

Document Reference	Appendix No.	Title
4.01.1	1.1	Screening Direction

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Mr James Cook
Sirius Planning Ltd.

(via e-mail)

Eich Cyf / Your Ref:

Ein Cyf / Our Ref: 3245503

Dyddiad / Date: 13 February 2020

Dear Mr Cook,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
The Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016
Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales)
Regulations 2017

Potential DNS Application

Site Address: Land at Pancross and Oaklands Farm, near Bonvilston, Vale of Glamorgan, CF5 6TQ

Proposed Development: Solar farm and power storage units (batteries) across approximately 111 ha of land (solar generation maximum installed capacity of 65 MWp) with ancillary infrastructure

On 23 January 2020 the Planning Inspectorate received confirmation that the developer was now content for the Inspectorate to publish and process a request for a Screening Direction which was originally received on 10 December 2019. The request was made under regulation 31(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 ("the Regulations"), for the Welsh Ministers to make a screening direction as to whether or not the development proposed is "EIA Development" within the meaning of the Regulations.

The Planning Inspectorate is authorised by the Welsh Ministers to provide that screening direction.

The project, as described above, falls within the description at paragraph 3(a) in column 1 of the table in Schedule 2 to the Regulations.

The attached screening assessment identifies the key areas which have been considered. Having taken into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3 to the Regulations and the

advice in Welsh Office Circular 11/99: Environmental Impact Assessment on establishing whether EIA is required, the assessment concludes that:

- Based on the information provided by the applicants, and the relevant consultee responses received, I find that this proposed solar farm and battery storage development is likely to have adverse effects in terms of landscape and visual impacts, ecology, hydrology and the historic environment. Considering these likely impacts, and the potential for cumulative effects with extant / consented solar farms in the locality I am led to conclude that, on balance, this development is likely to have significant environmental effects.

Therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Regulations and the authority referred to above, the Welsh Ministers hereby direct that the development subject of this application **is EIA development** within the meaning of the Regulations.

Consequently, this application must be accompanied by an Environmental Statement. Under regulation 17(1) of the Regulations an Environmental Statement must contain, for the purpose of assessing the likely impact on the environment, the information specified in that regulation. It is recommended that you refer to the Regulations and the accompanying Circular, Welsh Office Circular 11/99, before and during the preparation of the Environmental Statement.

In the meantime, you may wish to have regard to the particular environmental topics identified in the attached screening assessment.

This letter will be copied to the Vale of Glamorgan Council so that this screening direction is placed on Part 1 of the Planning Register in relation to the application in question, in accordance with the Regulations.

I have also copied this letter to Natural Resources Wales and Cadw.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

Rob Sparey

Mr Robert Sparey MPlan

Rheolwr Cynllunio a'r Amgylchedd / Planning & Environment Manager
Tîm Cynllunio a'r Amgylchedd / The Planning & Environment Team
Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio / The Planning Inspectorate

STAGE 1 – INITIAL EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

1 Case Details	
A	Case reference 3245503
B	Brief description of development Solar farm & battery storage (111 ha, maximum generation capacity 65 MWp) with ancillary infrastructure.
2 EIA Screening Details	
2A Schedule 1	
	Is the project Schedule 1 development as described in Schedule 1 of the EIA Regulations? No
	<i>If Yes, under which description of development? If No, consider whether project is 'Schedule 2' development below in part 2(B).</i>
2B Schedule 2	
(i)	Is the project listed as a description of development under Column 1 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations? Yes <i>If Yes, under which description of development? If No, EIA is not required.</i>
	3(a)
(ii)	Does the project change or extend development described in paragraphs 1 to 12 of Column 1 of schedule 2, where the change or extension may have SIGNIFICANT* adverse effects on the environment? No <i>If Yes, provide reasons for your answer below. *If unsure, discuss with PET. Proceed to point (iii).</i>
	Choose an item.
(iii)	Is the project located wholly or partly within a ' Sensitive Area ' as defined by Regulation 2 of the EIA Regulations? No <i>If Yes, state which area and more to Question 3. If No, proceed to point (iv) below.</i>
(iv)	Are the applicable thresholds/criteria in Column 2 exceeded / met? Yes <i>If Yes, note which applicable threshold/criteria. If No, EIA is not required.</i>
	Site exceeds 0.5 ha.

