



# The Planning Inspectorate Yr Arolygiaeth Gynllunio

Inception Meeting: 3253205: Penpergwm Solar Farm

Wednesday 20 May 2020 at 11:00 – 12:00

Via Teams Meeting

## Attendees:

### **Renewables Connection**

John Leith  
James Stone

### **Neo Environmental**

Nicole Beckett  
Paul Neary

### **Planning Inspectorate**

Giulia Bazzoni – Planning Officer  
Alexis Mordecai – Team Leader:  
Casework & Inspector Scheduling  
Robert Sparey – Planning &  
Environment Manager  
Chris Sweet – Planning Officer

### **Welsh Government – Planning Directorate (Decisions Branch)**

Alan Groves

## **Meeting Note:**

The Planning Inspectorate for Wales (the Inspectorate) met with the above representatives regarding a solar farm project located near Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. A brief background to the scheme and the current level of progress was provided by the developers. The developers confirmed that the solar farm will have a connection on site provided by Western Power. The developers advised that a set of surveys has been completed and that they have contacted Monmouthshire County Council to commencement pre-application consultations but have not received a response to date.

The focus of the discussion was mainly procedural, focussing on the various timescales described in the Inspectorate's procedural guidance, the requirements for formal consultation, fees and the importance of regular communication and early engagement. The Inspectorate advised that, as the scope for amending the scheme during the examination is limited, the developers should finalise the scheme design prior to formal consultation. The Inspectorate confirmed they will provide examples of past examination costs to the developers (**Action**).

The Inspectorate advised the developers to consult with Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Brecon Beacon National Park, Cadw and Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT).

The Developer asked for clarification about the need for Community Ownership in renewable schemes. Welsh Government confirmed that this is not planning policy and it not yet confirmed how this will be implemented in the planning system. It is not currently a material planning consideration. The Inspectorate advised to insert a statement to this regard as a separate statement, to sit alongside the Planning Statement accompanying the Application. Welsh Government will provide the developers with contact details in the department responsible for Energy policy **(Action)**.

The developers confirmed it was likely that they would request an EIA screening direction from the Inspectorate relatively soon and would then consider the potential for seeking pre-application advice. The Inspectorate advised that early engagement with consultees would likely help to narrow down any issues and aid in a concise examination process.

The developer asked for clarification on publicity requirements during Covid-19 lockdown. The Planning Inspectorate advised that notices can now be put up.

The developers asked about changes in technology post consent. The Inspectorate explained that depending on the changes it can be addressed as a change in conditions through a Section 73 Application directly to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) or non-material variation but would depend on the changes. The Inspectorate reminded the developers that an alteration in the time limit for commencement would require a new DNS application.

The Inspectorate advised that regular communication regarding timescales would be useful in order to effectively allocate resources. The developers confirmed they would keep in contact regarding progress as appropriate.