

# Economic Benefits Statement

DOC 08

Development of National Significance

## Alaw Môn Solar Farm

Land west of the B5112, 415m south of Llyn Alaw, 500m east of Llantrisant and 1.5km west of Llannerch-y-Medd, Anglesey

February 2024





## Document Management.

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# Executive Summary

## Background

This report outlines the economic benefits that will be created by the proposed ground mounted Solar Farm (up to 160MW) on land west of the B5112, 325m south of Llyn Alaw, 500m east of Llantrisant and 1.5km west of Llanerch-y-Medd, Anglesey. It has been produced on behalf of Wylfa Green Ltd (the “Applicant”) and the main quantifiable benefits for the construction and operational phases are:

- i. **Construction phase employment:** The Proposed Development could support up to 233 temporary jobs, both direct jobs on-site and in the wider supply chain, during the 12-month construction period.
- ii. **Contribution of construction phase to economic output:** The gross value added (GVA – a proxy for economic output) generated by jobs supported during the construction phase could be up to £15.1million.
- iii. **Permanent employment:** It is estimated that the Proposed Development will support up to 12 full-time equivalent jobs (FTE) in the Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC) area and the wider economy once it is operational.
- iv. **Contribution to economic output associated with the permanent employment:** The GVA associated with the 12 FTEs is estimated to be £0.8million per annum.
- v. **Business rates revenue:** Business rates generated by the solar project could be in the region of £11.9million (present value<sup>1</sup>) over the Proposed Development’s 40-year operational lifespan.

It should be noted that many of the benefits outlined above will be generated again during the decommissioning phase of the Proposed Development, especially those relating to the construction phase.

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<sup>1</sup> Where future benefits are calculated over a 10-year timeframe, they have been discounted to produce a present value. This is the discounted value of a stream of either future costs or benefits. A standard discount rate is used to convert all costs and benefits to present values. Using the Treasury’s Green Book, the recommended discount rate is 3.5%.

# 1. Introduction

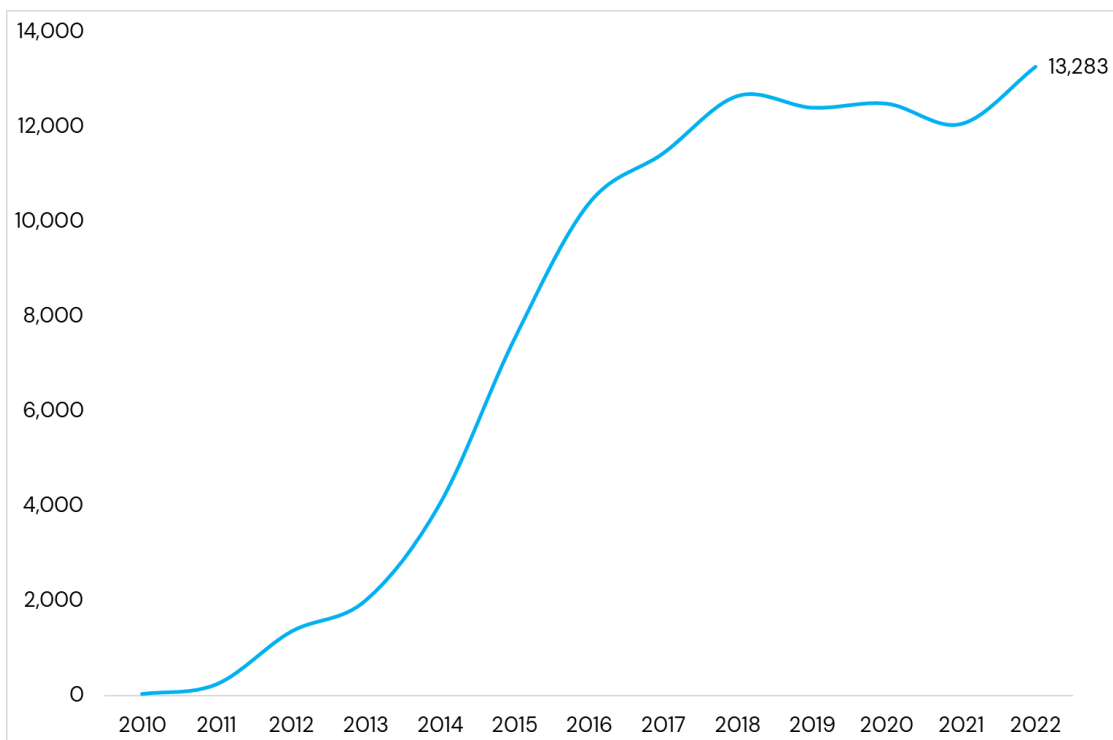
## Scope and Purpose

- 1.1. This report outlines the economic benefits that will be created by the proposed ground mounted Solar Farm (up to 160MW) on land west of the B5112, 325m south of Llyn Alaw, 500m east of Llantrisant and 1.5km west of Llanerch-y-Medd, Anglesey. It has been produced on behalf of Wylfa Green Ltd (the “Applicant”) and quantifies the main economic benefits from the construction and operational phases of the development.

## Supporting a Growing Sector

- 1.2. Data from the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics (DUKES) show that in the UK over the past 12 years, the amount of energy generated by solar PV has increased significantly. In 2010, only 40 GWh of solar PV energy was generated, however, by 2022 the figure had reached 13,283 GWh. **Figure 1.1** shows this increase in more detail for the UK as a whole.