3 LPA / Welsh Ministers' Screening		
(i)	Has the LPA issued a Screening Opinion (SO)?	No
(ii)	Have the Welsh Ministers issued a Screening Direction (SD)?	No
4 Environmental Statement (ES)		
	Has the applicant/appellant supplied an ES for the current or previous (if reserved matters or conditions) application?	No

STAGE 2 – DETAILED EIA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

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

5 Detailed Screening Questions		
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant? <i>Include consideration of features or measures to avoid or prevent what might otherwise be significant effects</i>
CRITERION 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF DEVELOPMENT		
Question 1(a) Size and design of the Development		
Will construction, operation or decommissioning of the Project involve actions which will cause physical changes in the locality (topography, land use, changes in waterbodies, etc.)?	Change in land use for a 30 year period (agricultural use at present). Possible impacts on locality based on the concerns raised by NRW over potential impacts on hydrology and potential risk of accident involving the extant slurry lagoon. On balance I find that significant effects in this regard are unlikely.	No
Question 1(b) Cumulation with Existing and/or Approved Development		
Are there any other factors which should be considered such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consequential development which could lead to environmental effects? 	Potential cumulative impacts with existing solar farms. As identified by the LPA: "Three smaller solar farms (2013/00967/FUL, up to 8MW, land adjacent to Sutton Mawr Farm; 2014/00798/FUL, up to 6MW, land east of Five Mile Lane; 2012/01224/FUL, up to 7.5MW, land at Garn Farm Lane) operate within 2 miles of the site.	Likely significant effect.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the potential for cumulative impacts with other existing or planned activities in the locality? • any plans for future land uses on or around the location which could be affected by the project? • transfrontier impacts? 	<p>There are also at least 3 other smaller solar farms operating in this area at a further distance from the site.”</p> <p>In the absence of more detailed information to the contrary and in light of consultee responses, it seems to me that that the cumulative effects in terms of landscape and visual impacts could be significant.</p>	
Question 1(c) Use of Natural Resources, in particular land, soil, water and biodiversity		
Will construction or operation of the Project use natural resources such as land, water, materials or energy, especially any resources which are non-renewable or in short supply?	Some during construction and decommissioning, but unlikely to be significant. Positive impact in terms of renewable energy production during operation.	Unlikely to be significant.
Question 1(d) Production of Waste		
Will the Project produce solid wastes during construction or operation or decommissioning?	Some during construction and decommissioning, but unlikely to be significant.	
Question 1(e) Pollution and Nuisances		
Will the Project involve use, storage, transport, handling or production of substances or materials which could be harmful to human health or the environment or raise concerns about actual or perceived risks to human health?	No	
Will the Project cause noise and vibration or release of light, heat energy or electromagnetic radiation?	Some during construction and decommissioning, but unlikely to be significant. Expected noise levels during operation unlikely to be significant.	
Will the Project release pollutants or any hazardous, toxic or noxious substances to air , or lead to risks of contamination of land or	No	

