

<b>MEETING</b>	Llŷn AONB Joint Advisory Committee
<b>DATE</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> of July 2016
<b>TITLE</b>	Solar Developments
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Inform Members
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Llŷn AONB Service Manager
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	Accept the Information

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report is presented following a request by the Members at the Joint Advisory Committee meeting held on November 18th 2015.
- 1.2 The Report contains general information about solar developments, information about planning applications in the Llŷn area and the latest about the payments for solar electricity production.

## **2.0 REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS**

- 2.1 Regulations from the European Union, obliges the UK Government to reduce air pollution. One of the most effective means to do this is to close conventional energy generating stations (coal, oil, gas) and gain more energy by renewable sources such as hydro, wind, biomass and solar.
- 2.2 Solar panels use sun-rays to create renewable electricity. Even though there are no long periods of sunlight in the UK, the panels are effective and their prices have reduced as technology has improved, and the price of production has reduced.
- 2.3 To encourage people and companies to develop renewable energy, the Government established payment via a “Feed in Tariff” that offered payments for renewable energy over long periods of time (usually 20 years). There are similar schemes in many other countries around the world.
- 2.4 The plan came into effect in Britain in 2010 and was very popular. As a result, came an increase in specialist companies producing and installing renewable energy equipment, especially wind turbines and solar panels. There were also developments regarding other techniques such as air pumps, ground pumps, biomass etc.

## **3.0 SOLAR DEVELOPMENTS IN LLŷN**

- 3.1 As in other parts of the UK, there was a great interest in renewable energy developments in Llŷn. Many planning applications were made for solar equipment in the AONB, and also near the boundary. In the early years, solar panels were mainly on houses or agricultural buildings but recently many applications have been made for solar farms on agricultural land.

- 3.2 These types of solar farms, that cover quite a large area of land, have the potential to have a significant impact on the area's landscape and environment.
- 3.3 The Appendix contains information about applications for solar energy developments in the Llŷn area over recent years.

#### **4.0 CHANGES IN PAYMENTS**

- 4.1 The grant schemes was highly popular and the scheme was at a significant cost to the Government.
- 4.2 As a result, the payments were reduced for renewable energy developments, including solar in August 2011, March 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016. The information below shows how the payments have reduced for solar developments (pence per kw):

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2016</b>
Solar PV on houses – 4kw or less	43.11p	12-5.73p
Solar PV with production capacity of more than 250kw	35.07p	5.73p

- 4.3 The FIT scheme came to an end in January 2016 and a new plan took effect. The new plan is different and offers payments that are considerably lower.

#### **5.0 THE AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN**

- 5.1 Renewable energy developments have been recognised in the present Management Plan as one of the issues that could have a significant effect on the beauty of the landscape and coast.
- 5.2 For the Plan's review, Solar Energy has been recognised as one of the key issues in terms of the Landscape and Coast and a specific policy has been included on the matter. This policy can be considered as part of the discussion on the Management Plan.

#### **6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 Accept the information.