

# Design Review Report

Prosiect Maen Hir Solar Energy and Storage,  
Ynys Môn Isle of Anglesey

**DCFW Ref: 323**

Meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2025



**Review Status**

Meeting date  
Issue date  
Scheme description  
Scheme location  
Scheme reference number  
Planning status

**PUBLIC**

9<sup>th</sup> May 2025  
22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025  
Renewable Energy Infrastructure  
Ynys Môn Isle of Anglesey  
N323  
Pre-planning/PINS DCO Submission

## Key Points

---

- The Design Commission welcomes the opportunity for further engagement with these proposals at this third meeting, which follows a period of statutory consultation.
- The Design Commission for Wales is supportive in principle of renewable energy generation and of supporting the Welsh Government, and the UK Government, to meet their policy ambitions in respect of decarbonising our power supplies.
- We also recognise and support the delivery of this project in a manner which facilitates effective energy generation alongside best practice which sets a precedent in landscape design, management, repair and renewal. We recognise the stated client commitment and the quality of the design process to date. At this stage of pre-DCO submission we now urge clear commitment to best practice in post-consent delivery and operation, ensuring a successful landscape legacy.
- Maen Hir remains a project of considerable scale and complexity - offering equally considerable potential for long term benefits, wider value for regenerative land management, biodiversity and landscape management, as well as for setting a best practice precedent. That precedent could inform and shape a broader strategic framework/plan for Ynys Môn, reflecting principles which can help guide and shape other initiatives over the longer term. We continue to strongly encourage the client and project team to explore and make commitments to this, alongside key local stakeholders.
- There is now clearer understanding of the relationship between policy set out in the relevant UK National Planning Statement (NPS), applicable to the DCO process, and that of legislation in Wales, reflected in the Well-being of Future Generations Act which is embedded in planning policy at all levels – from Future Wales, planning Policy Wales, statutory stakeholders and local guidance.
- The Design Approach Document and the outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (oLEMP) should make explicit the ways in which the design principles will a) be applied in practice throughout delivery and management over time, b) how both documents will be used in practice to promote, communicate and protect commitments to the design principles having weight in the DCO

process, and c) how the design responds to the requirements of legislation and policy applicable in Wales.

- As previously noted, active management of the landscape over 60 years should enable a long-term view to be taken on soil quality, biodiversity, ecological systems, etc with installations designed to be removed in their entirety. We emphasise this opportunity again and urge a clear commitment. The approach to project delivery, constructability and decommissioning offers a potential for exemplar practice which should be pursued. We again emphasise the opportunity, and need, for commitment to long term considerations to be reflected in commitment to a positive legacy including reuse and recycling of installation components, betterment in terms of landscape resilience, ecology and biodiversity, as well as the energy generated. This offers a unique opportunity to contribute to decarbonisation and net zero pathways and should be pursued.
- The extent of the proposed solar farm in the northern project area has evolved and no longer has at its core, development on the former Rhosgoch brownfield site. Every opportunity should now therefore be taken, given the higher landscape and cultural sensitivity and finer grain of the drumlin landscape around Rhosgoch, to consider the scale and layout of development, and its rationale and fit: especially in relation to the drumlin slopes and in views from the surrounding landscape.
- Discussion of the northern sites led to consideration of the status of DCO submission and consent material; noting that the for a solar farm, in the absence of any other firm and enforceable commitment, the red-line application boundary is the only real control on future development extent and layout. The yellow areas on the illustrative masterplan simply indicate that panels could be in this general area, but the actual layout will be a key part of the designs' future success or failure.
- Within the submission documents and in the draft DCO requirements, we encourage the project team to consider how the care needed in design of the panel layouts and locations can be tied-in to the consent (with sufficient weight) rather than rely entirely on the parties responsible for post-consent design and requirements discharge. We appreciate this difficulty in control of more detailed matters is a characteristic of the DCO process, so there may be examples from other implemented consents which could be drawn upon to provide some guidance on how to resolve this.
- The Design Commission has not seen any detail on the proposed battery storage or works associated with National Grid infrastructure. The size and scale of these elements are substantial. The consideration and coordination of elements of all such equipment layout is important and should be clearly articulated in design and

application diagrams and drawings, and these should go beyond parameter drawings. They will require more than mitigation.

- The Commission expects to comment further in response to documentation review pre-submission.

## Consultations to Date

---

This is the third review meeting with Design Commission for Wales via its Design Review Service and was convened at DCFW offices, as part of the continuing project team engagement and consultation. This meeting took place after the statutory consultation phase and before formal 'design-freeze' prior to the planned submission of the DCO application due later in 2025. The comment of the Commission is also therefore now public.

The Design Commission understands that there may be some further consultation on the battery storage and National Grid requirements and expects to see materials associated with this as soon as they are available as part of a pre-DCO submission document review. That review will also include the Design Approach Document and the outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan.

This third report should be read in conjunction with the report from the first review meeting held in April 2024 and the second held in July 2024. DCFW will as an interested party also submit its written comment in the form of these reports, at the relevant stages in the DCO programme.

## Next Steps

---

We encourage the client and team to read this report in conjunction with our two preceding reports and reflect on how far key issues have been resolved at this pre-submission stage. We also urge sharing of our comment with local authority stakeholders.

As discussed and agreed at this meeting, the Commission expects further details pre-submission, on the battery storage and substation proposals. These should be provided to the Commission at the earliest opportunity for document review, and should be accompanied by in particular of the Design Approach Document and the outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan. These should make explicit the design principles and their application in practice, through design development and into delivery and over time during operation.

Consideration of the DCO process and taking every opportunity to 'lock in' design principles which will have weight in the planning process and are useful in delivery and over the long term, remains a key part of this work and communicating 'optimum' scenarios.

**Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales is the trading name of DCFW LIMITED, a Private Limited Company established under the Companies Act 1985 and 2006, Company No: 04391072 incorporated in England and Wales as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E [connect@dcfw.org](mailto:connect@dcfw.org). The comment recorded in this report, arising from formal Design Review through our Design Review Service, is provided in the public interest for the consideration of local planning authorities as a material consideration, and other users of the Design Review Service. It is not and should not be considered 'advice' and no third party is bound or required to act upon it. The Design Review Service is delivered in line with DCFW's published protocols, code of conduct and complaints procedure, which should be read and considered by users of the service.**

***A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.***

## **APPENDIX 1**

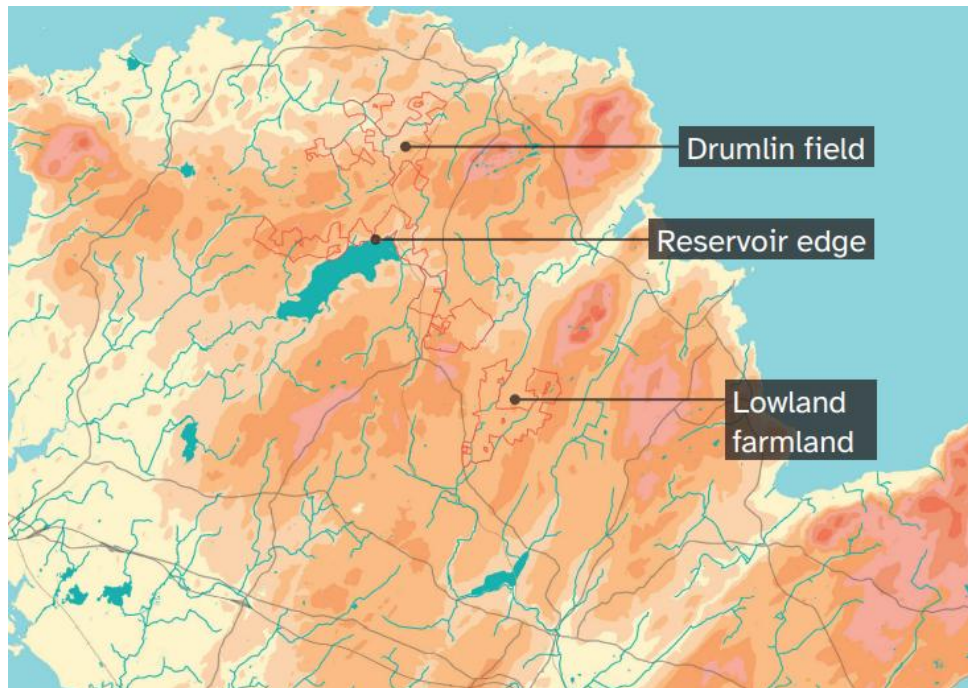
### The Proposal

---

The Prosiect Maen Hir Solar Energy and Storage proposal is categorised as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO) via the Infrastructure Planning Inspectorate. The Site is proposed for a solar generating station with a capacity of over 350MW, with energy storage. Key elements include:

- Solar PV Arrays
- Project Substation
- Grid connections
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
- Accesses
- Temporary construction compounds
- Enhancement and mitigation
- Community Solar PV Array (~5MW)

The project is intended to form a key part of the Isle of Anglesey Council's (IoACC) Energy Island Programme, which seeks to put the Island at the forefront of low carbon energy research, development, production and servicing, with the intention of bringing economic, community and environmental benefits.



*Map showing the location, site and context for the project on Ynys Môn.*

## Context

---

The site is located in the north of the Island, comprising approximately 1,234 hectares (ha) of land, in four main land parcels. The northern parcel includes the former Shell site at Rhosgoch (though this is no longer proposed to be developed directly). The two central parcels border Llyn Alaw and Llandyfyddog, and the southern parcel lies to the north of Llangefni, all within the administrative boundary of the Isle of Anglesey County Council. The site and surrounding area contain a variety of landscape types covering four character areas: Amlwch and Environs, North West Anglesey, Dulas Bay Hinterland, and West Central Anglesey.

At this third review meeting it was evident that whilst areas have shifted and been streamlined as a result of consultation input, the nature of the landscape and its characteristics continue to bring complexity to the project approach.

Prioritisation beyond consultation influences is still required as is commitment to lasting, positive legacy in the form landscape recovery, resilience and regeneration. This remains key to the refinement of design principles, their use and weight in planning terms and their longer-term influence over the lifespan of the project. Greater clarity was evident in the methodology for responding to policy and legislative tensions and how these are treated in the DCO process.

## Attendees

---

Client:	Aaron Brown, Lightsource BP
Design Team:	Alister Kratt, LDA Kris Hindaugh - LDA Lewis Turner LDA
Local Authority:	No representatives of the local authority were present at this meeting. The local authority is a statutory consultee in the DCO process.
Observing:	Sarah Richards, Jacobs

### **DCFW Design Review Panel**

Chair:	Ewan Jones
Panel:	Simon Power - Lead Panellist Andrew Linfoot; Simon Richards Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW

## Declarations of Interest

---

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare ***in advance*** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review and meeting Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCFW's central records.

Ewan Jones is co-chair of the DCFW Design Panel and has worked with LDA, on several projects however there is no current professional relationship that has a bearing on this proposal.

Andrew Linfoot noted that Jacobs have worked with members of this team but that to the best of his knowledge there are no current relationship that have a bearing on this proposal.

Alister Kratt of LDA is a member of the DCFW Design Review Panel but was representing LDA at this meeting.

Aaron Brown of Lightsource BP is a former employee of Jacobs.

END.