



PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF AN UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC CONNECTION CABLE
ROUTE ON LAND SOUTH OF CEFN ROAD, WREXHAM.

PLANNING AND DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

INNOVA RENEWABLES LIMITED

OCTOBER 2023

Registered company name: Innova Renewables

Registered company number: 12092691 Registered Address: 3rd Floor, St. George's House, 13-14 Ambrose Street,
Cheltenham, GL50 3LG.

1. Overview

1.1 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).

1.2 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.

1.3 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 sites, as shown on submitted plan 'Cable Route Constraints Plan'. Figure 3.

1.4 This application is supported by the following documents:

- Ecological Appraisal, prepared by Etive Ecology, dated 20th June 2023
- Hedgerow Appraisal, Prepared by Etive Ecology, dated 16th October 2023
- Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, Wessex Archaeology, dated May 2023
- Wrexham Cable Route, method statement, JSM
- Cable Route Plan, dated 14th December 2022
- Pre-Application Consultation Document, dated October 2023.

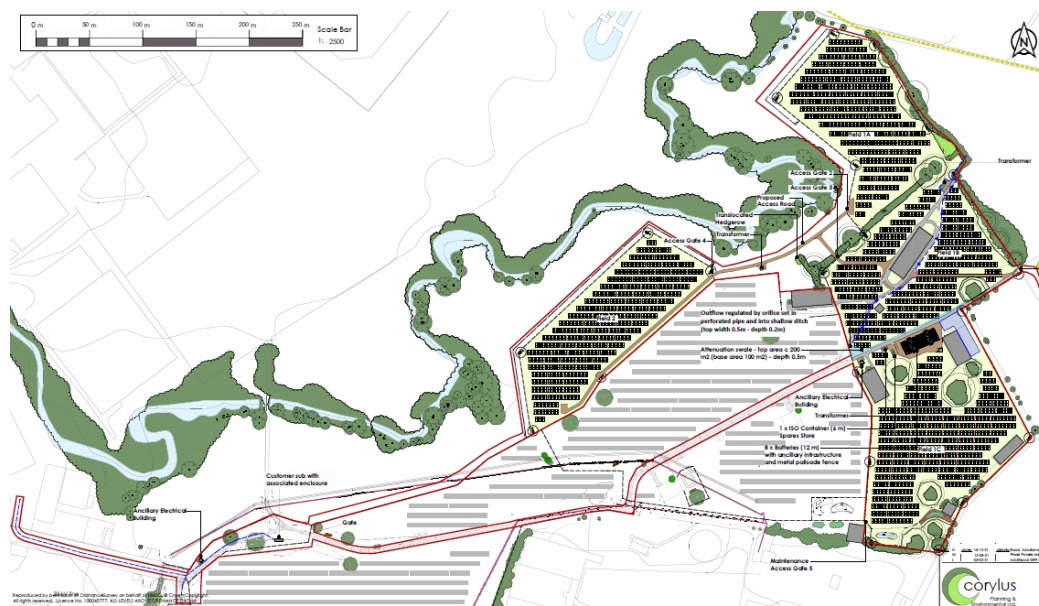


Figure 1: P/2022/0541 - Wrexham Solar Farm



Figure 2: P/2021/0676 Cefn Solar Farm

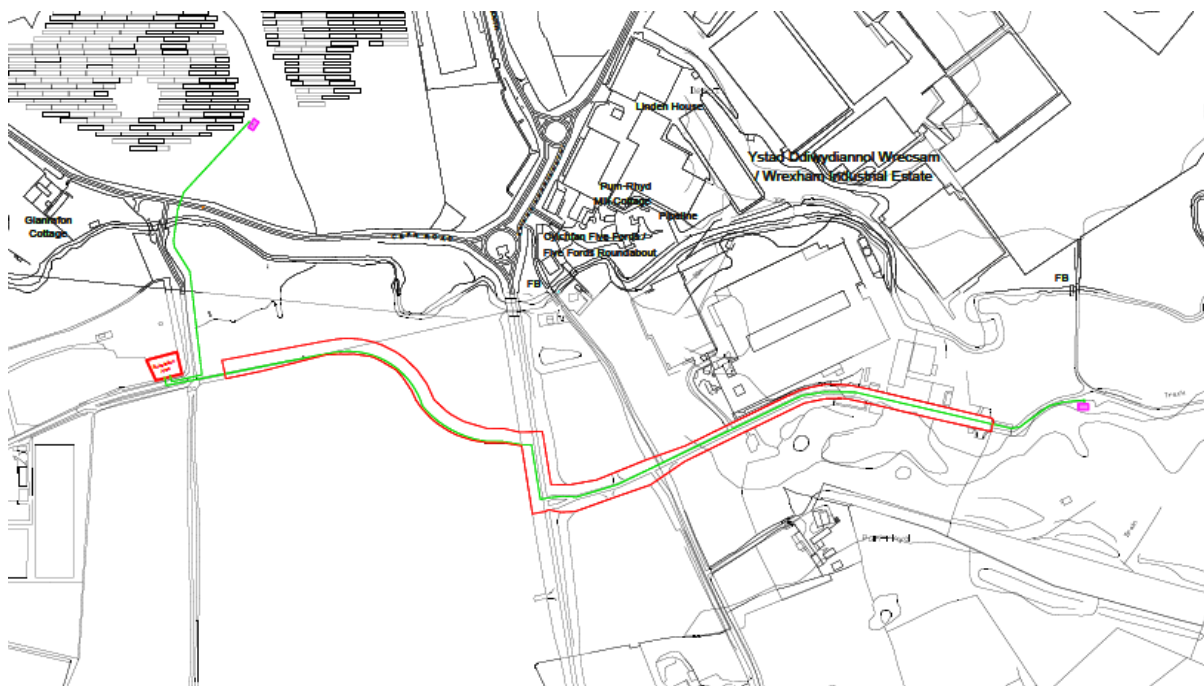


Figure 3: Proposed cable route

1.5 Route

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

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

1.8 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.

