

Planning Statement

Full Planning Application for the Proposed Installation of 5MW Solar Farm & Associated Infrastructure.

Talwrn Bach, Llanfyllin, Powys, SY22 5LQ.

On behalf of Fuse Renewables UK

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Fuse Renewables UK (“the applicant”) and accompanies a full planning application for the installation of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm with a generating capacity of 5MW, together with associated infrastructure including inverter stations, substation, security fencing, and CCTV.
- 1.2. The proposed development will contribute to national and local renewable energy targets, supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy and addressing the climate emergency declared by Powys County Council. Whilst also supporting the Welsh Government’s legally binding commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and the target to generate 70% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2030.
- 1.3. This statement provides:
 - A description of the application site and its context.
 - Details of the proposed development and its operational characteristics.
 - An assessment of the proposal against relevant planning policy and material considerations.
 - A review of technical matters including landscape, ecology, heritage, flood risk, and transport with a summary of the supplementary information that will accompany the application.
 - A planning balance weighing the benefits of the scheme against any potential impacts.
- 1.4. This statement also references the pre-application advice received from Powys County Council (Ref: 25/O108/PRE), which confirmed that the principle of development is acceptable under Policy RE1 of the Powys Local Development Plan, subject to detailed assessment of landscape and visual impact, ecology, heritage, and other technical considerations.
- 1.5. The proposed solar farm represents a well-considered, policy-compliant development that will deliver substantial environmental benefits with limited and manageable impacts. It is therefore considered appropriate for the grant of planning permission.

2. The Application Site

Site Description

- 2.1. The application site comprises 12.1 hectares of agricultural land located to the east of the B4393, approximately 2.5km east of the town of Llanfyllin, Powys. The site consists of three irregular-shaped fields currently used for grazing and bounded by hedgerows and occasional mature trees.



Figures 1 & 2– Site Location Plan and satellite image

- 2.2. Operational access to the site will be obtained via an existing gate opening on the B4393 road, with a temporary construction access, including a wider entrance made for HGVs during the construction period. The original access will be reinstated when construction is complete. The site benefits from close proximity to existing electricity infrastructure, enabling connection to the local distribution network.
- 2.3. The surrounding area is rural in character, with dispersed farmsteads and small settlements. The nearest residential property is Talwrn Bach, a Grade II listed building situated to the southwest of the site on the eastern side of the B4393. Other heritage assets in the vicinity include Bryngwyn Hall Registered Park and Garden, located approximately 500m south of the site – the impact upon these assets has been carried out and forms part of this application.
- 2.4. The site is relatively flat, with minor undulations and open views across the River Severn Flood Plain landscape. It is not located within a nationally designated landscape such as a National Park or Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), nor within any Green Belt or Green Wedge designation.
- 2.5. Agricultural Land Classification mapping indicates the land is predominantly Grade 3b, which is not considered Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land. This classification supports its suitability for solar development, as confirmed in the pre-application advice.
- 2.6. There are no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), TPO groups, or Ancient Woodland within the site boundary. Hedgerows will be retained and enhanced where possible. The site is located approximately 500m north of the Bryngwyn Hall SSSI, which comprises only the Hall and Stables.
- 2.7. The site is at very low risk of fluvial and surface water flooding, as confirmed by Natural Resources Wales mapping. A Flood Risk Assessment will accompany the application to address any residual risk.

Planning History

Pre-Application Advice

- 2.8. There is no relevant recent planning history within the site boundary. However, we submitted a pre-application advice request for the proposal in and met with the Planning Officer – Ms Jenkin – in June 2025. The pre-application response from Powys County Council (Ref: 25/O108/PRE) confirmed that the principle of solar development on this site is acceptable, subject to detailed assessments of landscape, ecology, heritage, and other technical matters that will accompany this application.
- 2.9. The Planning Officer acknowledged that the scheme contributes to decarbonisation targets and the climate emergency response, and stated that, subject to appropriate mitigation, the development is likely to be supported. The advice highlighted that the site's location and agricultural classification (predominantly Grade 3b) are suitable for solar development and that continued grazing would be encouraged. While landscape and visual impact were identified as key considerations, the officer confirmed that these can be addressed through a robust Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and sensitive design measures such as hedgerow retention and native planting. Similarly, ecological and heritage matters

were noted, with recommendations for an Ecological Impact Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, and biodiversity enhancements, all of which have been incorporated into the application strategy.

- 2.10. Overall, the pre-app response concluded that the proposal is acceptable in principle and is strongly supported by policy, provided that the detailed assessments and mitigation measures outlined are submitted with the planning application. This positive position reinforces that the scheme represents a sustainable, policy-compliant development that delivers significant environmental benefits.

EIA Screening Request

- 2.11. An EIA Screening request was also submitted on the 6th June 2025 (ref: 25/0837/SO) to determine whether the proposed solar farm constituted EIA development under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017. The Local Planning Authority issued its Screening Opinion on 26 June 2025, confirming that while the proposal falls within Schedule 2 (3a) of the Regulations, it is not likely to have significant effects on the environment. Consequently, an Environmental Statement is not required to accompany the planning application.

3. The Proposed Development

- 3.1. The application seeks full planning permission for the installation of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) farm with a generating capacity of 5MW, together with associated infrastructure. The development will occupy approximately 9.7 hectares of the total 12.1 hectares of agricultural land (RLB) and will operate for a period of 40 years, after which the site will be fully decommissioned and restored to agricultural use.