**Figure 1.1: Energy generated from solar PV (GWh) in the UK, 2010–2022**

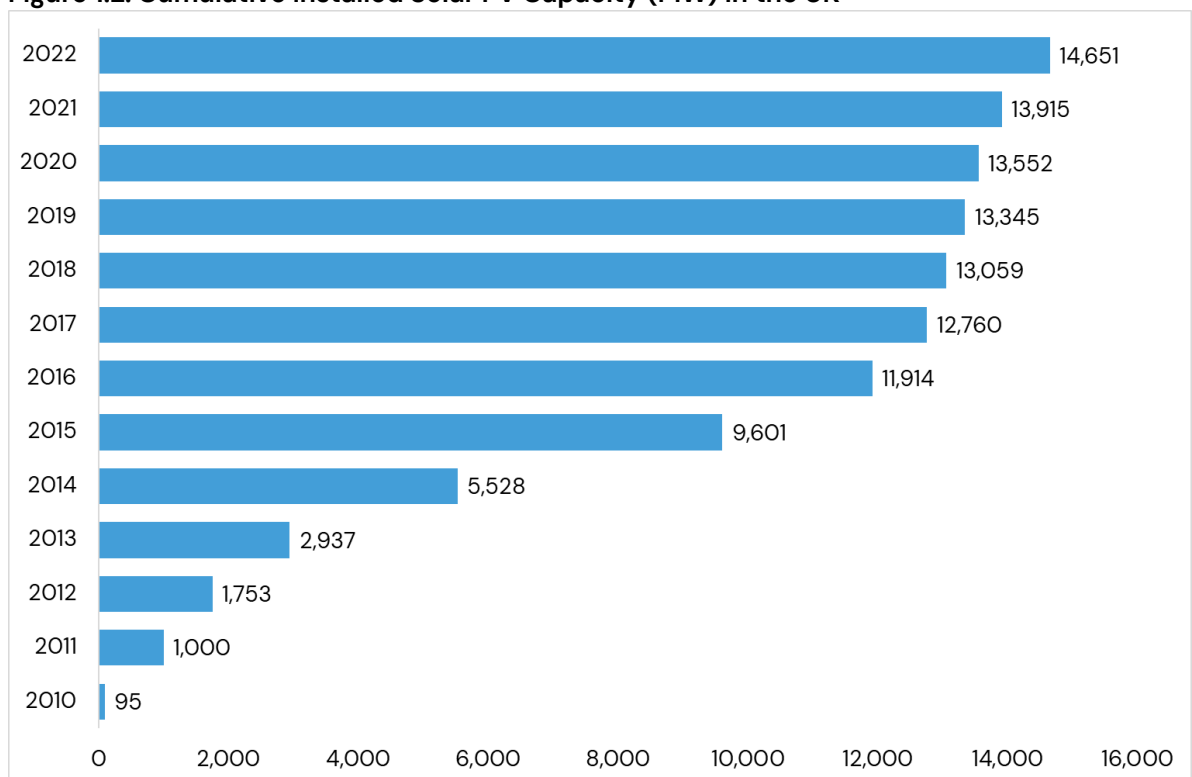


**Source:** Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics (DUKES)

- 1.3. The cumulative installed capacity of solar PV increased rapidly during the subsidy years between 2010 and 2017. In 2010 the installed capacity was 95 MW. This increased to 1,000 MW by 2011 and rapidly over subsequent years until plateauing in 2017/18. The most recent data for 2022 show the cumulative installed capacity of solar PV in the UK is 14,651 MW (see **Figure 1.2**).

- 1.4. In the Welsh Government’s report published in October 2023, *Energy Generation in Wales*<sup>2</sup>, there is a focus on the target that by 2030, 70% of electricity demand in Wales will be from renewable sources. In 2022, this figure stood at 59%. In July 2023, following a consultation period in which broad support was received for the Welsh Government’s renewable energy ambitions, the Welsh Government adopted new energy targets for 2035. These include generating the equivalent of 100% of Wales’ annual electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2035.
- 1.5. In 2022, 43 MW of new solar PV capacity was installed in Wales, the total capacity in Wales now totals almost 1.2GW across more than 70,000 projects. To meet the 2030 target outlined above, new renewable capacity needs to be commissioned in order to support continued growth in installed solar PV capacity.

**Figure 1.2: Cumulative Installed Solar PV Capacity (MW) in the UK**



**Source:** UK renewable electricity capacity, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

### Report Structure

- 1.6. The remainder of the report is structured as follows:
  - **Section 2** describes the character of the Isle of Anglesey County Council (IACC) area, in comparison to Wales and Great Britain. It presents information on employment trends, business numbers, unemployment and the claimant count.

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<sup>2</sup> *Energy Generation in Wales*: Welsh Government, November 2023.



- **Section 3** sets out the construction phase benefits of the Proposed Development, outlining its contribution to employment, economic output and potential spend associated with people working on-site during the build phase.
- **Section 4** sets out the number of jobs that the Proposed Development will create once fully developed and presents the assessment of the contribution of the Proposed Development to economic output and business rates. It also looks at how it will contribute to economic development objectives.
- **Section 5** presents a summary of the overall findings.

## 2. Socio-Economic Baseline

### Introduction

2.1. This section presents a profile of the IACC area, alongside Wales and Great Britain for comparison purposes. It examines the following topics:

- Employment – change over time and key sectors.
- Businesses by change over time.
- Unemployment, including the claimant count.

