



Candwr Solar Farm

Pre Application Consultation

Environmental Statement

Chapter 1: Introduction

2 July 2026



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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

- 1.1.1. This Environmental Statement ("ES") has been prepared on behalf of Candwr Solar Farm Ltd (the "Applicant") supporting a Development of National Significance (DNS) application, under Section 62 (D) of the of the Planning (Wales) Act 2015¹ ("the Wales Act"). The Applicant is seeking to obtain planning permission for the construction, operation and decommissioning of Candwr Solar Farm, a ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PM) farm approximately 46 Mega Watts (MW) with all associated works (including cable route corridor), equipment, and necessary infrastructure (the "Proposed Development") on land at Court Farm, Ponthir, Monmouthshire (the "Application Site"). The Application Site extends to approximately 131.62 hectares (ha) and lies within the administrative area of Monmouthshire County Council (MCC), Torfaen County Borough (TCB) Council and Newport City Council (NCC). The location of the Application Site is shown on **Figure 1.1 – Site Location Plan**.
- 1.1.2. This draft ES has been prepared for the purposes of pre-application consultation and will be subject to finalisation prior to submission of the DNS application.
- 1.1.3. This ES Chapter focuses on identifying the Applicant, provides an overview of the Proposed Development, verifies the legislative framework it adheres to, sets out the structure of the ES, presents a summary of the consultation and engagement carried out, and names the expert entities that have conducted the EIA.
- 1.1.4. This ES Chapter is supported by the following technical appendices as part of ES Volume 2:
- **Appendix 1.1 – EIA Screening Direction 12.06.25**
- 1.1.5. This ES Chapter is supported by the following figures as part of ES Volume 1:
- **Figure 1.1 – Site Location Plan**

1.2. The Applicant

- 1.2.1. Candwr Solar Farm Ltd ('the Applicant') (part of TotalEnergies) area a global integrated energy company that produces and markets energies. TotalEnergies has been present in the UK for more than 60 years. TotalEnergies have reinvented and diversified their energy offering to promote renewable and decarbonised energies, as well as sparing, well considered use of fossil energies.
- 1.2.2. TotalEnergies are making major investments in solar and are developing projects across England and Wales, amounting to around 1GW of power. TotalEnergies have invested in

¹ Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Section 62D, amended by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 Section 19

several offshore wind developments in the UK which will have the capacity to deliver about 5GW of renewable power, including Seagreen (1.1GW) which became fully operational in 2023, West of Orkney (2GW) and Outer Dowsing (1.5GW).

- 1.2.3. TotalEnergies are one of the UK's largest suppliers of gas and electricity to businesses and the public sector. We also offer electric vehicle charging solutions and market petroleum products including lubricants, aviation fuel, bitumen, and specialty fluids.
- 1.2.4. TotalEnergies is working in partnership with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water to decarbonise its operations through the delivery of this Proposed Development. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water will purchase and consume 100% of the energy generated by Candwr Solar Farm, a proportion will be consumed directly at Court Farm Treatment Works, with the rest of the generated energy 'sleeved' to other Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water sites around Wales via the National Grid. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water are not the Applicant for the Proposed Development.
- 1.2.5. Reducing Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's reliance on the National Grid also gives more control over operational costs. This would protect from fluctuating energy prices and helps manage customer bills at a time of rising costs thereby generating additional local benefits.
- 1.2.6. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water has committed to 90% carbon emission reduction by 2030 and 'Net-Zero' by 2040. This project would make a valuable contribution towards meeting these targets.

1.3. EIA Regulations and Procedures

- 1.3.1. By virtue of its potential generating capacity of between 10MW–350MW, the Proposed Development constitutes a Development of National Significance (DNS) under section 4 of the Developments of National Significance (Specified Criteria and Prescribed Secondary Consents) (Wales) Regulations 2016 , for the purposes of Section 62 (D) of the Wales Act.
- 1.3.2. The process for applying for a Development of National Significance is set out by the Development of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016 and subsequent Regulations. The DNS application process is managed by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) on behalf of the Welsh Government.
- 1.3.3. The requirement for EIA was prescribed by European law under Council Directive 85/337/EEC (the "EIA Directive"). This Directive has been amended four times, with the latest amendment, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive (2014/52/EU) entering into force on 15 May 2014.
- 1.3.4. Planning is a devolved matter, therefore each country of the United Kingdom is required to implement any updates to the EIA Directive into domestic legislation. In Wales, the Directive has been enacted most recently into law by The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (the "EIA Regulations"). The EIA Regulations came into force on the 16 May 2017.