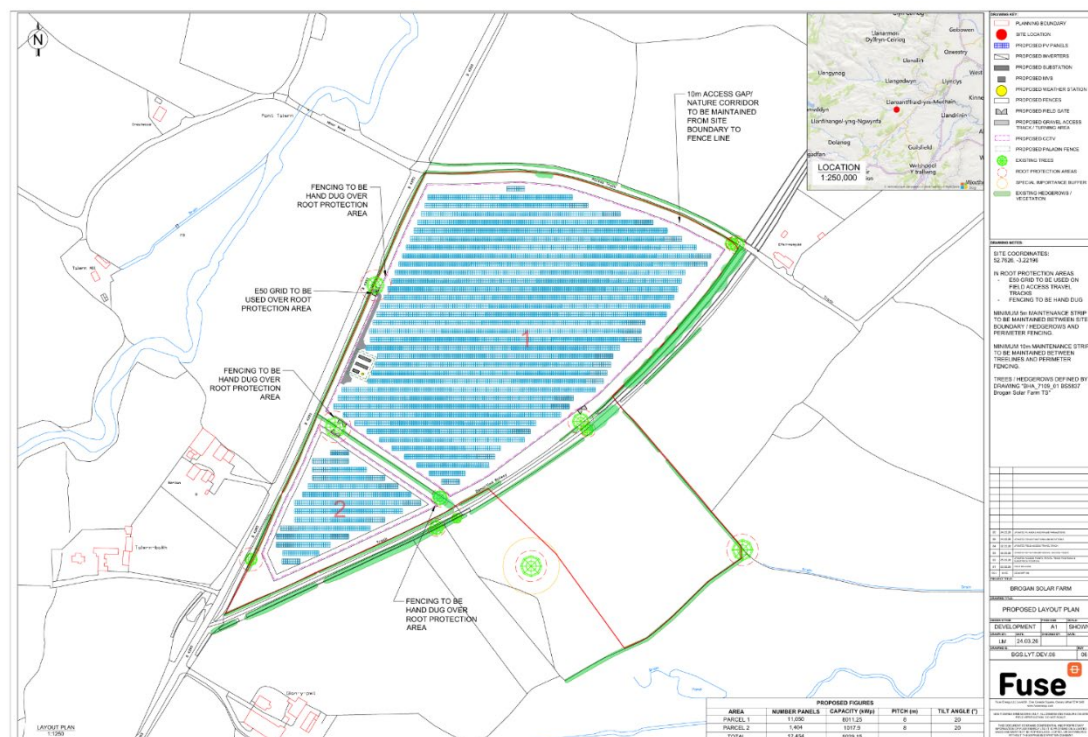


Figure 2- Proposed Site Layout Plan

- 3.2. The solar farm will consist of the following components:
- **PV Modules**– Panels mounted on steel frames, arranged in linear arrays aligned east–west to maximise solar gain, fixed at an angle of 25–30 degrees.
 - **Ancillary infrastructure**–including inverter stations housed in weatherproof enclosures, a substation for grid connection, MVS station and a secure spare parts container. The site will be enclosed by 2–metre–high deer fencing, supplemented by CCTV cameras positioned at strategic points for security. Internal access tracks surfaced with gravel will provide safe and efficient access for maintenance vehicles throughout the operational life of the development.
- 3.3. To further mitigate visual impact and integrate the development into the surrounding landscape existing boundary hedgerows will be retained where possible to prevent drivers and pedestrians from viewing the development whilst also providing effective screening from nearby viewpoints, enhancing biodiversity, and strengthening existing field boundaries. Additional planting will be incorporated where necessary to soften views from sensitive receptors, including any nearby residential properties and public rights of way. This is full detailed within the Landscape Masterplan.
- 3.4. As stated previously, temporary construction access to the site will be via a widened access point on the B4393 designed to accommodate HGVs. Speed surveys have been carried out and the junction has been appropriately designed for this location. The temporary construction access point will be removed and reinstated to its original state when construction is complete. No new permanent vehicular access beyond this is required. The development will connect to the local electricity network at the nearest grid connection point, ensuring minimal visual and environmental impact.
- 3.5. The design and layout have been informed by pre-application advice (Ref: 25/O108/PRE), which emphasised the need for careful consideration of landscape integration, mitigation of potential glint and glare impacts, and provision of biodiversity enhancements. The advice also highlighted the requirement for supporting documents including a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA), Heritage Impact Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment, and Green Infrastructure Statement. These recommendations alongside other key reports (ground investigations/Arboricultural ecology) etc. have shaped the proposal and will be addressed in the accompanying technical reports summarised within this planning statement.
- 3.6. Of particular note is the heritage assessment that was undertaken on nearby designated historic assets having consulted Cadw, and in line with their guidance “Managing Setting of Historic assets in Wales” (Cadw, 2017).
- 3.7. The scheme was subsequently amended to ensure the solar array was redesigned to be concentrated in the two western fields of the proposed site, with the eastern field excluded due to its proximity to, and impact on views from, Bryngwyn Hall.
- 3.8. This amendment has removed all impacts on historic assets associated with Bryngwyn Hall and its Registered Historic Park & Garden.

4. Planning Policy Context

Legislative background

- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Powys County Council Local Development Plan (2011–2026), National Planning Policy Framework for Wales (Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12, 2024) and Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 form key material considerations.

