

P-06-1552 Stop building industrial solar ‘farms’ close to residential buildings and within village boundaries.

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Rhagfyr 2025
Petitions Committee | 8 December 2025

Reference: SR25/12212-3

Introduction

Petition Number: P-06-1552

Petition title: Stop building industrial solar ‘farms’ close to residential buildings and within village boundaries.

Text of petition: Solar farms are increasing throughout the UK and Wales. Bringing unsightly structures into our countryside and reducing farmland.

With the high winds experienced during stormy weather damaging solar ‘farms’ causing damage which causes alarm to local residents due to the risk of shattered solar panels on their land.

Having solar ‘farms’ near residential property reduces value & affects sales.

I propose that we keep solar ‘farms’ away from residential areas and outside village boundaries.

<https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/huge-storm-wrecked-solar-farm-30556529.amp>



<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/projects/General/General-Advice-00769-2-Attachment.pdf>

<http://trefeglwys-solar-farm.co.uk/>

<https://www.countytimes.co.uk/news/24918555-solar-farm-planned-land-trefeglwys-powys/>

The text provided above is submitted by the petitioner. The petitions team make every effort to ensure it preserves their authentic voice. This text has not been verified for accuracy, or errors, and may contain unverified opinions or assertions.

Mae'r testun uchod yn cael ei gyflwyno gan y deisebydd. Mae'r tîm deisebau yn gwneud pob ymdrech i sicrhau ei fod yn cadw ei lais dilys. Nid yw'r testun hwn wedi'i wirio am gywirdeb, neu wallau, a gall gynnwys barn neu honiadau heb eu gwirio.

1. Background

1.1. The current state of solar PV in Wales

The Welsh Government's [Energy in Wales report 2023](#) said that a total of 86,398 solar PV projects provided 1,291 MW of capacity and an estimated 1,184 MWh of electricity generation. This makes solar PV the largest renewable technology in Wales by capacity, and the third largest by generation, behind only onshore (3,106 MWh) and offshore wind (2,163 MWh).

There has been a [large increase in the deployment of solar PV projects](#) in Wales in recent years. Almost four times as many projects were commissioned in 2023 (15,300) compared to 2021 (3,900). The new solar PV capacity installed in 2023 (108 MW) was more than double the amount installed in 2022.

1.2. Planning consent

Some types of development are considered by planning law to be 'permitted' and are therefore granted development consent without the need for a planning application. Small installations of solar panels, either on roofs, walls, or ground-mounted panels, may be considered 'permitted development' under [Welsh Government planning guidance](#).

Larger solar projects require planning consent and are subject to approval by the relevant planning authority, which is determined based on proposed generating capacity, as shown in the table below.

Project capacity (solar)	Consenting
<10 MW	Local planning authority (LPA)
10 – 350 MW	Welsh Ministers (<u>Developments of National Significance</u> (DNS))
>350 MW	UK Secretary of State (<u>Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects</u>)

Proposals for large-scale energy development are classed as ‘Developments of National Significance’ (DNS) and are determined by the Welsh Ministers. However, the Infrastructure (Wales) Act 2024 introduced a new consenting regime known as an Infrastructure Consent for ‘Significant Infrastructure Projects’, which is being established to replace the existing DNS regime.

Proposals will continue to be dealt with under the existing DNS regime until the new regime is in force.

1.3. National planning policy

Planning applications are determined in accordance with national and local planning policy unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In principle, any consideration which relates to the use and development of land is capable of being material.

The Welsh Government’s national planning policy is set out in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Future Wales sets out the Welsh Government’s policies on development and land use in a spatial context. It has development plan status and forms the highest tier of development plan in Wales.

Policies 17 and 18 of Future Wales (see page 95) deal with renewable and low carbon energy. Policy 17 states:

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. In determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision-makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales’ international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency.

Policy 18 sets out that proposals for renewable and low carbon energy projects qualifying as DNS will be permitted, subject to a list of criteria contained within the policy. This includes that **“there are no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings”**.

However, national planning policy does not mandate any set boundaries between solar developments and settlements. How this policy is interpreted and applied to individual applications would be a matter for the Welsh Ministers as the decision maker (in the case of DNS), and ultimately the courts.

It is worth noting that locating solar developments away from communities may potentially impact upon agricultural land. In March 2022, the Welsh Government issued a [letter to Chief Planning Officers](#) clarifying policies in relation to the development of solar on agricultural land. It sets out that:

*...where BMV [**Best and Most Versatile**] land is identified within a proposed solar PV array development, considerable weight should be given to protecting such land from development, because of its special importance, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise it will be necessary to refuse permission.*

It's also worth noting that in accordance with Future Wales, “sites in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) are considered unsuitable for large-scale wind and solar” developments.

2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government has statutory duties to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#). The Welsh Government has also set a target for renewable electricity generation to be equivalent to 70% of Wales' annual electricity consumption by 2030, rising to 100% by 2035.

As outlined, there are multiple factors to take into account when determining applications for solar developments in accordance with planning policy and a balance to be struck between meeting renewable energy targets, protecting AONBs and agricultural land and avoiding adverse impacts on communities.

In her letter to the Chair dated 25 November, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Energy and Planning, Rebecca Evans MS refers to the various planning policies discussed in this briefing. The Cabinet Secretary also highlights the Welsh Government's guidance on [Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales](#) which,

although not formal policy, “could be a material consideration to inform potential planning conditions”. The Cabinet Secretary says this guidance 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.

The letter goes on to state the Welsh Government’s ‘[Development Management Manual Wales \(2025\)](#)’ identifies that:

...when determining planning applications [planning authorities] 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.

3. Welsh Parliament action

On 11 June 2025, there was a [Senedd debate on a Welsh Conservatives motion](#) calling on the Welsh Government to: announce a moratorium on applications for solar panels on agricultural land; review solar energy potential in Wales; and develop a solar strategy for Wales. The motion was not passed.

An [open debate in Plenary on 19 March 2025](#) addressed the question of whether renewables alone can meet Wales’ energy needs. The debate included discussion of the most appropriate locations to site solar panels.

In June the [Committee considered a petition](#) calling for solar panels to be sited next to roads and railways, in industrial areas and over car parks. The Committee closed that petition with the intention of keeping a watching brief on the issue of where solar developments are located.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.