selection process and identify additional alternative sites, where a preferred site is found to be constrained.

160. In this case, and having had regard to the evidence presented, I am content that the approach taken by the applicant to the definition of the search area and the site selection process was logical, structured and comprehensive and, in the case of the site selection process, had appropriate regard to the need to consider suitable alternative sites. Moreover, I concur with the applicants view that the requirements of national policy in respect of BMV agricultural land, do not in themselves, prevent the development of such land.

Impact on BMV Agricultural Land

161. The development proposes the erection of a large-scale solar park with 70,000 PV panels fixed on mounting frames and set out in densely packed arrays across the site, 12 inverter and transformer cabins, 1.75 kilometres of access tracks, a 1600 sqm compound and 3.5 kilometres of security fence. Each of the solar mounting panels would be supported by two steel poles which would be driven into the ground to a depth of 1.8 metres, electrical cables connecting the arrays, invertor and transformer cabins would be laid out in a network of trenches through-out the site, concrete foundations would be laid for cabins and the control building, whilst the access road and compound would be constructed using crushed stone. The topsoil excavated through the construction process would be spread across the application site.

162. The ES and supporting evidence[49] explains the temporary nature of the development and indicates that the combination of the proposed solar arrays, buildings, access and compound would impact on less than 3% of the total area of the site. As such, it is contended that the potential impacts of the proposal on land quality during the construction, operation and decommissioning of the development would not have a significant negative affect on the site. Once constructed the areas around the solar arrays would be used for the grazing of sheep and for silage production. An agricultural use the applicant maintains would be consistent with the existing use of the site.

[49] BL001, Chapter 6 and BL002, Appendix A5.3

163. Objections to the proposed development and its potential impact on BMV agricultural land have been raised by DCC. In their comments DCC explained that only 10-15% of agricultural land in Wales is classified as being BMV and, as such, the land is a finite and nationally significant resource which needs to be protected in order to secure future food supplies. The Department is concerned that the development could, through matters such as compaction, waterlogging and the mixing of top and sub-soils, cause structural damage to the soil and in doing so reduce its flexibility, productivity and efficiency to such an extent that it would no longer be BMV agricultural land. Evidence presented by DCC at Hearing 2, suggests that these concerns are compounded by the veracity of the evidence supporting the application and the inherent uncertainty about the ability of any restoration scheme to successfully return land to a given quality.

164. In order to address these concerns, the applicant during the course of Hearing 2 proposed the imposition of conditions which: seek to restrict construction work at the site to the dryer months of the year; and require, as part of the CEMP, the provision of a soil resource report and a soil resource management plan which would provide details about the management of topsoil within the site and the measures intended to assist with the avoidance of compaction.

165. Whilst I note the applicant's contention about the potential impact of the development and the suggested conditions, I am nevertheless mindful that the structure of agricultural soil is fragile and easily damaged and that the construction of a development of the scale proposed is likely to result in a substantial amount of ground disturbance across the application site. This disturbance would arise from the engineering operations necessary to construct a solar park of the scale proposed and from the potential for widespread soil compaction caused by the movement and use of heavy vehicles and machinery required for the installation of the supporting posts and the excavation of trenches, access paths and foundations across the site. In my view the impact of these operations and the nature of the vehicles and equipment required are not comparable to agricultural practices and are likely to significantly damage the structure of the soil and result in the loss BMV agricultural land.

166. With respect to the suggestion that the site would continue to be in agricultural use during the operational period of the development, it is clear that the land could continue to be used for the grazing of sheep and silage production over the lifetime of the development. I am mindful however, that the development of a solar park on the application site would mean that the land would, effectively, be unavailable for the cultivation of food crops for a period of 40 years. The use of the site for complimentary agricultural uses, such as the grazing of livestock, does not to my mind, compensate for the loss of BMV agricultural land even for a temporary period.

167. The application is accompanied by the ODRP[50]. The Outline Plan provides a brief framework for the detailed Decommissioning and Restoration Plan which would be submitted to the Council for approval towards the end of the operational life of the development. The document explains that once the solar park is decommissioned and the associated apparatus and cabling has been removed, the site would then return to its original condition.

[50] BL002, Appendix A.6.1

168. Although I note the concerns of DCC in respect of the level of detail in the plan, I consider that the approach taken in the ODRP, which leave the precise requirements of the scheme to be determined at a time closer to the end of the operational life of the development, to be logical particularly in light of potential for technological advances during the intervening 40 years.