Local Policy

Local development Plan 2011–2026

- 4.2. For Powys County Council, the Development Plan covering the planning application boundary area comprises the Local Development Plan 2011–2026. Key policies of relevance include:

- **Policy DM2** – The Natural Environment
- **Policy DM4** – Landscape
- **Policy DM5**– Development and Flood Risk
- **Policy DM6**– Flood Prevention Measures and Land Drainage
- **Policy DM13**– Design and Resources
- **Policy RE1** – Renewable Energy

- 4.3. The Key policies listed above are discussed in greater detail below:

- **Policy DM2**– Development proposals shall demonstrate how they protect, positively manage and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests including improving the resilience of biodiversity through the enhanced connectivity of habitats within, and beyond the site.
- **Policy DM4**– Proposals for new development outside the Towns, Large Villages, Small Villages and Rural Settlements defined in the Settlement Hierarchy must not, individually or cumulatively, have an unacceptable adverse effect, on the valued characteristics and qualities of the Powys landscape. All proposals will need to: 1. Be appropriate and sensitive in terms of integration, siting, scale and design to the characteristics and qualities of the landscape including its: topography; development pattern and features; historical and ecological qualities; open views; and tranquillity; and 2. Have regard to LANDMAP, Registered Historic Landscapes, adjacent protected landscapes (National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the visual amenity enjoyed by users of both Powys landscapes and adjoining areas.
- **Policy DM5**– Development proposals must be located away from tidal or fluvial flood plains unless it can be demonstrated that the site is justified in line with

national guidance and an appropriate detailed technical assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the development is designed to reduce / avoid the threat and alleviate the consequences of flooding over its lifetime. In addition, the development must not increase flood risk elsewhere and shall where possible allow floodplains to provide water storage to reduce flooding in the catchment, unless: 1. the development is of a very minor nature such as an extension to a dwelling; or there is an overriding need in the public interest for the development.

- **Policy DM6**– Development proposals must avoid unnecessary flood risk by assessing the implications of development within areas susceptible to all types of flooding; any development that unacceptably increases risk will be refused .
- **Policy DM13**– requires all development proposals to achieve high-quality, sustainable design that respects local character and distinctiveness while efficiently using resources. It emphasizes integrating development into its surroundings through appropriate scale, layout, and materials, safeguarding residential amenity, and promoting accessibility for all users. The policy also prioritizes energy efficiency, water conservation, and waste reduction, encouraging the use of renewable energy and sustainable construction methods. Proposals must demonstrate how they minimize environmental impact, enhance biodiversity where possible, and contribute positively to the built and natural environment of Powys.
- **Policy RE1**– Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development will be permitted subject to the following criteria: 1. Within or close to the Strategic Search Areas (SSAs), proposals for wind energy greater than 25MW will be permitted subject to criteria 3 to 5; all other proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will only be permitted where they can demonstrate they would not prejudice the purpose of the SSA. 2. Within the Local Search Areas (LSAs), proposals for solar PV between 5 – 50MW will be permitted subject to criteria 3 to 5; all other proposals for renewable and low carbon energy will only be permitted where they can demonstrate they would not prejudice the purpose of the LSA. 3. Proposals for all types of renewable and low carbon energy development and associated infrastructure either on their own, cumulatively or in combination with existing, approved or proposed development, shall comply with all other relevant policies in the LDP. 4. Satisfactory mitigation shall be in place to reduce the impact of the proposal and its associated infrastructure. Proposals shall make provision for the restoration and after-care of the land for its beneficial re-use. 5. Where necessary, additional compensatory benefits will be sought by agreement with applicants in accordance with Policy DM1 – Planning Obligations.

National Policy

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040

- 4.4. In terms of national policy, Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (Future Wales, 2021) forms part of the statutory Development Plan.
- 4.5. Future Wales sets a clear direction of how Wales should be investing in infrastructure and development for the greater good of Wales and its people – the provision of renewable energy is firmly embedded to this future direction.

- 4.6. Relevant material considerations include Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (PPW, 2024) and accompanying Technical Advice Notes and Circulars and Policy Clarification Letters provide further detailed guidance on a range of issues which may affect development.
- 4.7. Relevant future Wales policies include:
- **Policy 8**– Flooding
 - **Policy 9** – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure
 - **Policy 17** – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure:
- 4.8. Policy 17 states the following:
- 4.9. “The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs. In determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision-makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales’ international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency.”
- 4.10. “Applications for large-scale wind and solar will not be permitted in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and all proposals should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment. Proposals should describe the net benefits the scheme will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities.”
- 4.11. “New strategic grid infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of energy should be designed to minimise visual impact on nearby communities. The Welsh Government will work with stakeholders, including National Grid and Distribution Network Operators, to transition to a multi-vector grid network and reduce the barriers to the implementation of new grid infrastructure.”
- 4.12. The amplification to Policies 17 and 18, at page 96 of Future Wales, identifies how “Wales is abundant in opportunities to generate renewable energy, and the Welsh Government is committed to maximising this potential. Generating renewable energy is a key part of our commitment to decarbonisation and tackling the climate emergency”. It goes on to set out the ambitious targets which have been set for renewable energy generation, including 70% of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030.
- 4.13. Policy 17 recognises the wealth of current and emerging renewable energy technologies that can contribute towards our energy and decarbonisation targets. It also demonstrates the Welsh Government’s support in principle for all renewable energy projects and technologies. Proposals should ensure there is no significant unacceptable detrimental development delivers positive social, environmental, cultural and economic benefits.
- Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)
- 4.14. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. The most recent Edition 12 was Adopted in February 2024 and is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Welsh Government Circulars,

and policy clarification letters, which together with PPW provide the national planning policy framework for Wales.

4.15. Paragraph 5.9.1 of the National Planning Policy Wales states the following:

“Local authorities should facilitate all forms of renewable and low carbon energy development and should seek cross-department co-operation to achieve this. In doing so, planning authorities should seek to ensure their area’s full potential for renewable and low carbon energy generation is maximised and renewable energy targets are achieved. Planning authorities should seek to maximise the potential of renewable energy by linking 8 the development plan with other local authority strategies, including Local Well-being plans and Economic/ Regeneration strategies.”

