

PREAPPLICATION CONSULTATION FOR A FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE
PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF ELECTRIC CONNECTION CABLE ROUTE ON LAND SOUTH
OF CEFN ROAD, WREXHAM.

Overview

Innova Renewables are proposing to submit an application for the installation of a buried high voltage cable. The cable is proposed to run from Cefn Solar farm to the west (National Grid Reference SJ37784825) to Wrexham Solar Farm to the east (SJ36824858).

Planning permission was granted on the 7th November 2022 for a solar farm and battery storage facility on land east of Maelor Works, Cross Lanes, Wrexham (reference SES P/2021/0676) – Figure 1.

On the 6th of March 2023 planning permission was granted for a solar farm and battery storage facility on land adjacent to Little Llwyn Onn, Cefn Road, Abenbury, Wrexham (reference ABE/P/2022/0541). Figure 2.

This application is for a cable route which will run between those site, as shown on submitted plan 'Cable Route Constraints Plan'. Figure 3.

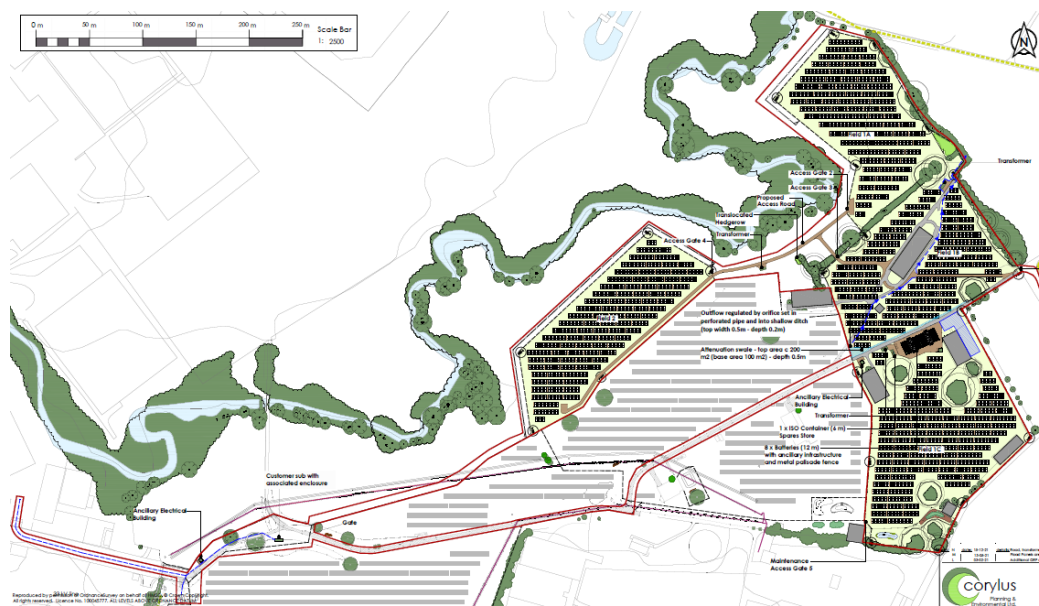


Figure 1: P/2022/0541 - Wrexham Solar Farm



Figure 2: P/2021/0676 Cefn Solar Farm

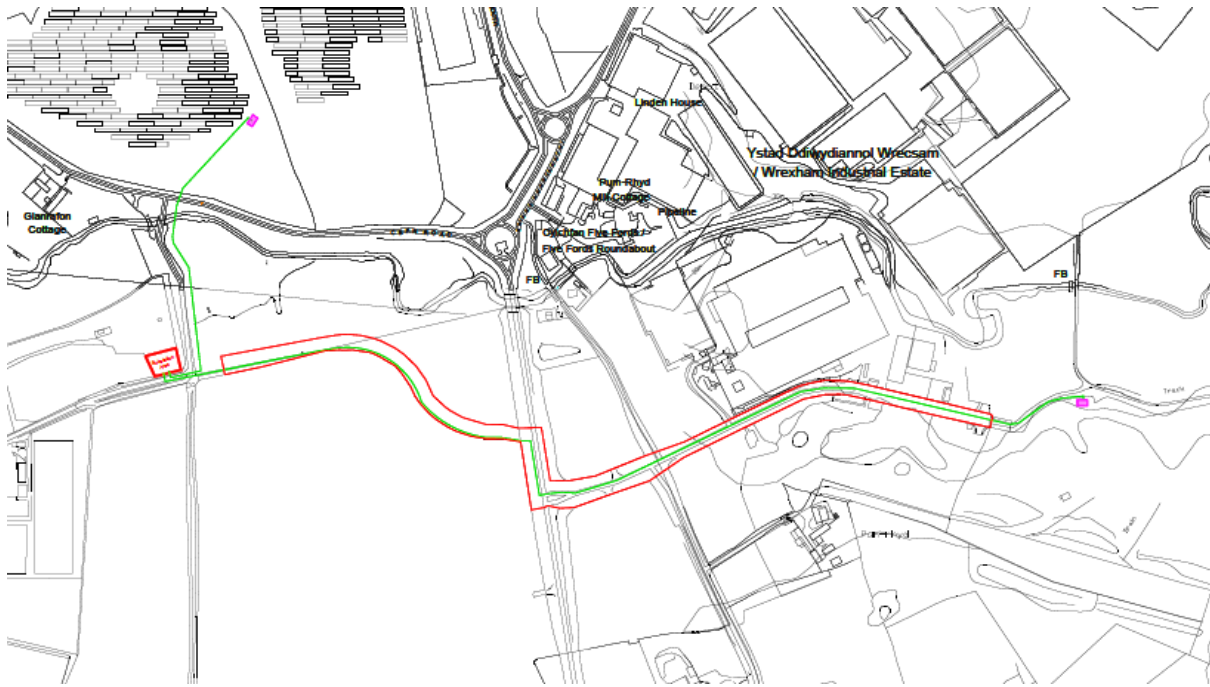


Figure 3: Proposed cable route

Route

The cable is proposed to be approximately 1.17km long and will be laid via a directional drill method.

The construction of the cable route is detailed within the attached supporting document 'Method Statement'.

From east to west, the proposed cable route runs approximately 650m along Bedwell Link (an existing tarmac road), before travelling approximately 70m north along Sesswick Way, and then travel approximately 450m west through an arable field west of Sesswick Way, south of Cefn Road, before linking to the Wrexham solar farm site.

Need for renewable energy development

The cable route is essential for connecting the proposed solar farm to the electric network. The proposed solar farm presently being considered will significantly contribute

to local and nationally significant objectives regarding renewable energy development, energy security and affordability of supply.

The 'UK Industrial Strategy (2016)' sets out a series of 'Grand Challenges' which are intended to place the UK at the forefront of industries of the future. The objective to achieve 'Clean Growth' is one of these challenges, defined as follows.

"..... to make the UK a world leader in the development, manufacture and use of low carbon technologies and systems and services that are cheaper than high carbon alternatives.

The Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) details that 'solar farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation worldwide. Solar farms can be built quickly and, coupled with consistent reductions in the cost of materials and improvements in the efficiency of panels...the government has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions. As such solar is a key part of the government's strategy for low cost decarbonisation of the energy sector'.

Within Wales, the move towards a low carbon future has been set out in "Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition". The document set out the Government's ambition to create a "sustainable, low carbon economy for Wales". The subsequent Delivery Plan set out how it would be delivered. The delivery plan identified that "In the short term, gas, nuclear and bio-energy will provide the energy to compensate for the intermittency in supply from renewable resources. In the medium to long term, the development of energy storage technologies and a next-generation 'smart grid' will provide further scope for managing the intermittency and balancing supply and demand more effectively".

