



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

5 NOVEMBER 2020

REPORT OF: DIRECTOR PROSPERITY AND DEVELOPMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

Members are asked to determine the planning application outlined below:

APPLICATION NO: 20/0553/10 (GH)
APPLICANT: Infinite Renewables
DEVELOPMENT: Solar farm including substation, fencing and below ground cabling. (revised drainage strategy received 17th July 2020)
LOCATION: LAND OFF PANTYBRAD ROAD, LLANTRISANT ROAD, YNYSMAERDY, LLANTRISANT, CF72 8YY.
DATE REGISTERED: 17/07/2020
ELECTORAL DIVISION: Town (Llantrisant)

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT, SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS.

REASONS:

As a small scale solar farm the principle of the development is considered to be acceptable. The development would be in line with PPW10 and TAN8 and would contribute to the Welsh Government's renewable energy generation targets. Furthermore, it is considered that the appearance of the solar farm, both in terms of the immediate and local visual impact and that upon the character of the wider landscape, would not cause harm to a degree that would warrant a refusal. In addition, no objections have been raised by any consultees with respect to the potential impacts upon either the amenity of nearby residential properties, highway safety or ecology. The development is therefore considered to comply with the relevant policies of the Local Development Plan.

REASON APPLICATION REPORTED TO COMMITTEE

The proposal is not covered by determination powers delegated to the Director of Prosperity & Development

APPLICATION DETAILS

Full planning consent is sought to construct a solar farm and associated plant and paraphernalia, at Land off Pantybrad Road, Ynysmaerdy.

The development would be erected in a part of the same field that accommodates the 'daffodil' wind turbine, and the solar farm is also intended to provide green energy to the Royal Mint.

The farm would have a generating capacity of 2MW and consist of 21 rows of southward facing photovoltaic (PV) panels. The rows would be set 1.5m apart to avoid shadowing and there would be a 4m wide perimeter buffer between hedgerows and panels.

The panels, each measuring no greater than 1m by 2m, would be grouped and set at an angle on supporting metal frames to a maximum height of 2.3m above ground level. The frames would not require foundation work, since their posts would be driven 1.5m into the ground.

String inverters would be attached to the underside of the PV panels, and connected to a new 3m high substation via cabling, the majority of which would be below ground. The new substation would be constructed just to the south of the wind turbine and this would enable both turbine and solar farm to utilise the existing onward underground connection to the Royal Mint.

In addition, that part of the field not already bounded by hedgerow would be enclosed by an extension to an existing post and rail fence, comprising a 2m high deer fence. The Applicant has also advised that there would be a buffer of 4m between panels and the boundary hedgerows.

Furthermore, no hedgerow would be lost as part of the development and, by the site entrance, a limited number of additional standard sized hedge trees would be planted along the hedgerows at random spacing to increase tree coverage levels, filter visibility and provide green links between existing woodland and scrub areas.

Lastly, the operational life of the solar farm has been identified at 25 years. During this period it is estimated that there would be no site based staff, and there would be a requirement for routine inspections/maintenance by light goods vehicle approximately three to four times a year.

In addition to the plans and elevation drawings accompanying the application, the following supporting documents have been submitted:

- Design and Access Statement
- Drainage Strategy
- Coal Mining Risk Assessment
- Pre-Application Consultation Report
- Heritage Impact Assessment Report
- Ecological Appraisal
- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal
- Planning Statement

SITE APPRAISAL

The land to which the application relates is located approximately 380m to the north of Llantrisant Industrial Estate. Comprising a surface area of approximately two hectares, it is part of a larger field which accommodates the prominent 'daffodil' wind turbine.

Access to the property is gained from Pantybrad to the east, where there is an existing crossover and gated entrance, the latter being set back from the adopted carriageway so that attending vehicles do not block the highway.

Within the site a track of hard core and stone leads from the gate past a small parking/setting down area to the base of the turbine and its compound. It is within the area to the north-west of this track where the PV panels would be installed.