4.16. Relevant technical advice notes include:

- **TAN8 Planning for Renewable Energy**– The guidance addresses energy efficiency, renewable technologies, and the implications for development plans and decision-making. It also highlights community involvement and benefits, aiming to balance energy generation needs with landscape, technical, and economic considerations.
- **TAN12 Design**– provides guidance on achieving sustainable development through good design in the planning system. It emphasizes that design is not just about aesthetics but about creating places that are functional, accessible, safe, and environmentally responsible. The document sets out objectives for good design, including character, community safety, environmental sustainability, and movement, and explains the design process from early considerations to delivery. It also requires Design and Access Statements for planning applications, ensuring proposals demonstrate how they meet these principles and contribute to placemaking and inclusive environments.

Public Consultation Process

4.17. In accordance with the Welsh Government’s statutory pre-application consultation requirements for major developments, the applicant will undertake a 28-day Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) prior to submission of the planning application. This process will ensure that local residents, statutory consultees, and community stakeholders have an opportunity to review and comment on the proposals.

4.18. The PAC will include:

- Publication of all draft application documents (including this planning statement) on a dedicated website.
- Notification letters to statutory consultees and neighbouring properties.
- A public consultation event to provide information and gather feedback.

4.19. In terms of providing a suitable local public consultation venue, the applicant has selected the Llanfechain Memorial Hall which is anticipated to take place in May/June 2026. The hall is located approximately 2.35 km away in the closest village from the proposed development site, making it a convenient and accessible location for the local community. Feedback received during the PAC will be recorded and addressed in a PAC Report, which

will accompany the planning application in compliance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012.

4.20. The 28 day-consultation period will begin once:

- All site notices (in English and Welsh) are displayed for public viewing around the application site.
- A copy of the site notice has been sent to the owners or occupiers of land adjoining the application site and community consultees.
- The information as set out in Schedule 1C under Article 2D – Consultation Before Applying for Planning Permission – DMPWO has been sent to the specialist consultees.
- The draft planning application documents for public viewing have been uploaded to our project website

4.21. Once all feedback is considered, we will submit the final planning application to Powys County Council.

5. Assessment of the Proposed Development

5.1. This section assesses the proposed development against the relevant policies of the Powys Local Development Plan, national planning policy, and other material considerations. The key planning issues include the principle of development, landscape and visual impact, ecology and biodiversity, flood risk and drainage, heritage, agricultural land, glint and glare, transport, and noise.

Principle of Development

5.2. The principle of renewable energy development is strongly supported by Policy RE1 of the Powys LDP and national policy objectives set out in *Future Wales – The National Plan 2040* and *Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12)*. The proposal will deliver approximately 5MW of clean renewable energy, contributing to Wales' legally binding target of generating 70% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and supporting the UK's net zero commitment by 2050.

5.3. The pre-application advice confirmed that the principle of development is acceptable in principle and is likely to be supported, subject to detailed assessment of technical matters. The proposal therefore complies with the overarching policy framework and represents a sustainable form of development.

Landscape & Trees

5.4. While the site is not within a nationally designated landscape (National Park or AONB), its rural setting requires careful consideration of visual impact.

5.5. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) accompanies the application and demonstrates that the proposal can be integrated sensitively into the landscape. Mitigation measures include:

- Retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and trees.
- Native planting along site boundaries to soften views.
- Low-profile panel design (maximum height approx. 3m).
- Use of non-reflective materials for frames and infrastructure.

- 5.6. The Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) report confirms that the site is situated within a typical agricultural valley landscape, with no national or local landscape designations, and that existing vegetation provides a strong degree of enclosure and screening. The Proposed Development would introduce a localised change in land use and character within the Site, with Moderate adverse effects identified during construction and early operation, primarily limited to the site and its immediate surroundings.
- 5.7. The development has been carefully designed to minimise landscape and visual effects through the retention of existing hedgerows and trees, low-profile infrastructure, and the incorporation of additional native planting and habitat features. The LVIA confirms that visibility is generally restricted by topography and vegetation, with most views being filtered or limited to short-range receptors.
- 5.8. Over time, the proposed mitigation planting will establish and mature, providing enhanced screening and assisting in integrating the development into the surrounding landscape. By Year 15, effects are typically reduced to Minor to Moderate adverse, with some receptors experiencing Minor adverse or negligible effects, confirming that impacts are localised, reversible and effectively mitigated. Overall, the LVIA concludes that the development would not result in unacceptable harm to landscape character or visual amenity in accordance with Policy DM4.
- 5.9. An Arboricultural Survey was undertaken to assess the trees and hedgerows within and surrounding the application site. The survey identified 55 arboricultural features comprising individual trees, hedgerows, and tree groups, the majority of which are of moderate (Category B) or low (Category C) quality, with no trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders and no Conservation Area designations affecting the site. One ancient, lapsed pollard oak (T13) of high arboricultural and conservation value (Category A3) is present to the southeast and has been afforded an appropriate buffer and full Root Protection Area, ensuring it will be safeguarded through the design process. Other notable late-mature oaks (T12 and T17) and a moderate-quality oak (T2) have been similarly considered, with all RPAs fully avoided by the proposed development layout. Hedgerows, predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn species, are retained and provide valuable screening and biodiversity function, with opportunities identified for enhancement through gap-planting and better management.
- 5.10. The survey confirms that the developable area—comprising the interior of agricultural fields—is largely unconstrained by arboricultural features and that, with adherence to recommended protection measures, the solar farm can be delivered without unacceptable impact on trees or green infrastructure. The findings conclude that the scheme is feasible from an arboricultural perspective and provides opportunities for long-term landscape and biodiversity enhancement.
- 5.11. The site therefore contains a number of native hedgerows and scattered trees, which provide ecological and landscape value. The tree survey report confirms:

- No trees within the site are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs).
- All existing trees will be retained, and hedgerows will be buffered and enhanced through gap infill planting and species diversification.