Ecology

Etive Ecology have been commissioned by Innova/Novus to conduct an ecological appraisal of the proposed cable route which was completed over in May 2023. The report which is submitted with this application details that:

'The proposed cable corridor runs through primarily low value habitats. There is a low risk of encountering protected species but GCN and roosting bats are potentially present in close proximity to the works. However, proportionate mitigation measures are recommended herein which adequately manage the risk of impacted legally protected species, such that the scheme can be installed without the need for and species licensing.'

Due to the detailed survey carried out, it is considered that the proposals will result in no negative impact on designated sites. Appropriate mitigation measures are proposed as part of the ecology appraisal which can be condition on any approval.

Archaeology

Wessex Archaeology were commissioned to undertake an archaeological Desk Based Assessment to assess the general aspect, character, condition and setting of the Scheme and to identify any impacts. A site visit was undertaken and appropriate records were researched and referenced in the preparation of the DBA.

The report concludes that This study has identified no overriding archaeological constraints which are likely to prohibit development.

Design and Access

Design and Access Statement were introduced to help ensure that both design quality and inclusive access are given sufficient consideration in the planning process. Design and Access Statements are required by The Town and County Planning (Development

Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016 (as amended) for “major developments”.
The proposed development, due to its length, would have an area of 1 hectare or more

Use

The cable is required to connect the solar farms to the electrical network. Without the cable route the solar farms will not be able to export electricity and battery units will not be able to import or export electricity.

Amount, Scale, heritage and Layout

The cable route is proposed to be approximately 1.17km long and constructed using a directional drill methods. The majority of the route will be within an existing highway, approximately 450 metres of the cable route is across an intensively farmed arable field.

A 1 metre buffer either side of the proposed route has been proposed to allow for any required flexibility in the route during construction.

There are no designated heritage assets along the route of the scheme, within the area there are three listed buildings, however, with the proposal is entirely underground.

Access, construction and operation

During construction parking will be made available on existing solar sites away from and off the public highway. During operation there will not be a need to for vehicular access or parking provision to service the development.

Appearance, ecology, and landscaping



The cable route will be constructed via a mixture of methods, directional drill technique with open trenching , Once the cable has been constructed there will be minimal evidence of any ground disturbance or the presence of development.