Although the northern and western boundaries are demarcated with mature hedges, the fall in level to the south/south-east is pronounced and views towards the site are possible from the south, particularly the northern fringe of Llantrisant town and across Llantrisant Common.

The site is located outside of the defined settlement boundary and is both within a locally designated Special Landscape Area (SLA) and where there is a high risk to development from historic coal mining. The site is also upslope of the Rhos Tonyrefail SSSI.

PLANNING HISTORY

The most recent or relevant applications on record associated with this site are:

- 19/1136/35:** Proposed solar farm. Decision: 15/11/2019, EIA.
- 18/0761/39:** Non-material amendment to decrease blade tip height of wind turbine to 59.75m (AGL). Decision: 14/09/2018, Grant.
- 17/0736/39:** Non-material amendment to reposition the approved turbine within the original red line boundary and also reduce its height and diameter. Decision: 09/08/2017, Grant.
- 16/0124/10:** Erection of a single wind turbine and associated infrastructure (revised plans received 31/5/16, including revised site boundary to accommodate an electricity connection to the Royal Mint, decrease in height of the turbine to 100 metres maximum blade tip height and change in colours to a green tower and yellow blades to represent a daffodil) (Amended plans/information received 31/05/16). Decision: 19/07/2016, Grant.

14/0913/10: Erection of a single wind turbine and associated infrastructure.
Decision: 04/11/2015, Withdrawn by Applicant.

PUBLICITY

The application has been advertised by direct notification to eight neighbouring properties and a notice was displayed on site.

Furthermore, in accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order (Wales) the relevant press notice was published on 16th July 2020 advertising the proposal as major development.

No letters of objection or representation have been received.

CONSULTATION

Transportation Section

No objection subject to conditions.

Flood Risk Management

No objection subject to a condition in respect of surface water drainage details and an advisory note.

Public Health and Protection

Conditions are recommended in respect of noise, dust, waste and hours of operation. However, noting the location of the site and the provisions of existing public health legislation, which can control these matters, such conditions would be unnecessary.

Natural Resources Wales

No objections subject to conditions regarding the mitigation measures proposed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

No comments or objections.

Western Power Distribution

A new connection or service alteration will require a separate application to WPD.

The Coal Authority

The Coal Authority considers that the content and conclusions of the Coal Mining Risk Assessment, dated 25 February 2020, are sufficient for the purposes of the planning system in demonstrating (based on the professional opinion of Terra Firma (Wales) Ltd) that the application site is safe and stable for the proposed development. The Coal Authority therefore has no objection to the proposed development.

Countryside, Landscape and Ecology – Ecologist

Any consent should be subject to conditions for a Wildlife Protection Plan, Ecology Mitigation, in addition to a Construction Environmental Management Plan.

Cadw

No objection

Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust

The Historic Environment Record showed there were no historic environment considerations that would be affected by the proposed development and therefore GGAT does not recommend any mitigation measures.

No other consultation responses have been received within the statutory period.

POLICY CONTEXT

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan

The application site lies within open countryside to the north of Llantrisant.

Policy CS2 - The policy emphasis in the Southern Strategy Area (SSA) is on sustainable growth that protects the culture and identity of communities by focusing development within defined settlement boundaries. Emphasis will also be on protecting the cultural identity of the strategy area by protecting the natural environment.

Policy CS10 - The policy seeks to protect resources and to contribute to local, regional and national demand for a continuous supply of minerals.

Policy AW2 - The policy provides for development in sustainable locations which are within the settlement boundary; would not unacceptably conflict with surrounding uses; and have good accessibility by a range of sustainable transport options.

Policy AW5 - The policy identifies the appropriate amenity and accessibility criteria for new development proposals. It expressly states that the scale, form and design of the development should have no unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. There should also be no significant impact upon the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and should, where appropriate, retain existing features of natural environmental value. Additionally the development would require safe access to the highway network and provide parking in accordance with the Council's SPG.