2. Need for renewable energy development

2.1 The cable route is essential infrastructure for connecting the solar farm to the electric network. The solar farms significantly contribute to local and nationally significant objectives regarding renewable energy development, energy security and affordability of supply.

2.2 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.

2.3 The 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. Solar farms can be built quickly and, coupled with consistent reductions in the cost of materials and improvements in the efficiency of panels large-scale solar is now viable....Solar farm proposals are currently likely to consist of solar panel arrays, mounting structures, piles, inverters, transformers and cable...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'.

2.4 Within Wales, the move towards a low carbon future has been set out in "Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition" (2012). The document set out the Government's ambition to create a 'sustainable, low carbon economy for Wales'. In order to realise this ambition 'business and industry in particular will play a key role in driving the transition to a low carbon economy and we recognise that we must do all we can to create a stable environment for the necessary long-term investment. We will work to do this by:

- striving to ensure that Wales is an exceptionally good place to conduct business and make long-term capital investments;
- engaging and working closely with, and being responsive to, the needs of business and industry;
- developing the Wales Infrastructure Investment Plan to ensure future infrastructure investment is clearly and strategically prioritised; and,
- ensuring our regulatory processes are as simplified and efficient as possible.'

3. Ecology

3.1 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:

3.2 '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.'

3.3. The proposal is to construct the cable route via low impact, underground directional drilling, however, there is one section as the cable route leaves Sesswick Way and travels west over farmland where the cable route will travel underneath the existing hedgerow (shown on figure 4 below). The intention is to directional drill under the hedgerow, however, in the event this is not possible there are two options. The first is if its during winter months the hedgerow can be dug out, root balls intact, and replanted once cable route is complete. The second option, if outside of the optimal transplant season, would be to remove the hedgerow and replant with new hedging of greater value than the existing when construction is complete. This is detailed within the Hedgerow Appraisal accompanying the application.

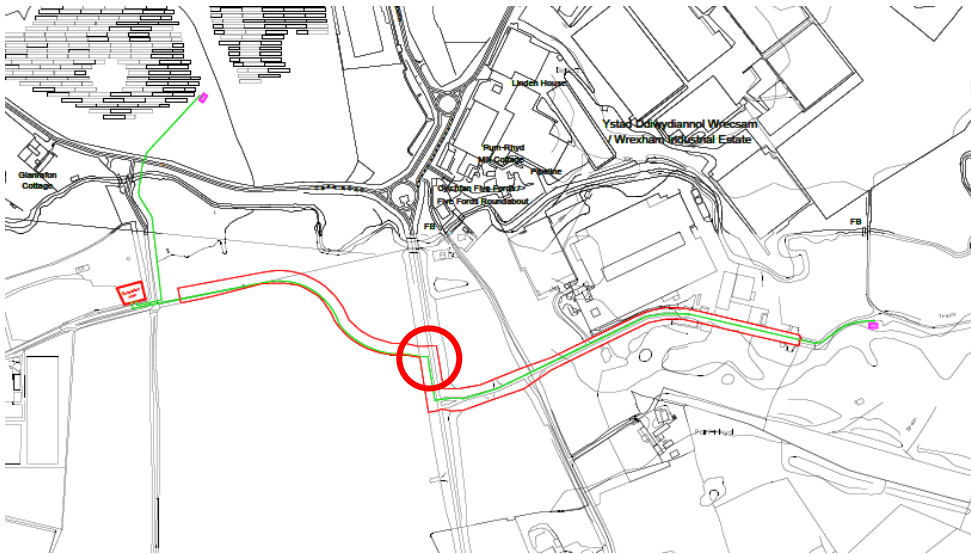


Figure 4: Location cable route interacting with hedgerow.

3.3 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 and hedgerow appraisal which can be condition on any approval.

4. Archaeology

4.1 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.

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

5. Design and Access

5.1 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.

5.2 Use

5.3 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.

5.4 Amount, Scale, heritage and Layout

5.5 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.

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

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

5.8 Access, construction and operation

5.9 During construction parking will be made available on existing solar sites away from and off the public highway. A construction Transport Management Plan can be secured

via condition if so required. During operation there will not be a need for vehicular access or parking provision to service the development.

6. Appearance, ecology, and landscaping

6.1 The cable route will be constructed via directional drill technique with possible open trenching in one section as detailed earlier in the report. Once the cable has been constructed there will be minimal evidence of any ground disturbance or the presence of development. The underground cable route would not interfere with agricultural activity or cause any permanent obstruction to the public highway.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The proposed development has been considered in according with the site's context, appropriate technical surveys and the needs of the project. The development is not constrained by any policy or statutory designations. Surveys taken place have shown there would be no adverse impact upon ecology, heritage and appropriate mitigation can be secured via conditions.