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
water (including surface waters, groundwater, coastal waters or the sea)?		
Question 1(f) Risk of major accidents and/or disasters relevant to the development concerned, including those caused by climate change, in accordance with scientific knowledge		
Will there be any risk of accidents during construction or operation of the Project which could affect human health or the environment?	Potential impacts on onsite slurry lagoon – risk minimal.	Unlikely to be significant.
Question 1(g) Risks to Human Health (for example due to water contamination or air pollution)		
Will there be any risk to human health during the construction and/or operation of the development	Best practice can be expected to minimise risk of accident during construction and decommissioning stages.	
CRITERION 2. LOCATION OF DEVELOPMENT		
Question 2(a) Existing and Approved Land Use		
Will the Project result in social changes, for example, in demography, traditional lifestyles, employment?	No	
Are there any routes or facilities on or around the location, which are used by the public for access to recreation or other facilities, which could be affected by the project?	No	
Are there any transport routes which are susceptible to congestion or which cause environmental problems, which could be affected by the project?	No	
Is the project located in a previously undeveloped area where there will be loss of greenfield land?	The development will occupy 111 ha of agricultural land, impacting on the potential for agricultural uses for 30 years. However, some agricultural use could co-exist with the proposed solar farm, (e.g. grazing under the panels). As proposed, the land would revert to agricultural use at the end of the 30 years.	Unlikely significant effect.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
Are there any areas on or around the location occupied by land uses which could be affected by the project, particularly sensitive land uses e.g. hospitals, schools, places of worship, community facilities?	The site is located near to the village of Bonvilston, but I do not consider that there are likely to be any impacts other than landscape and visual, so no significant impact on land use.	Unlikely significant effect.
Question 2(b) Relative Abundance, Availability Quality and Regenerative Capacity of Natural Resources in the Area and its Underground		
Are there any areas on or around the location which contain important, high quality or scarce resources e.g. groundwater, surface waters, forestry, agriculture, fisheries, tourism, minerals, which could be affected by the project?	No	
Question 2(c) Absorption Capacity of the Natural Environment		
Are there any other areas on or around the location which are important or sensitive for reasons of their ecology, or are used by protected, important or sensitive species of fauna or flora, which could be affected by the project?	Yes, as highlighted by NRW it is possible that the resulting change in hydrology could have impacts on the adjacent SSSI. The development could also have impacts on nearby ancient and semi-natural woodlands, as identified by the Local Planning Authority (LPA).	Likely significant effect.
Are there any inland, coastal, marine or underground waters on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	No	
Are there any areas or features of high landscape or scenic value on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes: Local designation Nant Llancarfan Special Landscape Area and non-statutory Llancarfan Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. While the applicants submitted Screening Request asserts that any effects would not be significant, I do not consider that enough information has been provided to support this at this stage. Based on the	Likely significant effect.

5	Detailed Screening Questions	
Questions to be considered	Yes/No/Unknown – provide description	For 'Yes/Unknown', are effects likely to be significant?
	extent of the site, I consider significant effects are likely.	
Is the project in a location where it is likely to be highly visible to many people?	Potentially – see comments above.	
Are there any areas on or around the location which are densely populated or built-up, which could be affected by the project?	The site is located near to the village of Bonvilston, but I do not consider that there are likely to be any impacts other than landscape and visual, so no significant impact on land use.	Unlikely significant effect.
Are there any areas or features of historic or cultural importance on or around the location which could be affected by the project?	Yes – Cadw & the LPA highlight the potential effects on the adjacent SAM (GM613 Castle Ringwork 850m ENE of Ty'n-y-Coed). It seems likely that the development will have a significant effect on the setting of the SAM. In a letter to the LPA, the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust highlight that there could well be archaeological features of national importance associated with the SAM. There are also another 80+ designated assets within 3 km of the site.	Likely significant effect.
Are there any areas on or around the location which are already subject to pollution or environmental damage e.g. where existing legal environmental standards are exceeded, which could be affected by the project?	No	
Is the project location susceptible to subsidence, landslides, erosion, flooding or extreme or adverse climatic conditions, which could cause the project to present environmental problems?	Site abuts Zone C2 but should not increase likelihood of flooding.	Unlikely significant effect.

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

Statement of reasons – insert into Screening Direction

Based on the information provided by the applicants, and the relevant consultee responses received, I find that this proposed solar farm and battery storage development is likely to have adverse effects in terms of landscape and visual impacts, ecology, hydrology and the historic environment. Considering these likely impacts, and the potential for cumulative effects with extant / consented solar farms in the locality lead me to conclude that, on balance, this development is likely to have significant environmental effects.

6 Outcome of assessment		
(ii)	If a SO/SD has been provided do you agree with it?	N/A
(iii)	Is EIA required?	Yes
	Outcome	Action
	Schedule 2 development – threshold exceeded/ criterion met or Sensitive Area and likely to have significant effects	Issue direction stating EIA Required (Letter 2)
	Name and Job Title of Assessor	Robert Sparey: Planning & Environment Manager
	Date of Assessment	13 February 2020