Policy AW6 - The policy supports development proposals that are of a high standard of design that reinforce attractive qualities and local distinctiveness. Additionally proposals must be designed to protect and enhance landscape and biodiversity.

Policy AW7 - The policy seeks to protect sites of architectural or historical merit from inappropriate development.

Policy AW8 - This policy seeks to protect and enhance ecological features and promote biodiversity. All development proposals will be required to demonstrate what measures are proposed for ecological protection and management, and the mitigation of, or compensation for, potential impacts.

Policy AW10 - The policy prevents development which could cause or result in a risk of unacceptable harm to health or local amenity due to flooding, contamination, land instability, or any other identified risk to local amenity and public health.

Policy AW12 - Development proposals that promote the provision of renewable and non-renewable energy will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that there is no unacceptable effect on the interests of soil conservation, agriculture, nature conservation, wildlife, natural and cultural heritage, landscape importance, public health and residential amenity.

Policy AW14 - The policy safeguards resources of sandstone from any development which would unnecessarily sterilise them or hinder their extraction.

Policy SSA 23 - The policy states that Special Landscape Areas have been designated to protect areas of fine landscape quality within Rhondda Cynon Taf. In order to protect the visual qualities of each SLA, development proposals within these areas will be required to conform to the highest possible design standards.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Design and Place-making
- Access, Circulation and Parking Requirements
- The Historic Built Environment
- Nature Conservation

National Guidance

In the determination of planning applications regard should also be given to the requirements of national planning policy which are not duplicated in the Local Development Plan, particularly where national planning policy provides a more up to date and comprehensive policy on certain topics.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 10 (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's (WG) current position on planning policy. The document incorporates the objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act into town and country planning and sets out the WG's policy on planning issues relevant to the determination of planning applications.

It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with the key principles and requirements for placemaking set out in PPW; and is also consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act's sustainable development principles through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives of driving sustainable development and building healthier communities and better environments.

Other relevant national policy guidance considered:

PPW Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning;

PPW Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities;

PPW Technical Advice Note 8: Renewable Energy;

PPW Technical Advice Note 12: Design;

PPW Technical Advice Note 22: Sustainable Buildings;

PPW Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment.

WG Practice Guidance – Planning Implications of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (February 2011)

WG 'Dear CPO' letter MA-P/CS/1303/16 re: Green Growth (15th March 2016)

REASONS FOR REACHING THE RECOMMENDATION

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that, if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Furthermore, applications that are not in accordance with relevant policies in the plan should not be allowed, unless material considerations justify the grant of planning permission.

Main Issues:

Principle of the proposed development

The solar farm and associated infrastructure will have a peak electrical generating capacity of approximately 2MW, and is designed to supply power directly to the Royal Mint site over a 25 year period.

National policy, as constituted by PPW 10 is supportive of such renewable and low carbon energy development, and paragraph 5.9.1 specifically requires local planning authorities to facilitate such proposals. Para 5.9.6 sets a national target of 1GW use of locally generated electricity by 2030.

TAN 8 is no less supportive and states that proposals for appropriately designed PV systems should be permitted unless this results in a visual impact that is critically damaging to a Listed Building, Scheduled Ancient Monument or Conservation Area vista. Recent guidance, including a Ministerial correspondence with LPAs, has further underlined the Welsh Government's commitment to "using all possible levers it has to increase the supply of renewable energy in Wales for the benefit of the next generation".

It is also worth noting that the draft National Development Framework repeats the 1GW generation target and the Llantrisant site appears to be within a solar and wind energy priority area. However, as emerging policy no significant weight can be attached to the draft NDF, although the Welsh Government's direction of travel is clear and the development would contribute towards the target as well as being supportive of the general policy thrust to tackle climate change.

The Council would not normally allow development outside of the settlement boundary in the Southern Strategy Area, however the benefits of providing renewable and low carbon energy, together with an acknowledgement that the site has, in part, previously been developed, is considered to outweigh such concerns.