5.12. Where minor trimming is required for access, this will be undertaken in accordance with best practice and ecological guidance. Additional planting of native species will be incorporated into the landscaping scheme to strengthen green infrastructure and deliver biodiversity net gain.

Ecology

5.13. Completed preliminary ecological surveys indicate the site comprises improved grassland of low ecological value, with hedgerows and scattered trees providing some habitat connectivity. No nationally designated sites lie within the site boundary; the nearest is Bryngwyn Hall SSSI, approximately 500m south of the site.

5.14. An Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation accompany the application. Enhancement measures include:

- Retention and management of existing hedgerows trees & woodland features;
- Gap infill planting and species diversification;
- Creation of species-rich grassland beneath and between arrays;
- Establishment of wildflower meadows, margins and buffer zones across the site;
- Construction of a new wildlife pond;
- Installation of bird and bat boxes;
- Provision of log piles and habitat features for amphibians.

5.15. The ecological assessments confirm that the site currently comprises predominantly improved agricultural grassland of low ecological value, with ecological interest largely confined to boundary hedgerows, mature trees and occasional woodland features which provide localised habitat connectivity. The proposed development has been designed in accordance with the Welsh stepwise mitigation hierarchy and DECCA framework, ensuring the retention, protection and buffering of these features, the avoidance of sensitive habitats, and the maintenance of ecological corridors across the Site and into the wider landscape.

5.16. A comprehensive package of biodiversity measures is proposed, including the retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows and trees, hedgerow gap infill and translocation, and the creation of extensive areas of species-rich and structurally diverse grassland beneath and around the solar arrays. Additional enhancements include the provision of wildflower margins and meadow areas, the introduction of a new wildlife pond with associated wetland habitats, native tree and scrub planting, and the installation of bird boxes, bat boxes, insect habitats and hibernacula. These measures will significantly increase habitat diversity, extent and condition, whilst strengthening ecological connectivity and

providing enhanced foraging, commuting and nesting opportunities for a wide range of species.

- 5.17. The Biodiversity Management Plan confirms that all habitats will be subject to a structured programme of long-term management, monitoring and aftercare throughout the lifetime of the development, including establishment and adaptive management prescriptions to ensure habitats reach and maintain their target condition. The proposals will result in the transition from intensively managed agricultural land to a more diverse mosaic of semi-natural habitats, delivering measurable improvements in habitat quality, ecological functionality and resilience. As a result, the scheme will deliver a clear net benefit for biodiversity, leaving the Site in a demonstrably better ecological condition than baseline, in accordance with Planning Policy Wales, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Policy DM2.

Green Infrastructure Statement

- 5.18. This Green Infrastructure Statement has been prepared in accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) and the Update to Chapter 6: Addressing the Nature Emergency. The purpose of the statement is to demonstrate how green infrastructure (GI) has been integrated into the proposed development and how the step-wise approach to protecting and enhancing biodiversity has been applied in a proportionate manner.

Existing Green Infrastructure Assets

- 5.19. The application site extends to approximately 12.1 hectares of agricultural land comprising three irregular shaped fields currently used for grazing. The site is bounded by a network of established native hedgerows, predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn, with occasional hedgerow trees and scattered mature oaks. These features provide the principal existing green infrastructure assets within and around the site, offering ecological connectivity, landscape containment, and visual screening.
- 5.20. The interior of the fields comprises improved grassland of generally low intrinsic ecological value; however, the surrounding hedgerows and trees form part of a wider local habitat network, linking the site to the rural landscape and adjacent field systems. An ancient veteran oak (T13) of high arboricultural and ecological value lies to the southeast of the original site boundary and has been fully safeguarded through the amended layout.
- 5.21. There are no Tree Preservation Orders or Ancient Woodland within the site, and no nationally designated ecological sites within the application boundary. The nearest designated site is Bryngwyn Hall SSSI, located approximately 500m to the south, with no direct hydrological or functional connectivity.

Application of the Step-Wise Approach

- 5.22. The step-wise approach set out in PPW Annex: Update to Chapter 6 has guided the development design, as follows:

Avoid

- 5.23. The development layout has been specifically amended to avoid areas of higher landscape, heritage, and ecological sensitivity. In particular:

- The eastern field has been entirely excluded from development to avoid visual and setting impacts on Bryngwyn Hall Registered Park and Garden.
- All existing boundary hedgerows and trees are retained, with no solar infrastructure placed within Root Protection Areas.
- A key ancient oak (T13) has been protected with a dedicated buffer and exclusion zone in accordance with arboricultural recommendations.

5.24. This approach ensures the retention of the site's primary green infrastructure assets and prevents fragmentation of existing habitat networks.

Minimise

5.25. Where interaction with existing green infrastructure could not be wholly avoided, impacts have been minimised through careful design and siting. Measures include:

- Low-profile solar panels with a maximum height of approximately 3 metres, allowing views through and over hedgerows to remain largely unchanged.
- Narrow access tracks limited to essential routes, surfaced with permeable materials.
- Temporary construction access achieved largely through existing gaps in vegetation, with only a short length (approximately 11.5m) of hedgerow requiring temporary removal and translocation.

5.26. Construction impacts will be controlled via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), incorporating standard good practice to protect retained vegetation, soils, and habitats.

Mitigate

5.27. Mitigation measures are incorporated within the scheme, including the retention and protection of existing features during construction and the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) designed to provide ecological and amenity benefits.

5.28. Enhance

5.29. The proposal delivers a substantial enhancement to green infrastructure across the site, resulting in a net benefit for biodiversity. Enhancement measures, as shown on the Landscape Proposals drawing, include:

- Extensive native hedgerow reinforcement and gap-infill planting using locally appropriate species.
- New native tree planting, including standard and whip planting, to strengthen field boundaries and improve landscape structure.
- Creation of areas of species-rich grassland and wildflower meadows to improve botanical diversity and invertebrate habitat.