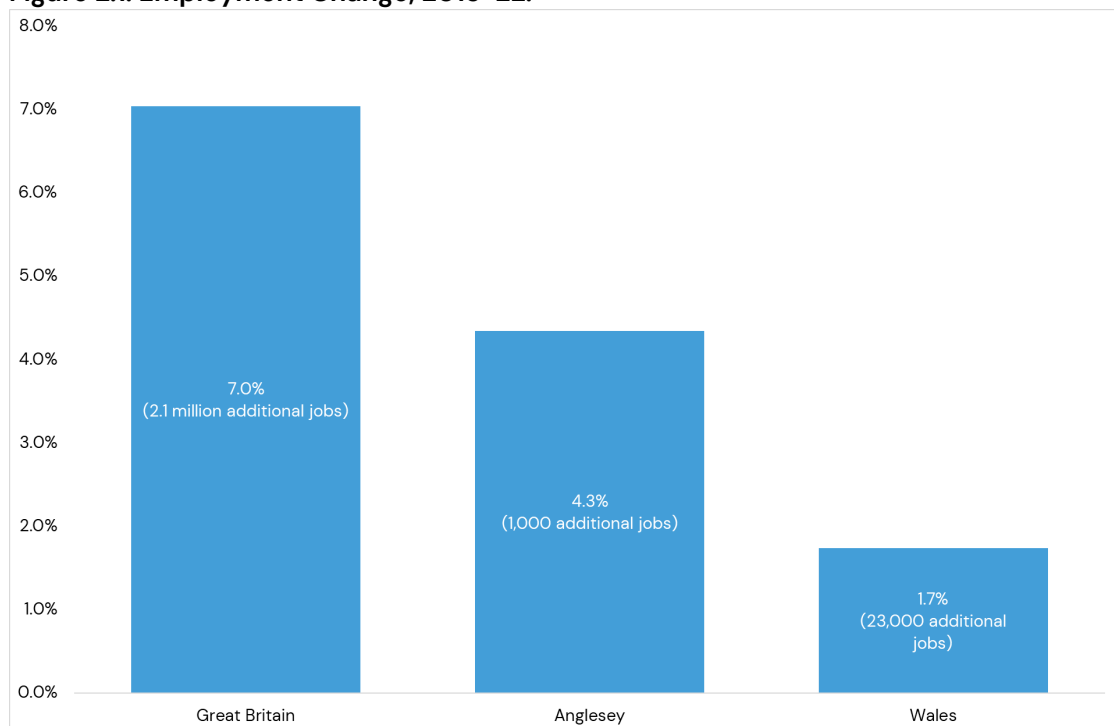
### Employment

#### *Employment Change, 2015–22*

2.2. Based on the most recent data published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) from the Business Register & Employment Survey (BRES), in 2022 there were around 24,000 jobs – including self-employment – in the IACC area.

2.3. Between 2015 and 2022, there was employment growth of 4.3% in the IACC area. This was higher than the regional rate with Wales having a growth rate of 1.7% (23,000 additional jobs) but below the national rate with Great Britain seeing an increase of 7% (2.1 million additional jobs – see Figure 2.1). The Proposed Development will create jobs in IACC and support the area’s growth by providing new labour market opportunities and help to bring employment change more in line with regional and national comparators.

**Figure 2.1: Employment Change, 2015–22.**



**Source:** ONS, Business Register & Employment Survey





- 2.4. Public administration, education and health is the largest sector in IACC, accounting for around 5,250 jobs and representing 22.2% of all jobs as of 2022. There is a similar trend in Wales and Great Britain with the public administration, education, and health sector accounting for the highest proportion of jobs (31.1% and 26% respectively).
- 2.5. The second largest sector in IACC is wholesale & retail, which accounted for 15.7% (3,700) of jobs in 2022, followed by accommodation & food services which accounted for 14.8% (3,500) of all jobs. The construction sector, which will see job opportunities created during the build phase, accounts for 6.4% (1,500) of employment in IACC. This is higher than the corresponding figures for Wales (5.1%) and Great Britain (5.0%). Table 2.1 breaks down employment by sector in more detail.

**Table 2.1: Employment by Sector, 2022**

	IACC	Wales	Great Britain
Agriculture, mining, utilities etc.	7.8%	4.5%	2.8%
Manufacturing	12.7%	10.4%	7.4%
Construction	6.4%	5.1%	5.0%
Wholesale & retail	15.7%	13.2%	13.9%
Transport & storage	5.3%	4.2%	5.0%
Accommodation & food services	14.8%	8.7%	7.9%
Information & communication	1.3%	2.2%	4.4%
Business, financial & professional services	9.5%	15.9%	23.2%
Public admin, education & health	22.2%	31.1%	26.0%
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	4.2%	4.7%	4.4%

**Source:** ONS, Business Register & Employment Survey

### Business Numbers

- 2.6. Between 2013 and 2023, the number of businesses in IACC grew by 15.4% (375). This represented lower growth when compared with the increases seen in Wales (17% - 18,800 new businesses) and Great Britain (21.2% - 539,010 new businesses). Table 2.2 presents the business data in more detail. Existing companies in IACC will benefit from the Proposed Development, especially during the build phase when construction workers will be spending money in the local economy on accommodation and items such as food and drink.