LDP Policy AW12 is supportive of renewable and non-renewable forms of energy where it can be demonstrated that there would be no unacceptable effect on soil conservation, agriculture, nature conservation, wildlife, natural and cultural heritage, landscape importance, public health and residential amenity. Although the policy does not explicitly reference solar schemes, it is nonetheless supportive of developments that align with key elements of national energy policy.

Furthermore, although the location of the solar farm would not be in accordance with some aspects of Policy AW2, it has to be recognised that not all criteria of this Policy will be relevant to this type of development which, other than for the placement of PV panels on buildings and other structures in urban areas, would normally be expected to be found in the countryside or on the settlement fringe.

Therefore, subject to other material policy matters discussed below, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle.

Impact on the character and appearance of the area

The Applicant's Design and Access Statement states that site selection is a critical aspect of the solar farm development process and potential sites are considered for their suitability against a number of factors. These include distance to the point of connection, proximity to residential properties, ecological concerns, site orientation, access etc.

The proposed site is located on hillside to the north of Llantrisant Business Park and due to its elevated position is visible from the south and east, particular the town of Llantrisant and Llantrisant Common. In considering the likely visual impact the context of the site is of relevance.

Firstly, the presence of the existing turbine is acknowledged, which due to its scale and design might be considered something of a local landmark. However, the appearance of this tall, slim structure is not necessarily comparable with a mass of solar panels across a 2 hectare field, possibly with glint and glare qualities, and would arguably be of less aesthetic appeal.

Secondly, the proximity of Llantrisant Business Park to the application site is noted which, as Members will be aware, is characterised by large industrial units, service yards and associated infrastructure etc. However since the Park is located along the valley floor the solar farm would neither appear to be part of the Park or an extension to it, which might otherwise offer some mitigation for its visual intrusion.

The concern therefore, is that the solar farm would have undue prominence at a higher level in the wider landscape where there is little or no development at that elevation other than that related to agriculture, and where the SLA designation requires development proposals to demonstrate a high standard of design quality.

Welsh Government Practice Guidance – “Planning Implications of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy”) sets out the land use planning impacts and benefits of different forms of such developments, including solar energy generation. The Guidance recognises that solar PV arrays are an emerging technology in the UK, it provides a summary of potential impacts and design mitigation and enhancement measures of solar installations.

Nevertheless, since the site is not flat any mitigation by landscaping, as suggested by the Practice Guidance, would not address the southerly fall across the site, and the effectiveness of any screening, even if proposed in place of, or in addition to, the fence, would likely be limited.

The location of the site close to Llantrisant Conservation Area and scheduled monuments means that TAN 24 must be a consideration. In its consultation response Cadw noted that the conservation of archaeological remains and their settings is a material consideration in determining a planning application, whether those remains are a Scheduled Ancient Monument or not.

Cadw has advised that it will only be in exceptional circumstances that planning permission will be granted if development would result in a direct adverse impact on a scheduled monument, and that TAN24 presumes against proposals which would involve significant alteration or cause damage, or would have a significant adverse impact causing harm within the setting of the remains.

On the basis of the Heritage Assessment submitted alongside the application the proposed development was considered in relation to four scheduled monuments within 3km of the site, namely GM074 Llantrisant Castle; GM219 Lle'r Gaer; GM280 The Beacons Round Barrows, and GM406 Tarren Deusant Sculptured Rock & Spring.

The Heritage Assessment concludes that the development would be seen from the upper parts of scheduled monument GM074 Llantrisant Castle, but the solar farm would not have an adverse impact on the setting of the monument. The proposed development would not be visible from the other scheduled monuments and would not have any impact on their settings. Cadw has stated that it concurs with the conclusions of this assessment.

Whilst it is evident that the development would neither conflict with TAN24 or LDP Policy AW7, concern remains about the long views towards the site from the south and whether the development can be justified within the SLA setting.

Nonetheless, the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment recognises that the proposed development, which is of relatively small scale, would affect an area of recognised landscape character but due to the limited areas with visibility of the site that this would be insubstantial and of minor significance within the local context.

