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Date/ Dyddiad: 1 March 2023

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Regulation 33 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017: Request to Welsh Ministers for a Scoping Direction in respect of the Eirlys Solar Farm Development, near to Port Talbot in the County of Neath Port Talbot.

In respect of *Regulation 33 of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017*, the Welsh Ministers are hereby requested to make a Scoping Direction to determine the information to be included within an Environmental Statement that would accompany a planning application for a Development of National Significance (DNS). The Project is Eirlys Solar Farm, a solar energy scheme being developed by Octo Partners ('the Developer'), a Wales-based renewable energy company, with a significant history of development in Wales.

The Eirlys Solar Farm scheme ('the Development') is a DNS in respect of the specified criteria set out in *Part 2, Regulation 4 Generating Stations of The Developments of National Significance (Specified Criteria and Prescribed Secondary Consents) (Wales) Regulations 2016* and any subsequent alterations to decision making powers under the Wales Act 2017. The scheme is currently in the early stages of design and surveys and will be Notified as required under Article 5 of *The Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016* in due course. However, the Developer requests a Direction on the EIA requirements that would form an Environmental Statement in order to understand the likely significant effects of the Development and commence relevant preparatory surveys which may take time to conduct.

Appended to this letter please find a Scoping Report setting out details of the information specified under Regulation 33 (2) and associated Figures. Such details include a plan of the Development site sufficient to identify the land, a description of the nature and purpose of the Development and any

likely significant effects on the environment, and a statement in respect of section 62D of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 that this request pertains to a DNS. Any additional pertinent information to the Scoping exercise is included within the Scoping Report.

I also hereby provide notification on behalf of the Developer that for the purposes of this Development it is the Developer's intent to produce an Environmental Statement in support of a planning application and that therefore a screening request under Regulation 7 will not be required.

As part and parcel of the Scoping exercise, the Developer also seeks your opinion on two relevant planning matters:

1. **Rochdale envelope:** the Developer advises that the UK is witnessing a rapid change to solar power and storage technology, which may lead to the introduction of new technologies during the planning phase of this development that may improve the capacity, power delivery and environmental benefits of the scheme. Accordingly, the Developer would like to understand to what degree your Authority would support the Rochdale envelope approach on this development.
2. **Scoping Flexibility:** at this stage of the development we only have access to limited information in presenting an outline design for the development. Such a design is likely to change as baseline surveys and sensitivity studies are undertaken. At this stage we are presenting a maximum installed capacity of solar panels within the available landowning. Any changes arising from EIA are likely to lead to a reduction in the scale of the development, and as such we believe that scoping on a maximum scale of development (as the worst case) is an appropriate approach to scoping, and that any revisions to the scheme that layout and associated capacity over time will not be viewed unfavourably.

I look forward to liaison with your Authority in respect of this request. Should you require any further details or clarifications please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Yours sincerely,



Conaill Carolan
EIA Project Manager