**Table 2.2: Business Change, 2013–2023**

	2013	2023	Absolute Change	% Change
IACC	2,825	3,260	435	15.4%
Wales	110,510	129,310	18,800	17.0%
Great Britain	2,543,115	3,082,125	539,010	21.2%

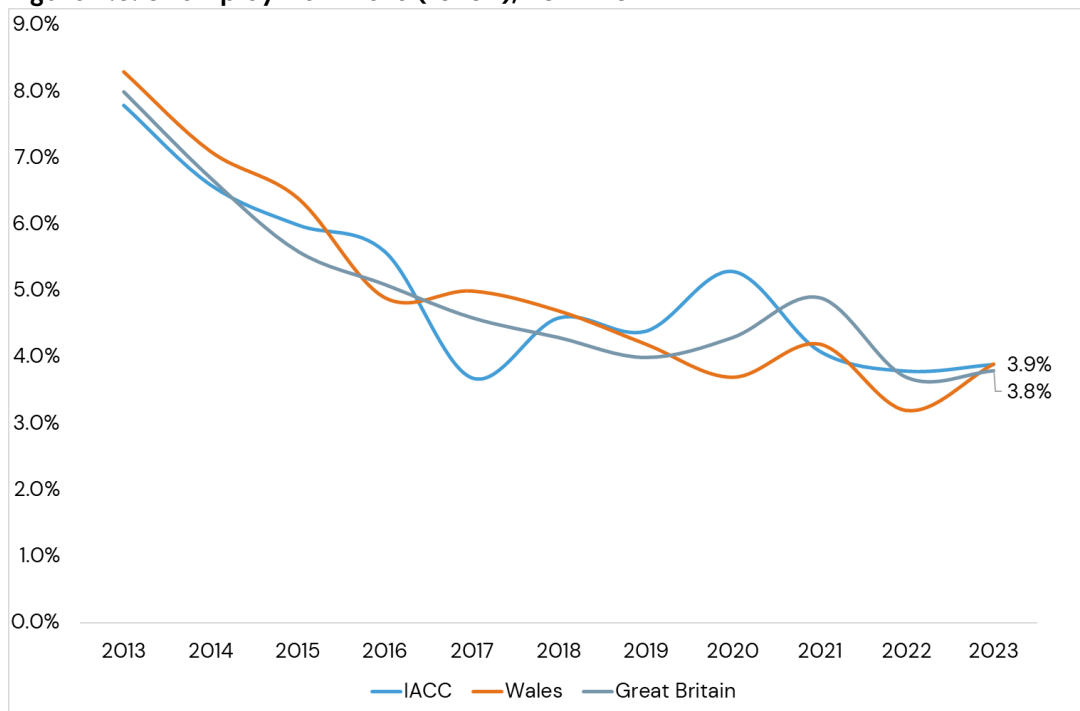
**Source:** ONS, UK Business Count

### Unemployment

- 2.7. Overall, the unemployment rate for people aged 16–64<sup>3</sup> in IACC, Wales and Great Britain fell between 2013 and 2023. For Oct 2012–Sep 2013 the unemployment rate across the three areas was 7.8% in IACC, 8.3% in Wales and 8% in Great Britain. As of Oct 2022–Sep 2023, IACC and Wales have fallen to 3.9% whilst Great Britain has fallen to 3.8% (see Figure 2.3).

<sup>3</sup> Those aged 16–64 are used as a proxy for economically active people.