- Construction of a new wildlife pond with marginal planting, wet meadow areas, and aquatic habitat features.
- Installation of bird boxes, bat boxes, insect hotels, and hibernacula within suitable locations across the site.
- These measures significantly increase habitat diversity compared to the existing baseline and improve ecological connectivity both within and beyond the site.

Compensate (if required)

- 5.30. No significant residual adverse impacts on green infrastructure have been identified. As such, off-site compensation is not required. The combination of avoidance, mitigation, and on-site enhancement measures achieves a clear net gain in biodiversity in line with PPW objectives.

Green Infrastructure Outcomes

- 5.31. The proposed green infrastructure has been designed to be multifunctional, delivering benefits for biodiversity, landscape character, climate resilience, water management, and visual amenity. The scheme strengthens existing hedgerow networks, introduces new habitats, and enhances the ecological function of intensively managed agricultural land, contributing to more resilient ecological networks in accordance with Future Wales Policy 9 and Policy DM2 of the Powys Local Development Plan.

Management and Long-Term Delivery

- 5.32. All green infrastructure elements will be managed and maintained for the lifetime of the development and beyond, in accordance with the Landscape Specification and Biodiversity Management Plan. This includes appropriate establishment, aftercare, and long-term maintenance of planting, grassland, and habitat features.
- 5.33. Management responsibilities will be secured through planning conditions and, where necessary, planning obligations, ensuring the long-term delivery and success of the green infrastructure proposals.

Conclusion

- 5.34. This Green Infrastructure Statement demonstrates that green infrastructure has been embedded within the design of the Brogan Solar Farm from an early stage. The step-wise approach advocated by Planning Policy Wales has been rigorously applied, resulting in the protection of existing assets and the delivery of meaningful, site-specific enhancements. The proposal responds positively to the nature emergency and represents a policy-compliant, environmentally responsible form of renewable energy development.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 5.35. Natural Resources Wales mapping indicates that the majority of the site is at very low risk of fluvial and surface water flooding, with a small area in Flood Zone 2. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and SuDS Strategy accompany the application.

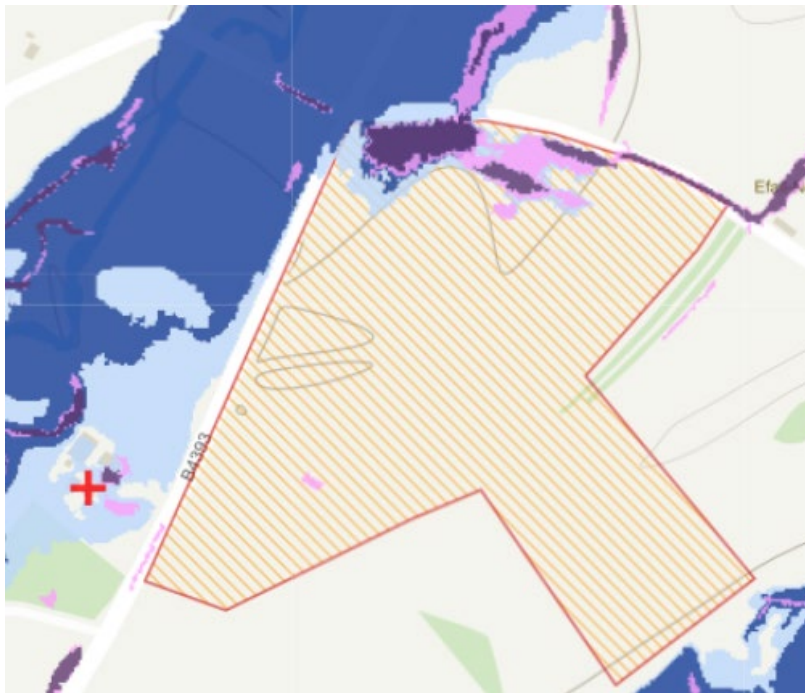


Figure 3– Flood Risk Map in relation to the proposed development site

- 5.36. The accompanying FRDA report confirms the following measures in place:
- Panels to be mounted on frames with minimal ground disturbance.
 - No permanent foundations; use of ballast blocks where required.
 - No increase in off-site flood risk.
 - No panels will be located in the pockets of higher risk areas.
- 5.37. The FRDA report prepared confirms the site is at very low risk of fluvial, surface water, groundwater, sewer, tidal, and reservoir flooding, with only the northernmost portion of Parcel 1 intersecting Flood Zones 2 and 3. Within this area, predicted fluvial flood depths in the location of proposed solar arrays range from 30 mm to 210 mm during the 0.1% annual probability plus climate change event, and no more than 50 mm during the 1% event.
- 5.38. Solar Panels are classed as essential electrical infrastructure and the design places all panels at least 600 mm above ground level, ensuring they remain flood-free and operational under all modelled scenarios. Access/egress via the B4393 remains safe in all flood events. Surface water management follows a greenfield approach, with the site remaining predominantly permeable; rainfall infiltrates naturally beneath and between the panels, assisted by a “rainwater gap” between rows and gaps between individual modules.
- 5.39. The conversion to permanent grassland reduces runoff compared to the existing agricultural condition, and erosion control is provided through strategically placed filter drains and maintained grass cover. Some areas of access tracks will use permeable stone surfacing and inverter platforms drain to surrounding permeable ground. As panel supports

occupy minimal ground footprint and do not obstruct flood pathways, the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere.

- 5.40. Although the northern part of the site intersects areas of surface water flood risk, the proposed solar PV panels constitute *essential electrical infrastructure* which is considered compatible with such locations when appropriately designed.