Therefore, subject to conditions in respect of the future decommissioning of the solar farm and the remediation of the site, it is considered that the proposed development would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, to a degree sufficient to warrant a recommendation of refusal.

Impact on neighbouring occupiers

In terms of whether there would be a direct impact on any neighbouring occupiers, it is noted that there is only one dwelling within 500m of the site. This is the farm house at Rhiwfelin Fach Farm, which is located approximately 320m to the east of where the closest PV panel would be erected.

On account of the static nature of the panels, the absence of noise generation and the infrequent need for traffic to attend the site post-construction, other than for maintenance, the proposed development would be compatible with surrounding agricultural land uses. Furthermore the maximum 2.5m height of each row of panels, taken together with the screening provided by vegetation and intervening topography, means that it is unlikely there would be any harm to the amenity of Rhiwfelin Fach Farm residents.

Consequently, it is considered that there would be no detriment to the privacy, outlook or amenity of other occupiers and the development would be acceptable in this regard.

Ecology

The application has been subject to consultation with both NRW and the Council's Ecologist.

NRW has confirmed it has considered the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal submitted in support of the application, and providing the recommendations and mitigation measures outlined in the document are adhered to, it is unlikely that protected species would be adversely impacted.

In addition, it is noted that the Rhos Tonyrefail SSSI lies downslope from the proposed solar farm; however the hydrological regime would mean that any run-off from the site flows predominantly to the south and not into the SSSI. Any potential impacts on water quality in the receiving streams could be negated by ensuring that appropriate mitigation measures are implemented as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Further to the conditions necessary to secure the above, the Council's Ecologist has raised concerns about the loss of two sections of marshy grassland to the solar farm that the previous turbine development specifically avoided. The third, and best area of marshy grassland which supports Marsh Fritillary Butterfly habitat, is just outside of the area of development, although it could be adversely affected by any hydrological change/drainage works on the slopes above.

The site sits in an extremely important location for Marsh Fritillary Butterflies lying in a connectivity/linking location between Rhos Tonyrefail SSSI to the north with Llantrisant Common SSSI in the south. Any potential marsh fritillary habitat within this landscape has great significance as future linking habitat for this priority species and the Applicant's Ecology Appraisal report identifies the potential to better manage the retained marshy grassland, together with the planting of Devil's Bit Scabious elsewhere on site.

Having taken into account the loss of marshy grassland; the potential hydrological impact for the retained marshy grassland, the likelihood for increased grazing pressure on the remainder of the farm field, and the need for the application to provide biodiversity enhancement; the Council's Ecologist recommended that the marshy grassland/marsh fritillary habitat mitigation/enhancement identified in the Ecology Appraisal should be delivered via a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) package for the remainder of the field within which the solar farm site will sit.

Such a package would have to be secured by a S106 Agreement. The Applicant's Ecologist has responded that whilst enhancement for marsh fritillary would be desirable, there is no scope for delivery of suitable grassland enhancement within the area under the applicant's control, which is limited to the array, substation and access infrastructure. Furthermore, the request for grassland enhancement and controlled grazing levels in the rest of the field presents practical constraints for the landowner

who requires the remainder of the field for continued sheep grazing at the current levels.

Consequently, the Applicant has considered other deliverable alternatives to provide the required enhancements to comply with policy, hence their agreement to the hedgerow management plan.

The Council's Ecologist has reluctantly agreed with the Applicant's representations and advised that the mitigation being offered, i.e. management of two hedgerows for the life of the scheme, is acceptable. In particular the mitigation should make particular reference to improving their potential for bat foraging and dormouse habitat, with the requirement for a HMP, an ecologically sensitive management schedule, species and habitat monitoring and reporting to the LPA.

Lastly a condition for a Wildlife Protection Plan is recommended, in addition to the CEMP, which deals with physical protection of adjacent features (hedgerows/marshy grassland), timings of works and a method statement related to potential protected species.

Access and highway safety

The development would be served from Pantybrad Road via the existing access that was created as part of the erection of the nearby single wind turbine.

