

From: Johnson, Mike (Access Development & Public Rights of Way Officer)
<Mike.Johnson@newport.gov.uk>
Sent: 20 August 2026 12:33
To: NCC - Planning <planning@newport.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Planning Consultation Request for case ref: 26/0556

Good Afternoon,

Please find PROW comments attached.

Best,

Mike Johnson

Access Development and Public Rights of Way Officer / Swyddog Datblygu Mynediad a Tramwy Cyhoeddus Countryside & Conservation / Cefn gwlad a Chadwraeth Environment & Public Protection / Amgylchedd a Gwarchod y Cyhoedd Newport City Council / Cyngor Dinas Casnewydd Tel / Ffon: 01633 656 656

Attached:

Countryside & Conservation

Public Rights of Way Comments

REFERENCE:	26/0556
PROPOSAL:	EIA SCREENING FOR A LARGE SOLAR FARM (DNS)
SITE:	Land Between M4 Motorway And South Wales Main Line Railway Near Llanwern Underwood And Bishton
APPLICATION TYPE:	Env Impact Screening
CASE OFFICER:	GERAINT ROBERTS
RECOMMENDATION:	-

Comments:

1. Urgent Clarification: Incorrect Path Identification

- 1.1. The EIA Scoping Report July 2026 erroneously references Restricted Byway 158/22/1 running south of Castle Farm Shop. No such path exists on the Definitive Map within this parish or application boundary.
- 1.2. The applicant must formally amend all text, maps, and figures (including Figure 7 Illustrative Landscape Masterplan) to correctly identify this route as Restricted Byway 388/22/1. Any future legal agreements, section 106 obligations, or Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) will be legally invalid if they reference an incorrect path number.

2. Status of Response: Scoping Response

- 2.1. The PROW Team concludes that the current baseline information is inadequate due to the incorrect path identification noted in Section 1.

3. Key PROW Considerations & Requirements

3.1. Legal Alignments and Widths

- 3.1.1. Definitive Map Protection: The definitive alignments of all footpaths, Restricted Byway 388/22/1, and Green Lane 388/GL4/1 must remain completely unobstructed on their legal lines. No permanent or temporary diversions may take place without a formal legal order.
- 3.1.2. 10m Corridors: The commitment to widen all footpath corridors to a minimum of 10m is welcomed. This 10m width must be legally secured via a Section 106 agreement to prevent future narrowing or encroachment by solar infrastructure.
- 3.1.3. Enclosure and Safety: Placing 10m corridors between high security fences and solar arrays risks creating an intimidating "tunnel effect." The applicant must submit detailed cross-sections showing fence heights, materials, and proposed native hedging to ensure the routes feel safe, open, and visually acceptable to users.

3.2. Specific Protections for Higher-Status Routes

- 3.2.1. Restricted Byway 388/22/1 & Green Lane 388/GL4/1: These routes carry public rights for walkers, cyclists, horse riders, and horse-drawn vehicles. The 10m corridor must safely accommodate these diverse users.
- 3.2.2. Equine Safety: Solar security fencing and panels must be set back sufficiently from these two routes to ensure horse riders are not trapped or spooked by panel glare, wind noise, or inverter hum.
- 3.2.3. Vehicle Conflict: Any proposed use of these routes by the developer for construction or maintenance vehicles must be strictly regulated. Vulnerable path users must have absolute priority at all times.

3.3. Construction and Operational Safety

- 3.3.1. Public Access: The assertion that all paths will remain open during construction is high risk. The applicant must submit a comprehensive PROW Management Plan and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prior to determination.
- 3.3.2. Temporary Closures: If public safety cannot be guaranteed during heavy engineering or trenching works, the developer must apply and pay for formal Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs). No paths may be closed or blocked until a TTRO is legally confirmed.

3.4. Ground Conditions and Long-Term Maintenance

- 3.4.1. Surface Upgrades: The proposal to upgrade 5km of paths from "poor winter condition" is welcomed. However, grass pathways may quickly

degrade under increased footfall or construction traffic. The applicant must submit exact engineering specifications for these surfaces (e.g., natural rolled stone or reinforced grass).

- 3.4.2. Maintenance Scheme: The proposed wildflower margins, picnic benches, and information boards require long-term upkeep. A fully funded 25-to-30-year Maintenance Scheme (matching the operational lifetime of the solar farm) must be secured via a Section 106 agreement, ensuring no financial burden falls on the Local Highway Authority.

4. Recommended Pre-Commencement Planning Conditions

- 4.1. Should the Planning Authority be minded to approve the application, the PROW Team insists that the following conditions are attached to any grant of permission:

- 4.1.1. PROW Scheme of Management: Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed Public Rights of Way Scheme of Management shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include exact route dimensions, fencing specifications, detailed cross-sections, and clear PROW signage designs.
- 4.1.2. Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP): No development shall take place until a CTMP has been approved, specifically detailing all PROW crossing points, vehicle segregation measures, and the deployment of banksmen during delivery hours.
- 4.1.3. Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP): A LEMP shall be submitted and approved prior to development, detailing the long-term seeding, cutting, and maintenance schedules for the 10m wildflower margins and pathways.

M. Johnson

Mike Johnson

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