**Figure 2.3: Unemployment Rate (16-64), 2012-2022**

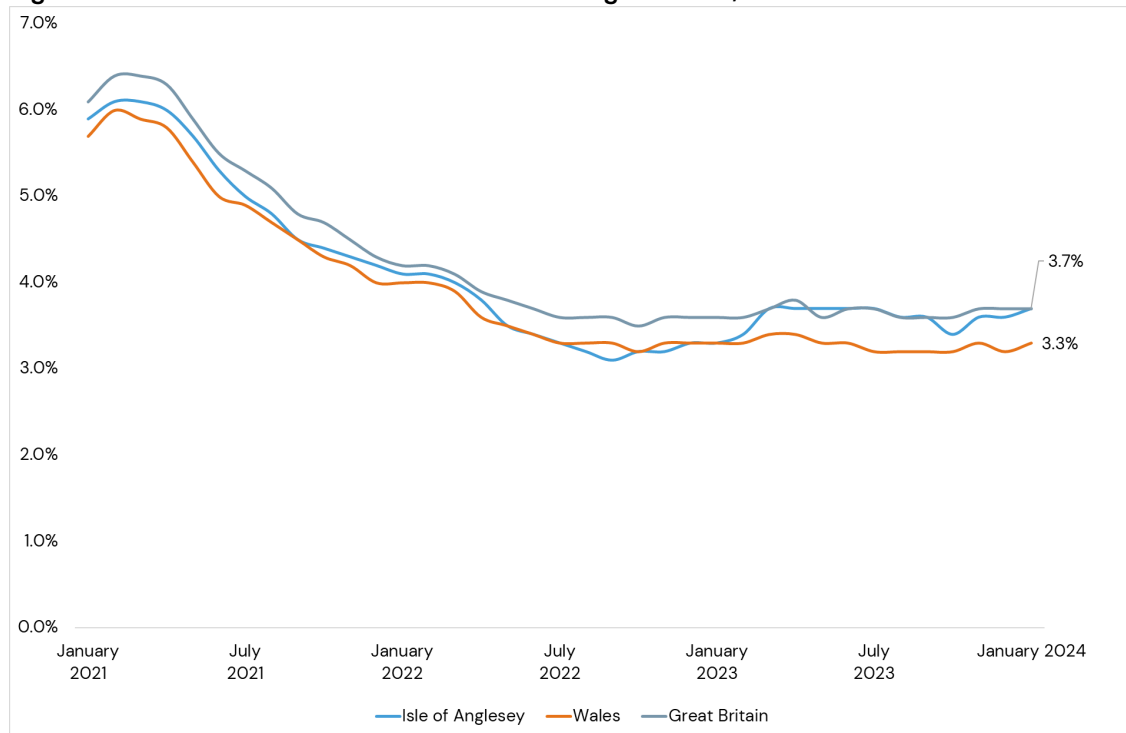


Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2021

### Claimant Count

- 2.8. Another way of analysing unemployment is to look at the claimant count, which counts the number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work.
- 2.9. Figure 2.4 shows the claimant count in IACC, Wales and Great Britain for every month from January 2021 to January 2024, expressed as a proportion of residents aged 16-64. In January 2021, the claimant count in IACC was 5.9% and by January 2023 it had fallen to 3.7%. This equates to around 860 fewer people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit who are required to seek work and be available for work. As of January 2024, the claimant count in IACC is the same as the rate in Great Britain (3.7%) but above the rate in Wales (3.3%).
- 2.10. As the claimant count is higher in IACC compared to Wales it remains imperative that new job opportunities are created in all parts of the country over the next few years and the Proposed Development will do this in IACC.

**Figure 2.4: Claimant Count as % of Residents aged 16–64, 2021–24**



**Source:** ONS, Claimant Count

### Summary

- Employment:** The IACC area saw jobs increase by 4.3% between 2015 and 2022. This increase was higher than the jobs growth seen across Wales (1.7%) but lower than the jobs growth seen across Great Britain (7%). The largest sector across all spatial scales was the public admin, education & health sector which supported 22.2% of jobs across IACC.
- Business Numbers:** Between 2013 and 2023, the number of businesses in IACC grew by 15.4% (375). This growth was lower than the figure for Wales (17%) and for Great Britain (21.2%).
- Unemployment:** The unemployment rate in IACC was 3.9% for Oct 2022–Sep 2023. The figure is the same for Wales and slightly lower for Great Britain at 3.8%. The claimant count is 3.7% in IACC, which is the same as Great Britain, whilst in Wales the figure is 3.3%.



### 3. Construction Phase Benefits

#### Supporting Construction Employment

- 3.1. Solar projects create opportunities for local businesses through the supply chain, including aggregates suppliers, security and monitoring during operation, farming and landscaping contractors and other aspects of the construction process, such as fencing. Construction workers may also use local services, which can bring further benefits to an area.
- 3.2. Based on information provided by the Applicant, the average number of construction workers on-site is expected to be around 100. The construction period is estimated to be 12-months.
- 3.3. The direct jobs on-site will support further employment via the “multiplier effect”, which measures further economic activity (jobs, expenditure or income) associated with additional local income and local supplier purchases. Research published in 2014 by the Centre for Economic & Business Research (CEBR) on solar powered growth in the UK<sup>4</sup> gives an employment multiplier for large-scale solar PV investments of 2.33 – i.e. for every single job supported on-site, 1.33 indirect/induced jobs are supported in the wider economy. Applying this multiplier to the average of 100 on-site jobs, the Proposed Development could support up to 133 additional temporary jobs in the wider economy during the 12-month build phase.
- 3.4. In total, the Proposed Development could support up to 233 temporary jobs, both direct jobs on-site and indirect/induced roles in the wider economy, during peak times of the 12-month construction period. A similar number of jobs are expected to be supported as part of the decommissioning process after 40 years when the solar project comes to the end of its lifespan.

#### Gross value added

- 3.5. The contribution of the site to economic output has been calculated by taking the average of 100 on-site jobs associated with the Proposed Development and multiplying this by an estimate of average levels of gross value added (GVA) per construction employee in Wales. Based on data sourced from ONS for 2021, GVA per construction employee in Wales is around £68,817 per annum.
- 3.6. The 133 indirect/induced jobs have been multiplied by the average GVA per job for all sectors in England & Wales (reflecting the fact that not all indirect/induced jobs will be in Wales). Based on 2021 ONS data, annual GVA per job is approximately £63,670.
- 3.7. Based on the figures above, it is estimated that during the 12-month construction of the Proposed Development, the GVA associated with the 233 temporary jobs supported on-site and in the wider economy could be in the region of £15.1million.

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<sup>4</sup> *Solar powered growth in the UK – the macroeconomic benefits for the UK of investment in solar PV*: CEBR (report for the Solar Trade Association), September 2014.



## Construction Spend in the Local Area

- 3.8. Research published by the CITB in April 2019<sup>5</sup> shows that nearly all construction workers in Wales live in Wales (98%). Due to the specialist nature of some parts of the Proposed Development, it is unlikely that a similar proportion of on-site workers will be living in Wales. The same CITB research also indicates that around 30% of a construction worker's career is mostly spent in Wales. Taking into account the specialist nature of some parts of the Proposed Development, it is felt that a figure of 30% of jobs is more realistic when considering the proportion of on-site build phase jobs that could be taken by local people or those living in the wider area.
- 3.9. Assuming therefore that at least 30% of the jobs are taken by local people during the build phase, the remaining 70% will be taken by people outside of the local area. These workers are likely to stay in the local area during construction and will spend money on accommodation and food and drink. It is therefore possible to estimate how much the construction workers could spend in the local area, thus supporting local businesses.
- 3.10. The build phase is expected to last 12 months and 70 jobs supported on-site could be taken by workers from outside of IACC (70% of the overall average of 100 on-site jobs). Workers from outside the area will be staying in hotels, B&B's etc. during the build phase. They will also be spending money in shops, other amenities, etc. The analysis below gives a high-level estimate of what this level of spend could equate to.
- 3.11. For month one it is assumed 40 workers will be on-site, for month two there will be 50 workers on-site, for month three there will be 60 workers on-site and for months four to seven there will be 70 workers on-site. For months eight and nine this will go back down to 60, for months ten and 11 there will be 50 workers on-site and for month 12 there will be 40 workers on-site. Assuming each worker spends around £75 per day on accommodation<sup>6</sup>, food and drink etc. and there are 21.75 working days in a month, it is estimated that during the 12-month construction phase, the construction employees from outside the local area could spend around £1.1million in local businesses. This will help support the 725 accommodation, food & drink and retail businesses<sup>7</sup> that operate within IACC.

