

Neath Port Talbot Planning
Brunel Way, Briton Ferry,
Neath SA11 2GG

7th July, 2025

Dear Sir / Madam,

Re: Awel Aman Tawe Solar Park, DN P2020/0408-Rev 1 and DN P2024-0720, Revisions to Approved Plans

This letter accompanies an application to your Authority seeking approval for slight changes to the approved plans for the Awel Aman Tawe solar park.

Following ground testing and site investigations conducted by the preferred Engineering Contractor appointed by the Applicant for the scheme, and an evaluation of new ranges of PV technology available since the original application was made, a number of slight changes to the layout and elevations of the scheme have been recommended. All such changes are within the approved Red Line Boundary and would, in the Applicant's opinion, result in very slight variations to the approved scheme. The changes proposed include:

- modifications to the alignment of the site track from the existing wind turbine hardstanding, whereby a more direct route to the centralised inverter has been shown possible thereby reducing the length of track, and hence footprint, required for site access. The original track was approx. 270m in length. This would reduce to approx. 90m in length;
- reductions to the number of solar rows and tables required due to the more recent availability of higher wattage panels, thus reducing the requirements for the number of mounting tables. The rows will reduce from 32 to 22, resulting in a reduced footprint overall of the mounting tables, which in turn will reduce the environmental impact zone of the scheme, and the increase to the spacing between the tables will result in a less concentrated layout;
- reduction in the number of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) units from x5 to x3, further reducing the overall footprint of the scheme;
- replacement of the reduced BESS with a single, smaller transformer unit;
- slight change to the central inverter location to align with the new track position; and
- change of fencing option to deer like fencing in preference to palisade fencing.

The Applicant has consulted with your Authority on the proposed changes (email exchanges with Andrea Davies up to 7th July, 2025), through which you have determined that the changes can be dealt with through an application for S73, amendments to the approved plans. This letter accompanies that application. A separate application to discharge the remaining pre-commencement condition will follow this application, the details of which are based upon this updated design and layout of scheme.

For the purposes of this application, and in respect to the approved plans for the scheme under Condition 2, I advise as follows:

Mynydd y Gwhryd Solar Farm - Environmental Report May 2020

The key environmental effects of the approved scheme identified in the Environmental Report (ER) will remain unchanged or will be reduced due to the reduction in the footprint of the solar arrays and associated infrastructure.

For the *landscape and visual assessment*, the proposed changes will result in reduced infrastructure and therefore lessen the density of the scheme within the receiving landscape. Potential significant adverse effects would remain to landscape character in and proximate to the site within approx. 0.15km of the boundary, affecting Landscape Character Areas 28 and 29), as set out in the Environmental Report, effects that have been deemed to be acceptable to your Authority. Proposed measures for landscape improvements through a shelter belt to the south of the scheme remain.

For the *preliminary ecological appraisal*, there will be minor ecological benefits through the reduction table numbers and rows, thereby reducing the footprint and landtake requirements of the scheme. The proposed measures for biodiversity improvements through the creation of a shelter belt of trees along the southern boundary will result in a net positive contribution to biodiversity and ecological resilience overall.

For *archaeology and cultural heritage*, there would be no change to the predictions of effect to designated and non-designated assets. Potential minor adverse indirect effects to two off-site post-medieval farmsteads will remain. An archaeological written scheme of investigation that would be employed during construction has been agreed with the statutory heritage advisors.

For *hydrology and drainage*, there would be no increase in the potential risks of sedimentation and surface water run-off, pollution or soil compaction effects, as set out in the ER. Proposed mitigation measures for silt traps, track maintenance, and drainage provisions will remain in place, and the Applicant will be seeking consent from the proposed surface water and drainage plan through the SuDs Advisory Body (SAB – also Neath Port Talbot).

For *glint and glare*, there would be no change to the summary of findings as there is no change to the extents or orientation of the scheme.

For *transport and access*, the reduction in the number of tables and panels for the scheme would have the effect of reducing transport requirements for conveying infrastructure to the site. The proposed changes would thereby lessen any potential impacts to the highway network.

For *noise*, there will be no change to the predicted noise emissions from on-site electrical infrastructure. The slight change to the inverter locations will not affect the preliminary findings of the noise evaluation, and it is concluded that the scheme would be constructed and operated within statutory noise limits and that no adverse effects to amenity would arise.

Design and Access Statement - May 2020

A summary of the amendments to the Design and Access Statement arising from the proposed modifications to the approved scheme is set out in the following table:

TABLE 1: KEY DESIGN AND ACCESS CHANGES

Factor	Original Scheme	Revised Scheme
Amount		
No. PV Panels	6972	4,336
No. Solar Tables	332	?
No. Battery Storage Containers	5	3
No. of Inverter Substation	1	1
Length of fencing	31,627 m	Unchanged
Scale		
Area of site boundary	3.99 ha	3.99 ha (unchanged)
Footprint of development	916 sqm	Circa 750 sqm
Panel size	1.6m x 1.0m	2.382m x 1.134m
Table Elevation max	2.6m	2.6m
Inverter dimensions	15.5m x 2.2m x 2.5m	9.4m x 4m x 3m
Access	A474 from Pontedawe / track to Mynydd Uchaf	Unchanged
Length of on-site access track	222m	90m
Environmental Sustainability		
GHG offsetting (annual)	630 tonnes	780 tonnes
No. of homes equivalent	672	800

Overall, the Applicant believes that the proposed modifications to the scheme would result in an improved design that has further reduced landtake requirements, whilst increasing installed capacity and thereby increasing the benefits associated with clean energy generation, GHG offsetting, and contribution to local consumption and ownership of renewable energy generated in the local area.

Coal Mining Risk Assessment - Sept 2020

There is no change to the proposed location of the scheme, which was consulted upon with The Coal Authority in 2018. The Coal Authority confirmed that the vast majority of the site is outside of a Development High Risk Area (DHRA), and that for the small area of solar park contained within the DHRA shallow mine workings previous studies have previously disproven any presence of these by probe drilling. The Coal Mining Risk Assessment has been deemed sufficient and fit for purpose for the approved scheme.

Site Location V2

This remains unchanged.

Figure 3.9 Indicative Education Area Rev

These details remain unchanged.

In respect of the proposed modifications, I confirm that these changes do not impact upon the already approved discharge of conditions under permission P2024/0720.

In support of this application, the following updated design plans are submitted:

1. Updated layout of scheme, Figure 1-2 Site Layout V2.
2. Figure 3-2 - Solar mounting frame elevation-V2
3. Figure 3-4 Option 2 - Separate Inverter and Transformer-V2
4. Figure 3-5 BESS Elevation Drawing-V2
5. Figure 3-6 BESS Transformer-V2
6. Figure 3-8 Security Fence Gate and Camera-V2

I look forward to liaising with your Authority on this application.

Yours sincerely
Michael Phillips