- 1.3.5. An Environmental Statement (ES) is a document that sets out the findings of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). An EIA is a process for identifying the likely significance of environmental effects (beneficial or adverse) arising from a Proposed Development, by comparing the existing environmental conditions prior to development (the baseline) with the environmental conditions during/following the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of a development should it proceed. The EIA is carried out prior to the submission of the DNS application.
- 1.3.6. The statutory requirements for carrying out an EIA, the contents of the ES and the procedures for determining planning applications for 'EIA Development' are set out within the EIA Regulations.
- 1.3.7. Further details on the EIA process are reported in **Chapter 2 – EIA Assessment Scope & Methodology**.

Screening Direction

- 1.3.8. In order to determine if it is necessary to undertake an EIA to accompany a planning application, Regulation 7 of the EIA Regulations makes provision for an applicant to request PEDW (on behalf of the Welsh Ministers) for a 'Screening Direction'; in the absence of a submitted EIA, Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations provides for Welsh Ministers to screen a planning application on receipt if it appears to require a Screening Direction.
- 1.3.9. The EIA Regulations require that any proposed development falling within the categories set out within Schedule 2 of those regulations should be considered as 'EIA Development' where the development is considered likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of such factors as its nature, size or location (Regulation 2).
- 1.3.10. The Proposed Development falls within Category 3(a) 'Energy Industry' – Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam, and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1). Column 2 of the table within Schedule 2 sets out 'Applicable Thresholds and Criteria' for Schedule 2 developments.
- 1.3.11. The applicable thresholds for 'Category 3(a) 'Energy Industry' – Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam, and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)' are as follows:
- *"The area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare"*
- 1.3.12. The Application Site is approximately 131.62 ha and therefore exceeds the thresholds of the EIA Regulations. Given that the Application Site exceeds the EIA Regulations, it is of the assumption that the Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 development of the EIA Regulations that may require the submission of an ES.
- 1.3.13. The Applicant submitted a request for an EIA Screening Direction, issued to PEDW on the 8th April 2025 (reference: DNS CAS-O2366-F2C3K8). A Screening Direction was adopted by PEDW on 12th June 2025 (**Appendix 1.1 – EIA Screening Direction 12.06.25**) confirming the application is an EIA development. .

Scoping Direction

- 1.3.14. In order to determine the scope of an EIA, the EIA Regulations make provision for, but do not statutorily require, an applicant to request that PEDW provide a written Scoping Direction as to the information to be provided within the ES.
- 1.3.15. A request for an EIA Scoping Direction was issued to PEDW (on behalf of the Welsh Government) on 30th September 2025 (**Appendix 2.1 – EIA Scoping Report**) to seek agreement on the scope and methodology of the EIA. An EIA Scoping Direction was adopted by the Welsh Government on 11.02.2026 (**Appendix 2.2 – EIA Scoping Direction 11.02.2026**). All issues raised in the Scoping Direction have been considered during the EIA process and are discussed in further detail in the ES Chapters. Further information on the scoping exercise is provided in **Chapter 2 – EIA Assessment Scope & Methodology** of the ES.

1.4. EIA Process

- 1.4.1. An EIA is a process for identifying the likely significance of environmental effects (beneficial or adverse) arising from the Proposed Development, by comparing the existing environmental conditions prior to development (the baseline) with the environmental conditions during/following the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of a development, should it proceed. An ES is a document that sets out the findings of an EIA.
- 1.4.2. The baseline for the EIA assessment has been derived from surveys and studies within and around the red line boundary. The ES includes a range of embedded mitigation (design measures incorporated into the Proposed Development) and has also considered measures to avoid, reduce, or additionally mitigate any significant adverse effects on the environment and, where possible, enhance the environment. An assessment of the likely significant environmental effects is made assuming embedded mitigation is delivered. It has then identified 'residual' effects, which are defined as the effects that remain on receptors following the implementation of additional mitigation measures.
- 1.4.3. The potential for cumulative effects from the Proposed Development and other developments are also considered, as well as in-combination effects (multiple environmental effects from the Proposed Development combined to affect the same receptor or resource). The EIA is carried out prior to the submission of the DNS application. The methodology and approach of the EIA process is explained in detail at **Chapter 2 – EIA Assessment Scope & Methodology** of the ES.

