

Rebecca Evans AS/MS  
Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning  
Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros yr Economi, Ynni a Chynllunio



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1552  
Ein cyf/Our ref RE/00945/25

Carolyn Thomas MS  
Chair - Petitions committee  
Senedd Cymru  
Cardiff Bay  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

25 November 2025

Dear Carolyn Thomas MS,

Thank you for your letter concerning Petition P-06-1552 - 'Stop building industrial solar 'farms' close to residential buildings and within village boundaries'. Your letter is seeking my views on this matter prior to your formal consideration of the petition. It would not be appropriate to comment on any specific proposals, and therefore I would refer the committee to national planning policy relevant to solar developments, along with development management guidance.

Welsh Government planning policy on solar development is set out in [Future Wales: The National Plan 2040](#) and [Planning Policy Wales](#) (PPW) and is further supported by [Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales](#) (December 2024) which was prepared by the Design Commission for Wales (DCfW) on behalf of the Welsh Government.

Future Wales is a national development plan that sets out a long-term vision for land use and development across Wales. It was adopted in February 2021 and forms part of the statutory development plan for Wales, sitting above strategic development plans (yet to be adopted) and local development plans.

Future Wales policies 17 and 18 set out the Welsh Government's planning policies for renewable energy. Policy 17 states that 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. Applications for large-scale wind and solar - Developments of National Significance (DNS) - are not 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.

Policy 18 sets out the criteria that need to be considered if a DNS is to be permitted. Developers are required to provide robust evidence to support and justify their proposals so

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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.

that communities, designated areas and landscapes, and habitats and species, are protected from unacceptable adverse impacts, including visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings. Assessments of solar impacts on communities include, for example, noise, reflected light, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance and cumulative impact studies where necessary.

DNS are submitted to [Planning Environment Decisions Wales](#) for consideration. Examination is by Planning Inspector and final decisions are made by Welsh Ministers (or Planning Inspectors for projects between 10 MW and 50 MW). The application process for DNS and guidance on engaging in the process are set out in [Developments of national significance \(DNS\): guidance](#) and [Developments of national significance \(DNS\): engaging with the process](#).

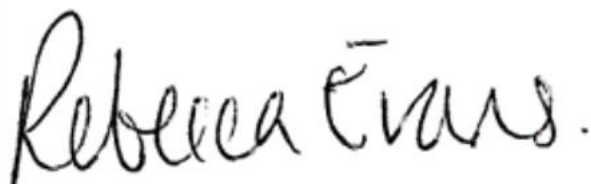
DNS in the context of solar development constitutes developments of between 10 MW and 350 MW. Projects above 350 MW would fall under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) regime and are non devolved. Projects below 10 MW are the responsibility of the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

PPW Chapter 5 (section 5.9) sets out planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy development. Other policies pertinent to the consideration of solar development may include Chapter 6 (section 6.4.5) Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty (Section 6 Duty), and Chapter 3 (section 3.58) Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land.

Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales (chapter 6) sets out design considerations for solar farms. Whilst this document is not formal policy it does promote best practice and could be a material consideration to inform potential planning conditions. Section 6.3 highlights site considerations for identifying suitable locations and includes, amongst other things, sites capable of screening from surrounding land, with perimeter planting and screens, or where sites are visible, the possibility of integrating the design of the solar array into the existing landscape pattern, and sites with low impacts on existing settlements and communities. Sections 6.4 to 6.10 provide further advice on solar farm design matters.

In terms of development management, the '[Development Management Manual Wales \(2025\)](#)' identifies that when determining planning applications LPAs must consider any relevant view on planning matters expressed by neighbouring occupiers, local residents and any other third parties. The Manual also identifies that the effects of a development on, for example, amenity, health and public safety can be material considerations in the assessment of a planning application. However, arguing a right to a view, or potential loss of property value, are not considered to be relevant planning matters and therefore would not be material considerations in determining applications.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Evans". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Rebecca Evans AS/MS**

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