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Prosiect Maen Hir

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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1. What is Prosiect Maen Hir?

Prosiect Maen Hir is a proposed solar and energy storage scheme brought forward by Lightsource bp in Anglesey. The project will supply over 350 megawatts (MW) of renewable electricity to the National Grid.

Prosiect Maen Hir is located in the north of the Island, and comprises approximately 1,234 hectares (ha) of land identified with potential to accommodate solar PV development and associated infrastructure including the project substation and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). The site is defined as comprising three linked parcels for ease of referencing. The parcels are: an area near Rhosgoch and Bodewryd (identified as 'Maen Hir North'), to the south-east of Llanerchymedd ('Maen Hir South'), and around the northern and eastern periphery of Llyn Alaw ('Maen Hir Central'). The land predominantly comprises agricultural fields, with an area of brownfield land within Maen Hir North close to Rhosgoch which was formerly a Shell oil depot.

The proposals include infrastructure for generating and storing renewable energy, supplying this energy to the National Grid, and the accesses and temporary compounds required for construction. Importantly, the proposals are also being developed with potential to enable further opportunities such as a 5MW community solar scheme, green infrastructure proposals, and new recreational opportunities. Lightsource bp's wider ambition has been for the project to enable an Energy Hub on the former Shell site, which would support economic development and job creation.

2. Who is the developer behind the proposals?

Lightsource bp is a global leader in the development, financing, management and operation of utility-scale solar and energy storage projects. Our purpose is to deliver affordable and sustainable solar power for communities around the world. We have a track record of constructing, operating and maintaining solar sites.

Lightsource bp is committed to working with and within the communities we invest and develop in and that is the case in the unique community of Anglesey and especially the communities of north Anglesey.

For more information about the developer, please visit www.lightsourcebp.com, follow us on Twitter [@lightsourcebp](https://twitter.com/lightsourcebp) or view [our LinkedIn page](#).

3. How will Prosiect Maen Hir support climate efforts?

The project will form a key part of the Isle of Anglesey County Council's Energy Island Programme, which seeks to position the Island at the forefront of low carbon energy research and development, production and servicing, with the intention of bringing economic, community, and environmental benefits.

Prosiect Maen Hir will contribute to Welsh Government targets to reach Net Zero by 2050 and have 70% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2030. The Climate Change Committee has warned that Wales is not currently on track to reach Net Zero by 2050, but projects such as Maen Hir could help achieve this.

The UK has also set national targets to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, and large-scale solar development is vital to achieving this. The [British Energy Security Strategy](#), published in April 2022, specifically aims to increase the UK's solar capacity fivefold by 2035, equivalent to around 70GW total generation capacity. Prosiect Maen Hir would contribute to reaching this target by generating over 350MW of renewable electricity.

4. Why has the project name changed from Môn Solar Farm to Prosiect Maen Hir?

We have previously shared our ambition to generate renewable energy from solar in this location, having introduced proposals for *Môn Solar* on similar site areas in 2021. This included early online engagement with local stakeholders and community webinars held in March 2021 under COVID-19 restrictions.

Our proposals have evolved since then. We have taken on board comments from the initial engagement, with the removal of some previously proposed land alongside identifying additional potentially suitable areas for solar through engagement with landowners and initial environmental surveys. We have also considered further improvements, such as added mitigation and enhancement measures, and developing a 5MW community solar scheme, the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), and infrastructure investment to help enable an Energy Hub to provide local employment.

Accounting for these developments, the project now has an anticipated generating capacity of more than 350 megawatts (MW), meaning it is classified as a (UK) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means that, in order to gain planning consent, we are required to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the proposed development to the UK Planning Inspectorate (PINS). PINS acts on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). It will carry out an examination of our proposals and then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State on whether to grant consent for the development. Local stakeholder and community engagement is an important part of this process.

We therefore updated the name of the proposals from *Môn Solar* to Prosiect Maen Hir to provide a clear indication of these changes.

We chose the name based on Anglesey's standing stones, or 'meini hirion,' which are part of the island's most characteristic and distinctive features. Prosiect Maen Hir would signify both an acknowledgment of Anglesey's past achievements and a commitment to shape its future in alignment with sustainable practices. It underscores the pressing need to respond urgently to achieve Net Zero emissions while working in harmony with the pre-existing local environment – a crucial step towards sustainability and environmental responsibility.

5. What is the Development Consent Order (DCO) planning process?

Prosiect Maen Hir is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) because it is proposed to have a generating capacity of more than 350 MW.

In Wales, if a project has a generating capacity of up to 10MW, it goes to the local planning authority. Between 10MW and 350MW, a scheme would go to the Welsh Government for approval. When a scheme has a generating capacity of more than 350MW, as Prosiect Maen Hir does, the planning application goes to the UK Government.