1.5. Structure of Environmental Statement

- 1.5.1. This ES comprises studies on each of the aspects of the environment identified as likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development (the 'technical chapters'), which are supported with figures and technical appendices where appropriate.
- 1.5.2. This ES is structured as follows:

- Environmental Statement– Main Text and Figures (Volume 1) – Comprises the main volume of the ES, including ‘general chapters’ and associated figures that describe the EIA context, provide a description of the Application Site and Proposed Development, and set out the scope of the ES, followed by the ‘technical chapters’ with the associated figures for each environmental discipline relevant to the proposals and concluding with a summary.
- Environmental Statement– Technical Appendices (Volume 2) – Comprises the technical appendices supporting each environmental topic within Volume 1.
- Environmental Statement: Non-Technical Summary (NTS) – this provides a concise summary of the ES identifying the likely significant environmental effects and the measures proposed to mitigate or to avoid adverse effects of the Proposed Development.

1.5.3. The ES includes a likely significant effect assessment across a range of technical ES chapters.

1.5.4. The structure of ES is detailed in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1 – Structure of ES

Chapter Number	Title	Responsible Author
	Contents and Statement of Competence	Pegasus Group
1	Introduction	Pegasus Group
2	EIA Assessment Scope and Methodology	Pegasus Group
3	The Application Site	Pegasus Group
4	Proposed Development and Alternatives	Pegasus Group
5	Landscape and Visual	Pegasus Group
6	Ecology	Avian Ecology
7	Glint and Glare	Pager Power
8	Agricultural Circumstances	Kernon Countryside Consultants

9	Water Environment	Pegasus Group
10	Built Heritage	Pegasus Group
11	Transport and Access	Pegasus Group
12	Air Quality	Air Quality Consultants (AQC) (part of Logika Group)
13	Summary	Pegasus Group
14	Glossary	Pegasus Group
15	References	Pegasus Group

- 1.5.5. For continuity, the figures and appendices are arranged and presented using the same reference numbers as the chapters as a means of providing supportive background and technical information.

The EIA Consultant Team

- 1.5.6. The EIA Regulations set out the requirements for EIA applications to be accompanied by confirmation that the Environmental Statement has been prepared by competent experts in accordance with Regulation 17(4)(a) of the EIA Regulations.
- 1.5.7. The ES has been coordinated and managed by Pegasus Group. Pegasus is accredited under the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) 'Quality Mark' scheme, formerly known as the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) before changing its name in July 2025. The ISEP 'Quality Mark' scheme is a mark of excellence in EIA co-ordination and management. Pegasus Group have extensive experience of undertaking EIA work across a range of projects and development types including renewable energy developments.
- 1.5.8. The consultants who have contributed to the preparation of this ES are referenced in the Statement of Competence at the beginning of the ES, along with information demonstrating their expertise to ensure the completeness and quality of the ES in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

1.6. Other Documents

- 1.6.1. A number of other draft documents have been produced for statutory consultation and will be submitted as part of, and accompanying, the DNS application.

1.7. Pre-Application Consultation

1.7.1. Effective and meaningful engagement and consultation with stakeholders is an essential aspect of developing the design of the Proposed Development and of undertaking a comprehensive EIA.

1.7.2. The Applicant has carried out consultation and engagement iteratively, seeking feedback on the Proposed Development at different stages of design development and environmental assessment from a range of stakeholders (PEDW, the local community and a range of statutory and non-statutory consultees). This has sought to ensure that feedback from relevant statutory consultees and the local community has been considered and reflected in the Proposed Development. The consultation undertaken to date has been informal and the pre application statutory consultation is taking place from July 2026.

PEDW

1.7.3. Early engagement has also been undertaken with PEDW to ascertain a without prejudice view of the emerging proposed development and proposed assessment.

1.7.4. An inception meeting was held on 2nd December 2022 to present the project, location and site selection rationale and ongoing technical work. A Pre-application meeting was held on 27th June 2025 to further discuss updates to the project design, the engagement so far and seeking feedback from PEDW on the application scope, assessment approach, and policy context.