Given that the proposed route was successfully utilised for the abnormal load deliveries associated with the wind turbine, it is considered acceptable in principle as an access route for the proposed solar farm.

Table 4.1 within the submitted planning statement indicates the anticipated number of vehicular movements to and from the site during the proposed 2 month construction period:

A total of 34 deliveries, or 68 vehicle movements are anticipated during the 2 month construction period and the planning statement further advises that there would be approximately 1 HGV delivery, or 2 vehicles movements per day.

In addition to these deliveries, it is estimated that 10 staff would be on site at any one time. However, these trips would generally be undertaken by LGVs, and as such, give no undue cause for concern.

Following completion of the construction phase of the development, 3-4 trips to the site are envisaged per year for operational/maintenance purposes.

Therefore, the proposed erection of a solar farm at this location is in principle considered acceptable, although given the sub-standard nature of Pantybrad Road a number of conditions are suggested to protect the integrity of the public highway during the construction period.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Liability

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was introduced in Rhondda Cynon Taf from 31 December 2014.

The application is for development of a kind that is not CIL liable under the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

Conclusion

It is considered the principle of the proposed solar farm would be in accordance with national planning policy for renewable energy developments. It would not have a significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the locality, including that of the Llantrisant Conservation Area and closest scheduled monuments, and would not be harmful to the amenity of the nearest neighbouring occupiers. The application is therefore considered to comply with PPW10, TAN 8 and Policies AW5, AW6, AW7, AW8, AW10 and AW12 of the Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of five years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Sections 91 and 93 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and drawings:

IR1013/04/02 Rev 1

IR1013/04/03 Rev 3

IR1013/04/04 Rev 0

IR1013/04/05 Rev 1

IR1013/04/06 Rev 0

and documents received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th June 202, 29th June 2020, 17th July 2020 and 12th August 2020 unless otherwise to be approved and superseded by details required by any other condition attached to this consent.

3. The permission hereby granted shall endure for a period of 25 years from the date when electricity is first exported from the development hereby approved to the electricity grid network ('First Export Date'). Written confirmation of

this shall be provided to the Local Planning Authority within one month of the First Export Date.

Reason: In the interest of visual amenity, in accordance with Policies AW5, AW8 & AW12 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

4. No development shall commence until all relevant matters outlined on the attached Planning Requirements Relating to Flood Risk Management, including full drainage details, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. These details shall indicate how the development is to comply with the requirements of Section 8.3 of Technical Advice Note 15. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the beneficial use of the development and retained in perpetuity.

Reason: To ensure that drainage from the proposed development does not cause or exacerbate any adverse condition on the development site, adjoining properties, environment and existing infrastructure arising from inadequate drainage, in accordance with Policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

5. No development shall commence until a site-wide Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP should include:

- Soil Management: details of topsoil strip, storage and amelioration for re-use.
- Pollution Prevention: demonstrate how relevant Guidelines for Pollution Prevention and best practice will be implemented, including details of emergency spill procedures and incident response plan.
- Details of the persons and bodies responsible for activities associated with the CEMP and emergency contact details
- Biodiversity Management: details of invasive species management, specifically if any invasive non-native species (INNS) are identified prior to, during or post construction an INNS plan will need to be produced.

The CEMP shall be implemented as approved during the site preparation and construction phases of the development.

Reason: To protect water quality and ensure protection of the natural environment during construction, in accordance with Policy AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

6. No development shall commence until a scheme, for the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measures contained within 'Section 5 – Recommendations' of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal produced by BSG Ecology (14th November 2019), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall also include details of a hedgerow management plan, which should make particular reference to improving potential for bat foraging and dormouse habitat, and include an ecologically sensitive management schedule, and methods for species and habitat monitoring and reporting to the LPA. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to the beneficial use of the development and retained for the duration of its operational life.

