



Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-1115
Ein cyf/Our ref JJ/03225/20

Janet Finch-Saunders MS
Chair, Petitions Committee
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29 December 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December regarding Petition P-05-1115: 'Stop giant Solar farm which will destroy ancient meadows near Abergavenny'. The petition asks the Welsh Ministers to refuse any future planning application associated with the development.

The development, referred to as Penpergwm Solar Farm, is a proposed 45MW solar farm with associated battery storage at Penpergwm, near Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. As it has an expected installed generating capacity of over 10MW, it is a Development of National Significance ("DNS") and planning applications for such development must be made directly to the Welsh Ministers.

Due to the Welsh Ministers' statutory role in deciding DNS planning applications, I cannot comment on the merits of individual proposals as to do so may prejudice any decision to may make in relation to it. However, I can clarify events to date.

The petition suggests Monmouthshire County Council ("MCC") has 'refused' a screening request from the developer. As MCC is not the determining authority, it cannot issue such decisions in relation DNS planning applications.

The petition also suggests the Welsh Government has 'accepted' a screening request. The applicant submitted a request on 14 October for the Welsh Ministers to make a direction to decide whether the development requires an Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA"), within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning (EIA) (Wales) Regulations 2017, to supplement any prospective DNS planning application.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The Planning Inspectorate, acting on behalf of the Welsh Ministers, decided on 12 November no EIA is required. The full reasoning behind the direction is contained at the following address:

<https://dns.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/ipc/uploads/projects/DNS/3252305/DNS-3252305-000009-2020-11-12%20-%20Screening%20Direction%20w%20Appendices.pdf>

While this is the case, the prospective applicant must undertake a period of statutory pre-application consultation in advance of submitting a DNS planning application. In doing so, the prospective applicant must produce a report which gives particulars of the account taken of all responses to the consultation, as part of its submission of a DNS planning application. It is encouraged those who support this petition engages with the pre-application process when it commences.

Yours sincerely,



Julie James AS/MS

Y Gweinidog Tai a Llywodraeth Leol
Minister for Housing and Local Government