1.7.5. Informal pre-application Advice was requested from PEDW on the 9th June 2025 with Pre-Application advice provided on the 25th July 2025. The advice in summary noted the following:

- The proposed solar farm is generally supported in principle, with strong alignment to national policy on renewable energy and rural diversification, subject to no unacceptable environmental impacts.
- The application scope and documentation list are broadly acceptable but must include an Environmental Statement (ES) as the development is confirmed as EIA development.
- The applicant should engage directly with LPAs to agree viewpoints and photomontage locations for the LVIA and cumulative assessment, with evidence of this engagement included.
- Submission of an EIA Scoping Direction is strongly recommended to refine methodology and obtain detailed consultee feedback; if not undertaken, robust justification is required for any scoped-out topics.

- The policy framework is largely appropriate, but should additionally reference key Welsh guidance (e.g., Well-being of Future Generations Act and renewable energy design/ownership guidance).
- Community engagement should go beyond minimum statutory requirements, with direct liaison with LPAs, community councils, and local residents encouraged.
- Overall, no fundamental in-principle objections are raised, but emphasis is placed on robust environmental evidence, early engagement, and well-prepared submission documents.

Local Planning Authorities

- 1.7.6. Pre-application Advice was requested from MCC, TBCC, and NCC between 4–9th June 2025. NCC Pre-application advice was received on 15th September 2025. TBCC confirmed the Scoping Direction stakeholder response to PEDW (see Appendix 1: Consultation Responses of **Appendix 2.2 – EIA Scoping Direction 11.02.2026**) constitutes their informal Pre-Application advice. MCC have not provided Pre-application advice, although the Applicant notes MCC also provided a stakeholder response to **Appendix 2.2 – EIA Scoping Direction 11.02.2026**.

Non-Statutory Consultation

- 1.7.7. The non-statutory consultation served to introduce the local community to the Proposed Development and to provide an early opportunity to shape the evolving design.
- 1.7.8. The Applicant launched a non-statutory consultation from 27th June to 25th July 2025 with a public exhibition held on 11th July 2025 in Ponthir Village Hall, Ponthir.
- 1.7.9. Visitors to the website were able to submit feedback online using a feedback form. In addition to this, there was a freephone number and email address. The website had 1,255 visits (between 27 June and 25 July 2025).
- 1.7.10. In total the Applicant received:
- 194 people attended the public exhibition event;
 - 79 responses in total during the non-statutory consultation period (via email, feedback forms, website and phone)
- 1.7.11. Key findings from the feedback forms from the public exhibition event include:
- Majority of respondents lived in Ponthir and nearby Caerleon;
 - Over half of respondents were supportive of the principle of renewable energy provision in Wales;

- Just under half of respondents supporting solar farms are positive form of renewable energy generation in principles;
- Traffic and access, use of agricultural land and landscape and visual amenity were the most frequently stated environmental issues raised

1.7.12. A series of meetings have been held with a range of statutory and non-statutory consultees and stakeholders with an interest in the Proposed Development, including Natasha Asghar Member of Senedd (MS) for the Casnewydd Islwyn constituency, Laura Anne Jones MS for Sir Fynwy Torfaen, Catherine Fookes Member of Parliament (MP) for Monmouthshire, Nick Thomas-Symonds MP for Torfaen, Llangybi Fawr Community Council, Ponthir Community Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, Newport City Council and Monmouthshire County Council Councillors and Officers.

1.7.13. Feedback received at these meetings has been considered in the development design. Where relevant, the meetings are referred to in the relevant ES technical chapters of this ES.

1.8. Environmental Statement Availability and Comments

Availability

1.8.1. Copies of this draft ES may be obtained from Pegasus Group during the pre – application statutory consultation phase, the costs for which are set out below:

- The ES is freely available to view digitally on the project website – <https://candwrsolarfarm.co.uk>
- Main Text and Technical Appendices- £500
- Non-Technical Summary (NTS) – £40
- Digital copies of the above documents on a USB – £15

1.8.2. Postage is payable on all orders. For copies of any of the above please contact Pegasus Group (quoting reference P24-2075) at the following address:

Pegasus Group
33 Sheep Street,
Cirencester
GL7 1RQ
Email: Cirencester@pegasusgroup.co.uk
Tel: 01285 641717

What Happens Next

- 1.8.3. At the close of the statutory pre-application consultation, all responses received will be carefully considered and taken into account in the development of the project. If, as a result of the feedback, the project changes to such an extent that it is necessary to undertake further consultation, then this further consultation will be undertaken. If the Applicant is in position to finalise the application, then it is we aim to move forward and submit the application to PEDW by winter 2026.