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<sup>5</sup> *Workforce Mobility and Skills in the UK Construction Sector 2018/19. – Wales Report.* CITB, April 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Assumes up to £50 per day on accommodation and up to £25 per day on food & drink, other items etc.

<sup>7</sup> Based on data for 2023 from the UK Business Count, published by ONS.



## 4. Operational Phase Benefits

### Introduction

- 4.1. This section outlines the impact of the Proposed Development once operational, in terms of supporting permanent employment and economic output in IACC and the wider region. It also provides estimates on the business rates generated by the Proposed Development on an annual basis. In addition, a summary of how it will support economic development objectives is provided. Reference is also made to the Welsh Government's objectives on the wider climate change agenda.

### Employment

- 4.2. Based on previous experience of calculating the economic impact of solar farm schemes elsewhere in Great Britain, it is estimated that up to 12 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs will be supported by the Proposed Development in IACC and the wider economy. This is likely to include roles in civil engineering, land management, operations and maintenance.

### Gross Value Added

- 4.3. The contribution of the Proposed Development to economic output has been calculated by taking the job creation associated with the Proposed Development and multiplying this by an estimate of average levels of GVA per employee in England and Wales (around £63,670 in 2021, based on ONS data). It is estimated that once operational and fully occupied, GVA associated with the 12 FTE jobs will be around £0.8million per annum.
- 4.4. Looking at the economic output contribution over the 40-year operational lifespan of the project, the GVA associated with the 12 FTE jobs is estimated to be £16.9million (present value)<sup>8</sup>.

### Business Rates

- 4.5. Business rates are an important economic contributor to an area, given they are a contributor towards the cost of local services. It is estimated that the Proposed Development could generate in the region of £534,465 per annum in business rates. Over the 40-year lifespan of the Proposed Development, business rates generated could total around £11.9million (present value)<sup>9</sup>.

### Community Benefits

- 4.6. As part of the legacy community benefits associated with the application, the Applicant has pledged a community benefit fund, that would be paid annually for the lifetime of the development. Depending on the structure of the fund, the annual payment based on the

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<sup>8</sup> Where future benefits are calculated over a 10-year timeframe, they have been discounted to produce a present value. This is the discounted value of a stream of either future costs or benefits. A standard discount rate is used to convert all costs and benefits to present values. Using the Treasury's Green Book, the recommended discount rate is 3.5% up to year 30 and then 3% thereafter.

<sup>9</sup> Using the Treasury's Green Book, the recommended discount rate up to year 30 is 3.5%. For year 31 onwards, the recommended discount rate is 3%.



candidate layout would be approximately £32,000 per annum. This equates to approximately £1.28 million over the lifetime of the project. The Applicant anticipates that Menter Mon would act as the fund administrator and be responsible for managing and distributing the funds to the local communities.

### **Supporting Economic Development Objectives**

- 4.7. The Welsh Government has an All Wales Plan for 2021–2025<sup>10</sup>, which outlines how all of Wales will work together to achieve net zero. The Plan sets out pledges that Wales make to target seven areas where action is needed. These areas are:
1. Commitment to net zero or action on climate emergency.
  2. Understanding and reducing carbon footprint.
  3. Education, Engagement and capacity building.
  4. Energy and reducing energy demand.
  5. Homes and housing.
  6. Circular economy and waste.
  7. Enriching our natural resources.
- 4.8. The Plan sets out pledges from individuals in Wales, to businesses and the government. The main point of action in order to reach net zero is to drastically reduce carbon emissions across all sectors. One way to do this is through the increased use of renewable energy sources to displace CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuel sources, which the Proposed Development will deliver.
- 4.9. In November–December 2023, world leaders met at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP28, to discuss and agree goals and strategies to reduce climate change. For the first time, countries agreed on the need to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems<sup>11</sup>. To achieve this transition, alternative energy sources will be required, such as solar power. Many groups had wanted a more ambitious commitment to phase out fossil fields. The agreement includes global targets to triple the capacity of renewable energy, like solar power, by 2030. Therefore, it is important that schemes are brought forward across the UK.
- 4.10. A report published by the Welsh government in December 2021 looks at policy and strategy recommendations to significantly scale up renewable energy in Wales<sup>12</sup>. It outlines that the vision for Wales is ‘to generate renewable energy to at least fully meet our energy needs and utilise surplus generation to tackle the nature and climate emergencies’. The report also looks to calling on Ofgem to develop a Welsh regulatory derogation to enable energy business model innovation. This would involve accelerating the scale-up of renewable

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<sup>10</sup> *All Wales Plan 2021–25, Working Together to Reach Net Zero*: Welsh Government, October 2021

<sup>11</sup> What was agreed on climate change at COP28 in Dubai?, BBC News, December 2023.