This means that, in order to build Maen Hir, we will apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO), which is effectively planning permission for a NSIP. DCO applications are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) and made to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). The DCO application will be subject to an examination by an examining authority which is appointed by the Secretary of State to make a recommendation to them as to whether development consent should be granted or not. The examining authority will consist of between one and five members. PINS will administer the examination on behalf of the Secretary of State. The final decision on whether development consent should be granted or not rests with the Secretary of State. More information regarding the DCO process is available at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/>

One of the key parts of the DCO pre-application process is engagement with local communities and stakeholders. We will be undertaking an informal phase of consultation in the new year, and have indicatively scheduled our statutory consultation to begin in Spring 2024. This will include additional documentation and information regarding the proposals, in addition to in-person and digital opportunities for us to meet with the local community and discuss Prosiect Maen Hir.

6. How will Maen Hir work with the local community?

In addition to supporting local and national targets to reduce carbon emissions and produce clean, low-cost, renewable energy, we believe those communities closest to the proposed development should benefit from it.

The project team are considering how best to deliver a 5MW community solar scheme as part of the project, intended for the local community to benefit directly from locally produced renewable energy.

Further opportunities such as green infrastructure proposals and new recreational opportunities are also being considered. We are also exploring how we could provide educational opportunities on Anglesey, such as working with local schools and colleges.

From the outset, the Applicant's wider ambition has been for the Project to enable an Energy Hub on the former Shell site which in turn would support economic development and job creation. The works required to bring forward a Construction Logistics Hub, and to develop the community solar and the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), may involve infrastructure investment that could generally help to unlock the site to support the planned employment and energy uses - helping enable an Energy Hub. This is of significance given the dormancy of the former Shell site and lack of development opportunities coming forward to date.

We are committed to working with local communities to identify and define community benefits. We are keen to hear about how Prosiect Maen Hir could support local community initiatives, and working alongside the community to refine our plans for providing local benefits.

7. How will the local community be involved?

Local knowledge and input is valuable to us, and we seek to create open and accessible communication channels with local communities and their representatives.

Our aim over winter 2023 and early 2024 is to re-introduce ourselves to the public and ensure the community is aware of our updated proposals. This will include making more information available regarding our updated plans for Maen Hir and hosting a series of in-person information events and meetings to support community awareness. This will give the chance for the local community to find out more information about the project and ask questions to the team. Details about the events will be released in the new year.

We plan to hold a Statutory Consultation, indicatively scheduled to take place in **Spring 2024**. This will include additional documentation and information regarding the proposals, in addition to in-person and digital opportunities for us to meet with the local community and discuss Prosiect Maen Hir.

We are keen to hear from the local community at any time to help shape the proposals, particularly to ensure we take into account local knowledge of the area in our plans. If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us by:

- Emailing: maenhir@lightsourcebp.com
- Calling our bilingual Freephone information lines: Welsh: **08081 756663** / English: **08081 756375**
- Writing to: **FREEPOST MAEN HIR PROJECT** (no stamp required)

8. What is our timeline?

The re-introduction of the project to the public in Autumn 2023 coincides with the submission of our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Our team is undertaking a thorough Environmental Impact Assessment, and this will be an ongoing process throughout the development of the project.

EIA is an iterative process where potential environmental impacts are assessed in parallel with the design process of a development, helping us identify potential effects of the proposals on the local community and environment, along with possible ways we can reduce these as far as possible. The EIA in turn informs the design for Prosiect Maen Hir.

The EIA Scoping Request sets out the proposed approach to EIA and the relevant organisations and councils will be consulted to inform the Scoping Opinion on how the team conduct the environmental assessments. PINS will seek feedback from prescribed consultees to inform the Opinion.

The Scoping Opinion produced by PINS will then inform how we conduct our EIA. This will result in the publishing of a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) prior to Statutory Consultation. Alongside the final Development Consent Order, we will submit an Environmental Statement (ES) detailing all the potential effects and the mitigations we will be putting in place. The final results of the EIA will be reported in the Environmental Statement (ES), submitted in support of the DCO planning application. We indicatively expect to submit this DCO to PINS in **Winter 2024**.

Alongside this technical process, we are committed to providing updates to members of the public and community representatives. We are re-launching the updated proposals for Prosiect Maen Hir currently, with further engagement to come in January when we will be holding a series of events in the local community. This will give the chance for the local community to find out more information about the project and ask questions to the team. Details about the events will be released in the new year.

We are anticipating holding Statutory Consultation in **Spring 2024**. Prior to this, we will be releasing more information and details about the project. Statutory consultation will

enable the local community, councils and organisations to formally provide their feedback on the proposals, which will help inform the design.

We will analyse all the feedback received and comments will be considered in the development of the design. After this, the DCO, incorporating the EIA work and community feedback, will be submitted to PINS in Winter 2024. The plans will then be examined by PINS on behalf of the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). They will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who will ultimately make the decision as to whether or not grant consent for the project.

Subject to achieving consent, the earliest construction is anticipated to start is 2027. Please note that all of these dates are indicative and may be subject to change.

9. How do I stay informed?

To stay informed about Project Maen Hir, you can sign up here to receive project updates directly to your inbox: www.lightsourcebp.com/uk/projects/maen-hir-solar-battery/

Accessibility is important to us. Please contact us via any of the communications lines set out below should you require or prefer alternative forms of communication.

- Email: maenhir@lightsourcebp.com
- Call our freephone information lines: Welsh: **08081 756663** / English: **08081 756375**
- Write to: **FREEPOST MAEN HIR PROJECT** (no stamp required)