169. With regard to restoration, and whilst I note the applicant's comments in relation to the temporary nature of the development, I am mindful of the guidance contained in TAN 6 which advises that restoring land to BMV quality is seldom practicable. In this case, despite the evidence presented about the rigorous approach that would be taken to the decommissioning of the site, I am not persuaded that, given the nature and scale of the disturbance, that the land can be effectively restored to BMV quality and it won't be lost for future arable food production.

170. Overall, although I have found the approach to the definition of the search area and site selection process to be satisfactory, I consider that for the aforementioned reasons the proposed development would be likely to result in the loss of BMV agricultural land and, in doing so, have an impact on the objective of ensuring future food security. As such, the proposed development would be contrary to the requirements of policy 18 of Future Wales, PPW and TAN 6.

Other Matters

171. Objectors to the proposal raised a number of other concerns including those relating tothe impact of the development on the designated groundwater SPZ, the cost of decommissioning the site and the benefits of the scheme for local communities. I am mindful that evidence relating to the potential impact of the proposal on the SPZ, the strategy for decommissioning and restoring the application site and the social economic and environmental benefits of the scheme has been provided in some detail in the ES and that, for the most part, this evidence satisfactorily addresses the concerns expressed by residents. Therefore, in the absence of any compelling evidence to the contrary, I consider that the approach contained in the ES in respect of these matters is robust and would address the concerns identified in an appropriate manner.

172. In addition, a number of local residents expressed concern about the adequacy of the public consultation undertaken by the applicant and have suggested that all decisions relating to the development should be put on hold, until the current pandemic is over and the public can be properly consulted. Whilst I note these concerns, I have reviewed the evidence presented[51] in respect of the approach taken by the applicant to pre and post application public consultation, and I am content that it accords with the requirements of the DNS Regulations and has provided everyone with a fair opportunity to comment on the proposal.

[51] BL001, subsection 4.1.1 and BL007

Conditions

173. A list of revised conditions submitted by the applicant following Hearings 1 and 2 werediscussed during Hearing 3. Following the hearing the Council, in consultation with themain parties, formulated a revised list of conditions. Subject to some minor revisions, these form the basis of the list of suggested conditions set out in Annex A. In my opinion, the conditions meet the requirements of Welsh Government Circular 16/14: The Use of Planning Conditions in Development Management and are, for the followingreasons, necessary to ensure the effective mitigation and management of the

174. Conditions 1,2 and 3 are necessary to specify a time limit for the development and toensure that the proposal is carried out in accordance with the submitted plans.

175. In the interests of biodiversity and the visual amenities of the area, conditions 4, 6 and 7 are necessary to ensure the provision of an agreed landscaping scheme for the site, a LEMP that specifically makes provision for landscape and ecological mitigation measures, including providing a framework for safeguarding badgers, small mammals and the Manx shearwater, and provides certainty about the use of external lighting at the proposed development. In addition, condition 16 is necessary to ensure the effective screening of the proposed development when viewed from the site entrance on Nash Lane.

176. Condition 9, sets out the requirement for a CEMP to be submitted to and approved prior to the commencement of development. The CEMP is necessary to, amongst other things, provide a framework for managing: watercourses, surface water run-off and drainage; the importation and storage of materials, fuels, oils and chemicals; and the construction of the compound, car park and offices. Matters in relation to the management of waste are addressed in condition 14, which in the interests of biodiversity and visual amenities, sets out a requirement for a Site Waste Management Plan.

177. In order to address issues in relation to accessibility and highway safety, conditions 5, 11, 12 and 13 are necessary to set out the requirements for the physical reinstatement of footpath SP8/11, the provision of a CTMP which is intended to provide a framework for the management of traffic to and from the site during the construction and decommissioning phases, and the need for pre / post construction road condition surveys along Nash Lane and the A477/ Lower Nash Priority Junction.

178. Lastly, the combination of conditions, 8, 9, 10 and 15, require the provision and agreement of a soil resource report, a soil resource management plan, a scheme for the decommissioning of the solar park and seek to control months during which construction can take places at the site. These conditions are necessary to ensure the effective restoration of the site. During Hearing 3 there was a disagreement between the applicant and DCC about the months during which construction should take place at the site. I have considered the evidence presented by both parties and, in light of the potentially significant impact on BMV agricultural land, concluded that development on the site should not take place between October and April. I have amended condition 10 accordingly.

Planning Balance and Conclusions

179. Decisions are required to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this regard I have taken into account the relevant policies of Future Wales and the adopted LDP, the LIR, the representations and associated evidence in this case.