<sup>12</sup> *Renewable energy deep dive: recommendations*: Welsh Government, December 2021.



energy in Wales and realising the benefits and wider co-benefits of renewable energy, such as those associated with the Proposed Development.

- 4.11. In March 2022, the Welsh Government published their Plan for Employability and Skills<sup>13</sup>. The aim of the plan is to set out how the Welsh Government is committed to ensuring all individuals in Wales have a high quality education, access to jobs and to ensure Wales is a place where businesses can thrive.
- 4.12. The Plan focuses on five priorities, outlined below:
- 1. Young people realising their potential:** The government want to ensure that everyone under the age of 25 has access to work, education, training or self-employment. To work **towards this goal there will be 125,000 new apprenticeships for people of all ages.**
  - 2. Tackling economic inequality:** This aims to ensure that the employability support is available to everyone and will target those under-represented in the labour market and those in and out of work with a long-term health condition to find work and progress with their employment.
  - 3. Championing fair work for all:** The Welsh government want to ensure that employers create high quality employment for all employees, improve the offer to workers and ensure they have fair employment practices.
  - 4. Supporting people with a long term health condition to work:** This aims to prevent people falling out of employment through health prevention, early intervention, healthy workplaces and maximise the role of the health service.
  - 5. Nurturing a learning for life culture:** It is the aim of the Welsh Government to reduce inequalities in education and rise the overall standards of education. They want to increase participation in the skills system for people with disabilities and ethnic minority groups, whilst tackling low qualifications and increasing the mobility of workers.
- 4.13. The North Anglesey Economic Regeneration Plan published by IACC in July 2019 identifies a number of proposals for action and investment in North Anglesey to drive economic revitalisation in the area up to 2026. The vision of the regeneration plan is outlined below:
- *“By 2026: North Anglesey will have developed improved employment opportunities and supporting infrastructure that make the most of its natural, historic and built environment, complements the area’s character and promotes wellbeing, community cohesion, Welsh language and quality of life. The area will be an attractive place to live, work and visit.”*
- 4.14. The regeneration plan has five priority themes, one of which is to create job opportunities in the area to grow the economy. This is something the Proposed Development will do, during both the construction phase and once it is operational.

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<sup>13</sup> Stronger, fairer, greener Wales: A plan for employability and skills: Welsh Government, March 2022.





## Potential Impacts on Tourism

- 4.15. The impact of renewable energy schemes is sometimes highlighted by local residents and businesses as a concern when considering a proposed development, for example raising concerns around traffic disruption and the impact on tourism.
- 4.16. Based on data from the 2021 edition ONS Business Register and Employment Survey, in IACC there are around 4,500 (19.1%) jobs supported by accommodation and food services and the arts, entertainment, recreation and other services sectors. Tourism therefore plays an important role in supporting the local economy. When considering any potential impact the Proposed Development could have on the sector, it is helpful to look at work undertaken elsewhere on any impacts that renewable energy schemes can have on tourism.
- 4.17. In 2013, a survey of 1,000 holidaymakers in Cornwall explored the extent to which solar and wind farms impact on whether people would visit the area. The survey was commissioned by Good Energy, a renewable energy supplier, and carried out during the peak holiday month of August. The main findings to emerge from the research were that<sup>14</sup>:
- More than nine out of ten (94%) respondents said the presence of solar and wind farms would make no difference to their decision to visit Cornwall again.
  - Poor weather (17%) and the cost of holidaying (14%) were the largest deterrents to holidaymakers, with only 2% of those surveyed citing the presence of solar and wind farms as a reason to be less likely to visit Cornwall.
  - Only 7% of those surveyed said that the presence of solar farms had a negative impact on their visit.
- 4.18. In another study published in 2014, Regeneris Consulting and The Tourism Company looked at the potential economic impact of onshore wind farms and associated grid infrastructure on the Welsh Tourism Sector<sup>15</sup>. Findings from the study include:
- Wind farms have been an established presence on the local landscape in areas such as Powys, IACC and the South Wales Valleys. Case study analysis of these areas (including consultation with local tourism trade associations and local authority tourism officers) reveals little evidence of significant impacts on tourism. The majority of consultees believed there had been no impact on overall visitor numbers.
  - While visitor responses and reactions to wind farms are highly subjective, the evidence indicates that a clear majority of people do not react negatively to wind farm developments or change their visiting behaviour as a result.
  - Disruption during the construction phase can be an annoyance for visitors and also businesses. The study found no evidence that it had deterred visitors, however it

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.economicvoice.com/wind-and-solar-farms-are-accepted-part-of-landscape-say-holidaymakers-in-cornwall/>

<sup>15</sup> *Study into the Potential Economic Impact of Wind Farms and Associated Grid Infrastructure on the Welsh Tourism Sector.* Regeneris Consulting & The Tourism Company, February 2014.