Heritage

- 5.41. The site is located in proximity to several designated heritage assets, including Talwrn Bach (Grade II) approximately 150m to the southwest, Ty-Coch Talwrn (Grade II) to the north, and Bryngwyn Hall Registered Park and Garden approximately 500m to the south. Other listed buildings such as Glanbrogan Hall and Brogan-fact (Grade II) lie within 0.5km, and Scheduled Monuments including Bryngwyn Wood Camp and Bwlch-y-Cibau Enclosure are located within 1.2km of the site.
- 5.42. A Desk-Based Assessment and Stage 2 Settings Assessment, including coordination with CADW and the Conservation Officer, has been undertaken to evaluate potential impacts on the setting and significance of these assets. The assessment concludes that:
- Intervening vegetation, topography, and existing built form limit visibility from most heritage receptors.
 - The proposed solar arrays are low-profile and will be screened by retained and enhanced hedgerows.
 - No Pannels will be installed in the parcel closest to the Grade II* Park & Garden,
 - Sensitive siting of ancillary infrastructure and additional planting will further mitigate any residual effects.
- 5.43. Whilst Bryngwyn Hall Registered Park and Garden has partial intervisibility with the site, the proposal has been redesigned to be concentrated in the two western fields of the proposed site, with the eastern field (which has partial intervisibility with the Park and Garden) has been excluded. This amendment has removed all impacts on historic assets associated with Bryngwyn Hall and its Registered Historic Park & Garden.
- 5.44. The LVIA and heritage assessment confirm that the proposal will not result in harm to its significance. The development is therefore considered to have no unacceptable impact on the setting of listed buildings, registered parks, or scheduled monuments, in accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Chapter 6) and relevant LDP policies.

Agricultural Land

- 5.45. The application site comprises Grade 3b agricultural land, as confirmed by Agricultural Land Classification mapping. This grade is not considered Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land under Planning Policy Wales, which prioritises the protection of Grades 1, 2, and 3a. The use of Grade 3b land for solar development is therefore acceptable in principle and consistent with national and local policy.
- 5.46. The proposed development is fully reversible, with no permanent foundations and minimal ground disturbance. Panels will be mounted on frames using ballast blocks rather than deep

concrete footings, ensuring that the soil structure remains intact and the land can be returned to agricultural production at the end of the operational life of the solar farm. Importantly, the layout has been designed to allow continued agricultural use during operation, specifically sheep grazing beneath and between the solar arrays. This dual-use approach maintains the productive capacity of the land while delivering renewable energy generation, aligning with Welsh Government guidance and Policy RE1 of the Powys Local Development Plan.

- 5.47. An Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey undertaken that confirms that the 12-hectare site comprises a mix of Subgrade 3a (Good) and Subgrade 3b (Moderate) agricultural land, with no areas of Grade 1 or Grade 2 land present. The detailed soil assessment—supported by auger boring, a soil pit, and laboratory particle size analysis—identifies heavy clay loam topsoil over silty clay loam subsoils, with soil wetness identified as the principal limiting factor across the site. Field Capacity Days (205 FCD) and Wetness Class II conditions restrict land quality to Subgrade 3a in surveyed areas, while the remaining land is confirmed as Subgrade 3b in line with the Welsh Predictive ALC Map. Overall, 4.3ha (36%) of the site is Subgrade 3a (Best and Most Versatile) and 7.7ha (64%) is Subgrade 3b, with no evidence of flood limitations, slope constraints, or climatic restrictions. The findings confirm that the site contains only a modest proportion of BMV land, that the solar farm layout avoids significant disturbance to higher-quality soils, and that the proposed development remains fully compatible with national and local policy on safeguarding agricultural land.
- 5.48. National appeal decisions have consistently confirmed that solar development on agricultural land does not result in permanent loss of agricultural function, provided that appropriate management measures are in place. The proposed scheme adopts these principles, ensuring that the land remains available for future agricultural use.

Glint and Glare

- 5.49. A Glint and Glare Assessment has been undertaken to evaluate potential impacts on residential receptors, highways, and aviation interests. The assessment confirms that:
- No significant impact is predicted upon residential amenity and mitigation is not recommended.
 - The site's orientation and topography significantly reduce the likelihood of glare affecting road users however a moderate impact is still predicted upon road safety, and mitigation in the form of screening along the site boundary is recommended.
 - No significant impacts are anticipated on aviation receptors, given the absence of nearby airfields.
- 5.50. Mitigation measures include maintaining existing large hedgerows and implementing additional planting where necessary to screen views. The assessment concludes that glint and glare effects will be negligible and well within acceptable limits, ensuring compliance with Policy DM4 and national guidance.

Ground Conditions

- 5.51. A Preliminary Ground Investigation and Geotechnical Assessment was undertaken prior to construction to confirm soil conditions and inform foundation design.

- 5.52. To summarise, the assessment comprised of a desk study and site walkover to evaluate potential contamination risks and geotechnical constraints. Historical mapping and on-site observations confirmed the absence of contaminant sources, with the land remaining undeveloped except for a dismantled railway embankment adjacent to the site. The environmental setting is moderately sensitive due to nearby watercourses and aquifers; however, no pollutant linkages were identified, and the site presents a Low risk to human health and controlled waters.
- 5.53. Potential risks relate to compressible ground, perched groundwater, and possibly made Ground near the former railway embankment. A site-wide geotechnical investigation will be undertaken to confirm ground conditions and inform foundation design. No additional land quality investigations are warranted.
- 5.54. These findings will be incorporated into the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure safe and sustainable construction practices.