180. Future Wales together with PPW make clear that one of the primary objectives of the planning system is to contribute towards the delivery of sustainable development and, in doing so, improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. A central requirement of both documents is the need to achieve the decarbonisation of energy, build resilience to the impacts of climate change and ensure that Wales focuses on generating the energy it needs to support its communities and industries over the next twenty years. In this regard the proposed development would align with, and support, the requirements of Future Wales and PPW.

181. The benefits of the proposed development are clearly set out in the submitted ES and include: a reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases; the generation of energy from a renewable source which would serve up to 7,825 households on an annual basis over the lifetime of the scheme; an increase in the diversity and reliability of the UK energy supply; and a total investment of £14 million in the proposed development, a proportion of which would be spent in the local economy[52]. The benefits of the proposed development are considerable and will assist in meeting national renewable energy targets, reduce reliance on energy generated from fossil fuels and actively facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy. As such, the benefits of the development should carry significant weight in the determination process.

182. Consideration has been given to the impact of the proposed development on the main issues associated with this proposal. In doing so, I have found that, subject to the mitigation measures proposed and appropriate planning conditions, the development would not have an adverse impact on landscape and visual impact, cultural heritage, ecology and ornithology or highway safety. However, I have concluded that the proposal would have a significant adverse impact on BMV agricultural land, which is a finite and nationally significant resource. For the reasons set out earlier, I consider that the development would, potentially, result in the loss of 27.75 hectares of BMV agricultural land and, as a consequence, assist in undermining the objective of ensuring food security for future generations.

183. I note the applicant's contention about the contribution the proposed development would make to addressing the climate emergency and securing future energy provision. However, I do not consider that the scale of the energy generated from the site would, in itself, be sufficient to override the need to protect BMV agricultural land.

184. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy 18 of Future Wales, inrelation to the acceptability of the provisions for the decommissioning

[52] BL001, Chapter 3.6

restoration of the proposed development, and the requirements of PPW, which seeks to conserve BMV agricultural land as a finite resource for the future.

185. Overall, I consider that the benefits of the proposal, in providing renewableenergy, would not outweigh the harm caused to BMV agricultural

Recommendation:

186. The planning application should be refused. However, if Welsh Ministers are minded togrant planning permission, Annex A lists the conditions that I consider should be attached to any permission granted

Nicola Gulley

Inspector

ANNEX A – SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

Recommended conditions in the event of planning permission being granted:

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than five years from the date of this decision.

   Reason: In order to comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be for a temporary period only, to expire 40 years after the date of first commercial export of electricity to the grid ("the date of first export"). Written confirmation of the date of first export shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority within one month after the event.

   Reason: In order to comply with Section 72(1)(b) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 .

3. The development/works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with Plan A and Plan B. However, notwithstanding these plans, before development commences, details of the inverter/transformer cabins, control building, cabins, security fence (including any CCTV), access track and panels shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

   Reason: In order to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved documents, plans and drawings submitted with the application and in order to protect visual amenity in compliance with policies SP.1 and GN.1 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP

4. No development shall take place until details of hard and soft landscape works ("the landscaping scheme") have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The landscaping scheme shall include a statement setting out the design and mitigation objectives and how these will be delivered. Soft landscape works shall include but not be limited to:

   - Planting plans;
   - Written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment);
   - Schedules of plants noting species, plant supply sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate;
   - Implementation programme (including phasing of work where relevant).

   The landscaping scheme shall be implemented in full thereafter in accordance with the implementation programme so agreed and those

details approved by reason of condition 6

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and visual amenity and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1, SP 16, GN.1 and GN.37 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

5. No development shall take place until a scheme (to include an implementation timetable) for the physical reinstatement of footpath SP30/02 where it becomes SP8/11 between coordinates 201239, 203294 and 201249, 203415 ("the footpath scheme") has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved footpath scheme shall be implemented in full thereafter.

   Reason: In order to protect the integrity and safety of the public footpath network and in compliance with policies GN.1 and GN.2 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP

6. No development shall take place until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The LEMP shall incorporate the principles outlined in Section 9.6 of the Environmental Statement, Section 2.3 of the Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan and the Landscape Management Plan that formed part of the application. The LEMP shall also include but not be limited to:

   - A scheme for monitoring Manx shearwater on the site between mid-August and mid-October for an initial period of 2 years from the date of first export. Monitoring shall comprise a site walkover at intervals to be agreed with the local planning authority. Should no Manx shearwater be encountered on the site during the initial 2 year period of monitoring, monitoring shall cease. Should Manx shearwater be encountered on the site during the initial 2 year period of monitoring, provision shall be made for a further period of monitoring to be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.
   - A commitment to maintain the hedgerows across the site at a minimum height of 4 metres throughout the operational period of the development hereby permitted.
   - A pre-commencement badger survey across the site and extended to 30 metres from all works
   - Addition of 6 no. hibernacula across the site.