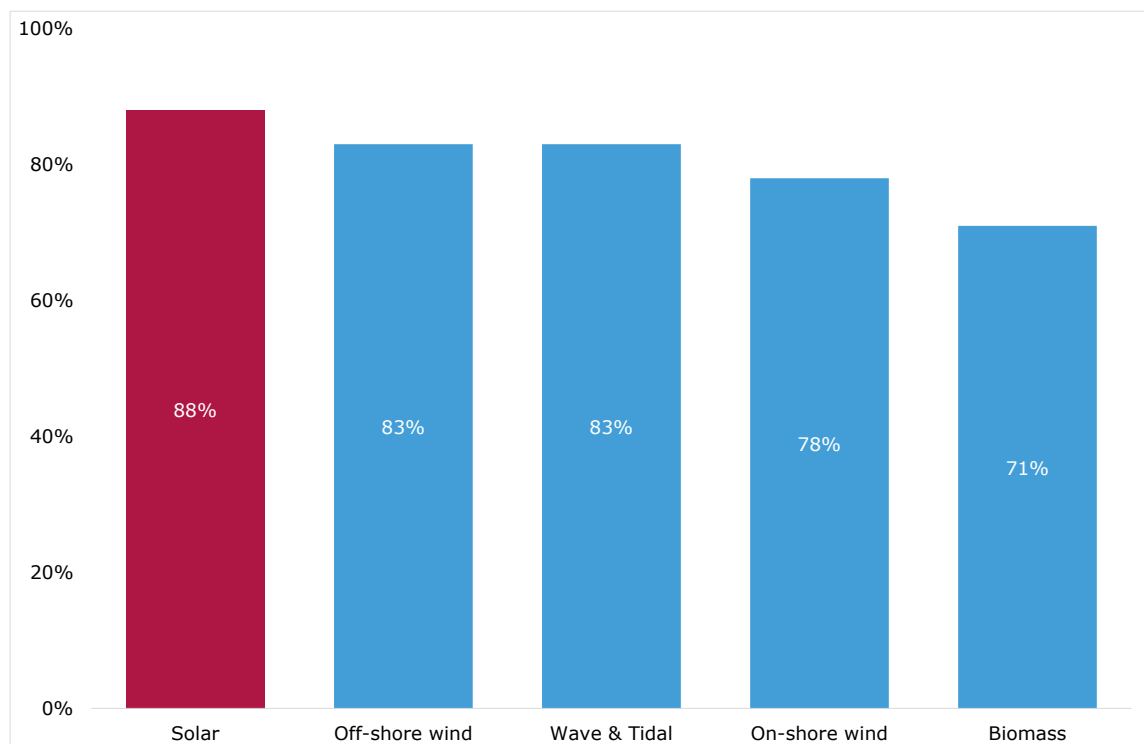
did note that such disruption should be minimised or mitigated through the planning process.

4.19. The analysis presented above indicates that solar and wind farms do not have any major negative impacts on tourism, with the presence of such schemes not appearing to significantly influence the decision to visit an area.

### Public Attitude Towards Renewable Energy

4.20. Findings from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (formerly BEIS) Public Attitude Tracker found that in Spring 2023, 85% of the UK public supported renewable energy and this has remained stable since Winter 2022. It also found that of the renewable energy sources included in the tracker, solar had the highest public support at 88% (Figure 4.1 shows this in more detail).

**Figure 4.1: Public support for renewable by source, Spring 2023**



**Source:** DESNZ Public Attitude Tracker

4.21. Research published in August 2023 by Copper Consultancy<sup>16</sup> for Solar Energy UK presents the results of a survey into public attitudes to solar farm development. The main findings are summarised below:

- Support for solar grows throughout the project life cycle and is at its highest when solar farms are operational with 61% of individuals living in the vicinity of a solar farm showing strong support for schemes once they are operational.

<sup>16</sup> 2023 – A transformative year for solar. A study of public attitudes to solar development. Copper Consultancy, August 2023.



- 32% of those asked highlighted the provision of low-cost, clean energy to the local area as a key benefit.

### Cumulative Socio-Economic Effects

4.22. Table 4.1 lists each of the cumulative schemes identified in the IACC area which should be assessed. It indicates whether each scheme is scoped in or out of the assessment.

Scheme Name	Included in Cumulative Socio-Economic Assessment (yes/no?)	Operational Impact of Scheme (where available)
Maen Hir Solar and Energy Storage Project	No	Economic benefits are discussed in planning documents but have not been quantified, therefore these benefits cannot be analysed in this report.
Carrog, Cemaes	No	Economic benefits are discussed in planning documents but have not been quantified, therefore these benefits cannot be analysed in this report.



## 5. Summary

- 5.1. This report has highlighted the economic benefits that will be created by a proposed 160MW solar project in IACC. The main findings from the analysis can be summarised as follows:

### The IACC Economy

- **Jobs growth:** Between 2015 and 2022, IACC saw employment growth of 4.3%. Wales saw lower growth at 1.7% and Great Britain saw higher growth of 5.2%. The Proposed Development will create jobs in IACC and ensure that it can maintain its strong performance relative to Wales and achieve the same level of growth as Great Britain.
- **Maintaining low unemployment:** The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work in IACC is higher than the Welsh average. In order to keep unemployment and the claimant count low new jobs must be created in the area.

### Benefits Generated by the Proposed Development

- **Construction phase employment:** The Proposed Development could support up to 233 temporary jobs, both direct jobs on-site and in the wider supply chain, during the 12-month construction period (and similar levels of employment during decommissioning of the project).
- **Contribution of construction phase to economic output:** The gross value added (GVA) generated by jobs supported during the construction phase could be up to £15.1million.
- **Operational benefits:** It is estimated that the Proposed Development will support up to 12 full-time equivalent jobs (FTE) in IACC and the wider economy once it is operational. The GVA associated with the 12 FTEs is estimated to be £0.8million per annum. Business rates generated by the Proposed Development could be in the region of £11.9million over its 40-year lifespan (present value).
- **Supporting economic development objectives:** The Proposed Development will support the Welsh Government's pledge to become net zero and the aim of many developing countries involved in COP28 of reducing carbon emissions.

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