Transport and Access

- 5.55. The proposed development will utilise the existing access point from the B4393, which provides a safe and direct route to the public highway network. Minor improvements will be made to the entrance to accommodate construction traffic, including temporary widening and surfacing works where necessary. No new permanent vehicular access is proposed beyond this.
- 5.56. A Transport Assessment and CTMP will be submitted as part of the planning application to provide a detailed analysis of:
- Baseline traffic conditions on the B4393 and surrounding network.
 - Predicted construction traffic volumes and routing.
 - Assessment of junction capacity and highway safety.
 - Mitigation measures to ensure no adverse impact on local roads.
 - Defined delivery routes to minimise disruption to local roads.
 - Restricted working hours to avoid peak traffic periods.
 - Use of banksmen and temporary signage to ensure safety.
 - Wheel-washing facilities to prevent mud and debris on the highway.
- 5.57. The Transport Statement confirms that site access will be via a temporary access point on the B4393, designed to accommodate HGVs with appropriate visibility splays based on speed surveys. Construction is expected to last around six months. Once operational, the site will require only one to two maintenance visits per month. The traffic impact is temporary and modest, with no significant effect on the local highway network or road safety. Swept path analysis demonstrates safe access for the largest vehicles, and accident data indicates no pre-existing safety concerns. Overall, the development is considered acceptable in transport terms.

- 5.58. The CTMP sets out measures to manage and minimise construction traffic impacts during the six-month build period. It includes strict routing via the B4393 to the A495, avoiding sensitive routes, and a delivery booking system to prevent congestion and schedule HGV movements outside peak hours and school times. Temporary compounds will provide on-site parking and turning areas for all vehicles, eliminating highway obstruction. Strategies include “just-in-time” deliveries, signage schemes, banksmen for manoeuvres, dust and dirt control, and wheel washing to maintain highway cleanliness. Safety measures prioritise pedestrians and cyclists, and monitoring protocols ensure compliance throughout construction. Once operational, traffic will be negligible, limited to occasional LGV maintenance visits. The CTMP demonstrates a robust approach to mitigating short-term impacts on the local community and highway network.

Summary

- 5.59. The proposed 5MW solar farm has been assessed against all relevant national and local planning policies and technical considerations. The development clearly aligns with Policy RE1 of the Powys Local Development Plan, *Future Wales – The National Plan 2040*, and *Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12)*, which strongly support renewable energy generation to meet decarbonisation targets. Detailed assessments confirm that potential impacts on landscape, ecology, heritage, flood risk, transport, and residential amenity can be effectively mitigated through sensitive design, robust landscaping, biodiversity enhancements, and best practice construction measures.
- 5.60. The scheme utilises non-BMV agricultural land, is fully reversible, and allows continued grazing, ensuring compliance with sustainability principles. Technical reports—including LVIA, Ecological Impact Assessment, Heritage Impact Assessment, Glint and Glare Assessment, and Flood Risk Assessment—demonstrate that the proposal will not result in unacceptable harm. On this basis, the development is considered policy-compliant, environmentally responsible, and wholly acceptable in planning terms.

6. Planning Balance

- 6.1. In determining this application, it is necessary to weigh the benefits of the proposal against any potential adverse impacts. The proposed solar farm will deliver substantial and immediate benefits, most notably the generation of approximately 5MW of renewable electricity, contributing directly to national and local decarbonisation targets.
- 6.2. The environmental benefits of the scheme are significant. By displacing carbon emissions and reducing reliance on fossil fuels, the development will make a measurable contribution to tackling the climate emergency declared by Powys County Council. These benefits are complemented by the proposal’s sustainable design, which allows continued agricultural use through sheep grazing and ensures full reversibility at the end of its operational life.
- 6.3. Potential impacts on landscape, heritage, ecology, and flood risk have been carefully assessed and mitigated to ensure that there is a strategy in place for every possible potential impact to the wider site and area. The layout has been informed by a robust LVIA, heritage settings assessment, and ecological surveys, ensuring that sensitive receptors are protected. Measures such as hedgerow enhancement, native planting, biodiversity net gain, and avoidance of flood-prone areas demonstrate a proactive approach to environmental stewardship. Technical assessments confirm that residual impacts will be minor and temporary and can be controlled through planning conditions.

- 6.4. The proposal can also deliver wider social and economic benefits. It supports local supply chains during construction, contributes to energy security and aligns with community engagement principles through a comprehensive Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) process. These factors reinforce the scheme's compatibility with sustainable development objectives.
- 6.5. In summary, the balance of considerations is overwhelmingly positive. The planning officer in their pre-application advice stated that the scheme is acceptable in principle and the development accords with the Development Plan and national policy, delivers substantial renewable energy benefits, and mitigates potential impacts to an acceptable level. Even if limited harm were identified, it would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the powerful environmental and policy-driven benefits of the proposal.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. This planning application has been submitted by Pegasus Group on behalf of Fuse Renewables UK, seeking full planning permission for the installation of a 5MW ground-mounted solar farm and associated infrastructure at Talwrn Bach, Llanfyllin, Powys. The proposal responds directly to national and local policy objectives to increase renewable energy generation, reduce carbon emissions, and address the climate emergency.
- 7.2. The development has been carefully designed to minimise environmental impact while delivering substantial benefits. Comprehensive assessments have informed the design, addressing landscape, ecology, heritage, flood risk, and transport considerations. Mitigation measures—such as strategic planting, biodiversity enhancements, and avoidance of flood-prone areas—ensure that any residual impacts are minimal and acceptable.
- 7.3. The scheme is firmly supported by planning policy at all levels and has received positive pre-application advice from the Local Planning Authority. It delivers significant environmental benefits, aligns with sustainable development principles, and demonstrates a proactive approach to community engagement.
- 7.4. In light of the overwhelming benefits and the absence of any unacceptable harm, the proposed development is considered wholly appropriate and suitable for the granting of full planning permission without delay.

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

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