   The approved LEMP shall be implemented in full thereafter.

   Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and visual amenity and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1, SP 16, GN.1 and GN.37 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

7. There shall be no external lighting unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Lighting shall be installed and retained as agreed.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and visual amenity and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1, SP 16, GN.1 and GN.37 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

8. No development shall take place until a Soil Resources Report ("the Soil Resources Report") has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The approved Soil Resources Report shall be used to inform the Soil Resources Management Plan required by condition 9.

   Reason: In order to protect soil quality and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1 and GN.1 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

9. No development shall take place until a Construction Environment Management Plan ("the CEMP") has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall include but not be limited to:

   - The identification of surrounding watercourses and potential pollution pathways from the construction site to those watercourses, along with direction of flow
   - How each of those watercourses and pathways will be protected from site run-off during construction (i.e. locations and widths of buffer strips / principles related to the placement and specific requirements of the silt fencing)
   - How the water quality of the watercourses will be monitored and recorded
   - How surface water runoff from the site during construction will be managed/discharged
   - Storage facilities for all fuels, oils and chemicals
   - Storage of all materials on site
   - Construction compounds, car parks, offices, etc.
   - Details of the nature, type and quantity of materials to be imported on to the site
   - Location and detail of any wheel washing facilities
   - Measures for dealing with any contaminated material (demolition waste or excavated waste)
   - Identification of any buried services, such as foul sewers, so that they are protected
   - Daily check sheet and an explanation of who will be responsible for the process
   - Details of emergency contacts, for example Natural Resources Wales hotline
   - Site wide monitoring for silt run-off
   - Root protection measures for retained trees and the method for the protection of hedgerows
   - Additional details on soil management "the Soil Resources Management Plan" to include:

   - details of how topsoil removed will be preserved for restoration at

the end of the operational life of the development

- how the mixing of topsoil and subsoil will be avoided
- minimisation of compaction and the avoidance of damage to current drainage systems.

The CEMP and Soil Resources Management Plan shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity, visual amenity, water and soil quality and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1, SP 16, GN.1 and GN.37 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

10. No construction works (other than works relating to landscaping) shall take place between the months of October and April inclusive.

Reason: In order to protect soil quality and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1 and GN.1 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

11. No development shall take place until an updated Construction Traffic Management Plan ("the CTMP") has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. In addition to the details contained within the Draft CTMP, the updated CTMP shall include but not be limited to the following:

- A survey of the lane/A477 junction and a subsequent scheme for any upgrade or widening works deemed necessary
- Retention and maintenance of the shared use path
- 3 banksmen to be located along the lane
- Details of traffic management to include positive traffic control and a temporary speed reduction order on the A477
- A commitment to a pre and post construction condition survey along the lane
- Details of off-site management of vehicle movements including layover areas and construction schedule.

The CTMP shall be implemented in full in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1 and GN.1 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

12. No development shall take place until details of the methodology for the scope and nature of the pre and post construction road condition surveys ("the road condition survey scheme for the lane") on the lane leading to the site (to include the shared use path) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The condition survey

scheme shall include details of the surveys themselves, a mechanism for agreeing remediation works and timescales. The approved road condition survey scheme for the lane shall be implemented in full thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1 and GN.1 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

13. No development shall take place until details of the methodology for the scope and nature of a pre-construction survey of the lane/A477 junction has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority ("the Lane/A477 junction scheme"). The Lane/A477 junction scheme shall include details of the survey itself, a mechanism for agreeing upgrade or widening works and timescales. The approved Lane/A477 junction scheme shall be implemented in full thereafter.

    Reason: In the interests of highway safety and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1 and GN.1 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

14. No development shall take place until a Site Waste Management Plan ("the Site Waste Management Plan") has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Site Waste Management Plan shall be implemented in full thereafter.

    Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and visual amenity and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1, SP 16, GN.1 and GN.37 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

15. Not later than 12 months prior to the proposed decommissioning date for the development (the decommissioning date being 40 years from the date of first export) hereby permitted or following the expiration of 6 months of the development not being used for the supply of electricity (whichever is the earlier), a decommissioning and restoration plan ("the decommissioning and restoration plan") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include but not be limited to:

    - a scheme for removal of all surface elements of the photovoltaic solar farm and any foundations or anchor systems;
    - a scheme detailing the restoration and aftercare of the land (to include a methodology for ensuring the restoration of the agricultural land to its existing condition)
    - a timetable for completion of the removal and restoration works.