Reason: To ensure the protection of habitats and species in accordance with Policies AW8 and AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

7. No development shall take place until a wildlife and habitat protection plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plan shall include:
 - a) An appropriate scale plan showing 'Wildlife and Habitat Protection Zones' where construction activities are restricted and where protective measures will be installed or implemented
 - b) Details of protective measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid impacts during construction (including any tree protection zones)
 - c) A timetable to show phasing of construction activities to avoid periods of the year when sensitive wildlife could be harmed (such as nesting bird season, hibernating and breeding amphibians and reptiles, etc.)
 - d) Details of pre-construction ecological surveys.
 - e) Details of mitigation of night working, if applicable, and site lighting with regards to bat and barn owl impacts
 - f) Details for the positive management of existing hedgerows.
 - g) Persons responsible for:

- i) Compliance with legal consents relating to nature conservation
- ii) Compliance with planning conditions relating to nature conservation
- iii) Installation of physical protection measures during construction
- iv) Implementation of sensitive working practices during construction
- v) Regular inspection and maintenance of physical protection measures and monitoring of working practices during construction
- vi) Provision of training and information about the importance of the 'Wildlife and habitat Protection Zones' to all construction personnel on site.

The protection plan shall then be implemented in accordance with the timings approved by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure the protection of habitats and species in accordance with Policies AW8 and AW10 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

8. Prior to the commencement of the development a report indicating the methodology for undertaking a survey of the condition of the access route along Pantybrad Road affected by the proposed development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The report should include:

- a) details of the road to be surveyed;
- b) the timescales for undertaking the surveys; and
- c) the method(s) of reporting the findings to the local planning authority (including the use of comprehensive photographs), and any potential compensation arrangements.

The solar farm hereby permitted shall not become operational until the final survey on completion of the development hereby approved has been carried out and any compensation arrangements have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of safety of all highway users in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

9. No development shall take place, including any works of site clearance, until a Construction Traffic Management Plan / Method Statement has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to provide for;

- a) Details of delivery programme identifying all anticipated rigid and articulated vehicles deliveries to site and anticipated delivery times,
- b) The parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors,
- c) The management of vehicular and pedestrian traffic along the access route to accommodate delivery movements to the site,
- d) Consultation with all stakeholders such as police, emergency services, public transport operators, properties and businesses affected by the proposals, and notification to the travelling public and the local communities/businesses.
- e) Temporary signage to be provided along the access route,
- f) Management of delivery traffic and loading and unloading of plant and materials,
- g) Storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development,
- h) Wheel cleansing facilities,
- i) The sheeting of lorries leaving the site.

The approved Construction Traffic Management Plan / Method Statement shall be adhered to throughout the development process unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the safety and free flow of traffic in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

10. Prior to the beneficial use of the development, a Decommissioning Plan shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The Decommissioning Plan shall include details of the works necessary to revert the site to its original agricultural condition, including; the method for the removal of all the solar panels, structures, enclosures, equipment and all other apparatus above and below ground level from the site and details of their destination in terms of waste/recycling, and details of how the site is to be restored to its original condition and any financial arrangement for this. The decommissioning works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policies AW5 and AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

11. Within 25 years and six months following completion of construction of the development, or within six months of the cessation of electricity generation by the solar photovoltaic facility, or within six months following a permanent cessation of construction works prior to the solar photovoltaic facility coming

into operational use, whichever is the sooner, the solar photovoltaic panels, frames, fencing, access tracks and all associated structures and foundations, hereby approved shall have been dismantled and removed from the site. The developer shall notify the Local Planning Authority, in writing, no later than five working days following cessation of power production.

The site shall subsequently be restored (in accordance with the scheme required by Condition 10) no later than six months following the cessation of power production or within 25 years and six months of the completion of construction, whichever is the sooner.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and ensure that any derelict or obsolete features do not adversely affect the environment in accordance with Policies AW5, AW8, AW12 and SSA23 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

12. All construction Heavy Goods Vehicles shall access and egress the site via the A4119 and Hoel-Y-Sarn.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety, and the free flow of traffic in accordance with Policy AW5 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.