    The approved decommissioning and restoration plan shall be implemented within 12 months of the date of the last commercial export of electricity generation and shall be completed in accordance with the approved timetable.

Reason: In order to ensure that the site is fully restored and to protect the visual amenity of the area, in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1, SP 16, GN.1 and GN.37 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

16. No development shall take place until a scheme for a new hedgerow to be planted adjacent to the vehicular entrance of the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the location of the new hedgerow and timescale for planting implementation.

Reason: In the interests of biodiversity and visual amenity and in compliance with policy 18 of Future Wales and policies SP 1, SP 16 and GN.1 of the adopted Pembrokeshire County Council LDP.

ANNEX B – APPEARANCES

Hearing 1 - Landscape, ecology, ornithology and transportation

FOR THE APPLICANT:	
Charlotte Peacock BSc (Hons), MSc, AIEMA, ACIEEM, AMIEnvSc	WSE
Joanna Berlyn BA(Hons), Dip TP, MRTPI	Planning Policy
John Ingham BA (Hons) DIP LA, CMLI	Landscape
Will Bedford BA, MCIfA	Cultural Heritage and Archaeology
Rebecca Shelton BA(Hons), ACIEEM	Ecology
Mark Baker BSc CEng MICE FCIT FILT EurIng	Traffic Consultant
OTHER PARTICIPANTS:	
Mike Simmons	Development Manager (Major Projects and Planning Obligations), PCC
Rebecca Blackman	Specialist Advisor – Ecology, PCC
Richard Staden	Landscape Planning Officer, PCC
Stephen Benger	Group Engineer – Infrastructure, PCC
Sharon Luke	Senior Development Planning Advisor, NRW
Olwen Maidment (BA Landscape Architecture, Dip Landscape Architecture, MA Conservation Studies (Garden & Lanscapes) CMLI	Landscape Officer, NRW
Richard Jones	DE&I, Welsh Government
J Blow	Local resident

Hearing 2 – Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land

FOR THE APPLICANT:	
David Hardy, LL.B (Hons), BCL(Hons)(Oxon)	Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP
Charlotte Peacock BSc (Hons), MSc, AIEMA, ACIEEM, AMIEnvSc	WSE
Johnny Wearmouth BSc (Hons)	Grid and Site Selection, WSE
Joanna Berlyn BA(Hons), Dip TP, MRTPI	Planning Policy
Alastair Field BA(Hons), Postgraduate Diploma, MSc, PIEMA, Fellow British Institute of Agricultural Consultants, AMIEnvSc	Agricultural Land Classification, Agriculture and Site Restoration
Bill Butterworth BSc (Hons), CEnv (retired 2018) Lifetime member of the British Society of Soil Science, Member of the International Union of Soil Scientists Commission on Soil Degradation control, remediation. and reclamation	Soils and Agriculture
OTHER PARTICIPANTS:	
Mike Simmons	Development Manager (Major Projects and Planning Obligations), PCC
Ben Standing	Browne Jacobson LLP
Arwel Williams	DCC, Welsh Government
Richard Sowden	ADAS
Ruth Metcalf	ADAS
J Blow	Local resident

Hearing Session 3 - Planning Conditions

FOR THE APPLICANT:	
David Hardy, LL.B (Hons), BCL(Hons)(Oxon)	Squire Patton Boggs (UK) LLP
Charlotte Peacock BSc (Hons), MSc, AIEMA, ACIEEM, AMIEnvSc	WSE
Joanna Berlyn BA(Hons), Dip TP, MRTPI	Planning Policy
OTHER PARTICIPANTS:	
Mike Simmons	Development Manager (Major Projects and Planning Obligations), PCC
Rebecca Blackman	Specialist Advisor – Ecology, PCC
Richard Staden	Landscape Planning Officer, PCC
Stephen Benger	Group Engineer – Infrastructure, PCC
Sharon Luke	Senior Development Planning Advisor, NRW
Ben Standing	Browne Jacobson LLP
Arwel Williams	DCC, Welsh Government
Richard Sowden	ADAS
Ruth Metcalf	ADAS
Richard Jones	DE&I, Welsh Government
J Blow	Local resident

ANNEX C – DOCUMENTS

List of documents submitted during the Hearings:

- Updated Plans in respect of alternative Sites A to D, submitted by the DCC, Welsh Government.
- Schedule of 'draft' conditions submitted by the Applicant.

List of documents submitted after the Hearings:

- Schedule of 'final' conditions submitted by the Council in agreement with the main parties.