



Pennant Walters

---

# Trecelyn Wind Farm

Draft Planning Statement



November 2023



---

**Report for**

Meryl Lewis  
Pennant Walters Ltd  
Hirwaun House  
Hirwaun Industrial Estate  
Hirwaun  
Aberdare  
CF44 9UL

---

**Main contributors**

Adam Mealing  
Andrew Williamson

---

**Issued by**

.....  
Andrew Williamson

---

**Approved by**

.....  
David Kenyon

---

**WSP**

Canon Court West  
Abbey Lawn  
Shrewsbury SY2 5DE  
United Kingdom  
Tel +44 (0) 1743 342 000  
Doc Ref.

Draft Planning Statement

---

**Copyright and non-disclosure notice**

The contents and layout of this report are subject to copyright owned by WSP save to the extent that copyright has been legally assigned by us to another party or is used by WSP under licence. To the extent that we own the copyright in this report, it may not be copied or used without our prior written agreement for any purpose other than the purpose indicated in this report. The methodology (if any) contained in this report is provided to you in confidence and must not be disclosed or copied to third parties without the prior written agreement of WSP. Disclosure of that information may constitute an actionable breach of confidence or may otherwise prejudice our commercial interests. Any third party who obtains access to this report by any means will, in any event, be subject to the Third Party Disclaimer set out below.

---

**Third party disclaimer**

Any disclosure of this report to a third party is subject to this disclaimer. The report was prepared by WSP at the instruction of, and for use by, our client named on the front of the report. It does not in any way constitute advice to any third party who is able to access it by any means. WSP excludes to the fullest extent lawfully permitted all liability whatsoever for any loss or damage howsoever arising from reliance on the contents of this report. We do not however exclude our liability (if any) for personal injury or death resulting from our negligence, for fraud or any other matter in relation to which we cannot legally exclude liability.

---

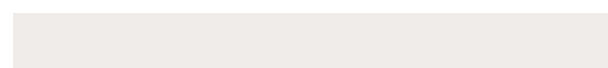
**Management systems**

This document has been produced in full compliance with our management systems, which have been certified to ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 by Lloyd's Register.

---

**Document revisions**

No.	Details	Date
1	Draft PS	Nov 2023



# Contents

---

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	Overview	5
1.2	Purpose of the Planning Statement	5
1.3	Pre-application consultation	5
1.4	Structure of the Planning Statement	5
<b>2.</b>	<b>Overview of the Proposed Development</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	The Applicant	7
2.2	The Site	7
2.3	The Proposed Development	9
2.4	Planning History	1
2.5	Environmental Impact Assessment	1
<b>3.</b>	<b>Energy Policy</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1	Background	2
3.2	International Agreements	2
3.3	Acts of Parliament and Regulations	3
3.4	UK Wide Strategies and Plans	6
	Welsh national strategies and plans	9
<b>4.</b>	<b>Planning Policy Review</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1	Background	13
4.2	UK planning Policy	13
	Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2011)	13
	Draft National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2023)	13
	National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2011)	14
	Draft National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-3) (2023)	14
4.3	Welsh Planning Policy	14
	Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (2021)	14
	Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) (2021)	16
	Technical Advice Notes	17
4.4	The Local Development Plan	19
	Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Development Plan	19
4.5	Other Local Planning Considerations	22
	Supplementary Planning Guidance	22
	Emerging LDP	23
4.6	Other Relevant Strategies	23
	Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	23
4.7	Planning considerations	24
	Assessment of compliance with national policy	24
	Assessment of compliance with the Local Development Plan	36

<b>5.</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>48</b>
5.1	The Planning Balance	48
<hr/>		
Table 4.1	Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021	19
Table 4.2	Assessment against Future Wales Policy 18 requirements	29
Table 4.3	Assessment against Technical Advice Note requirements	35
Table 4.4	Assessment against the LDP	36
<hr/>		
Figure 2.1	Site Location	8
Figure 2.2	Site Layout	10
<hr/>		

# 1. Introduction

---

## 1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This Draft Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Pennant Walters Ltd by WSP Ltd (WSP) to support a planning application for the construction and operation of a wind farm comprising up to four wind turbines across three parcels of land at Trecelyn. The site is within the Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) area.
- 1.1.2 This Draft Planning Statement has been prepared to demonstrate the suitability of the Proposed Development in planning terms. It has been prepared as part of a suite of documents to support the process of pre-application consultation prior to the submission of the final proposals to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) on behalf of the Welsh Government for consent as a Development of National Significance (DNS).
- 1.1.3 This Draft Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Draft Design and Access Statement (Draft DAS), which sets out the approach taken to the design and access of the Proposed Development, and the Draft Environmental Statement (Draft ES), which sets out an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development.

## 1.2 Purpose of the Planning Statement

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this Draft Planning Statement is to:
- Provide a brief description of the Proposed Development including its site history and approach to the preparation of the proposal;
  - Set out the objectives of the Proposed Development and other design considerations;
  - Explain the benefits of the Proposed Development in the context of need for renewable energy and summarise the overall environmental performance of the scheme; and
  - Review the planning policy framework and set out the conformity of the scheme with the framework.

## 1.3 Pre-application consultation

- 1.3.1 This Draft Planning Statement along with other supporting documents for the proposed DNS planning application, including the Draft ES, will be subject to six weeks pre-application consultation. The results of which will be used to refine and update (where necessary) the application documents prior to final submission to PEDW.

## 1.4 Structure of the Planning Statement

- 1.4.1 The remainder of the document provides the following information:
- **Section 2** - Provides a description of the applicant, the site, the Proposed Development, planning history and Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) approach;
  - **Section 3** - considers the need for the development, the issues of climate change and security of supply and as a consequence the pressing need for renewable energy. The

section demonstrates how the Proposed Development could make a contribution to reducing the effect of climate change and improving security of supply;

- **Section 4** - this section summarises the national and local policy context and analyses how the scheme performs against national planning policy requirements. It also sets out how the scheme performs against the CCBC Local Development Plan (LDP) and any other material considerations; and
- **Section 5** - concludes how the scheme meets the planning policy requirements through application of the planning balance.

## 2. Overview of the Proposed Development

---

### 2.1 The Applicant

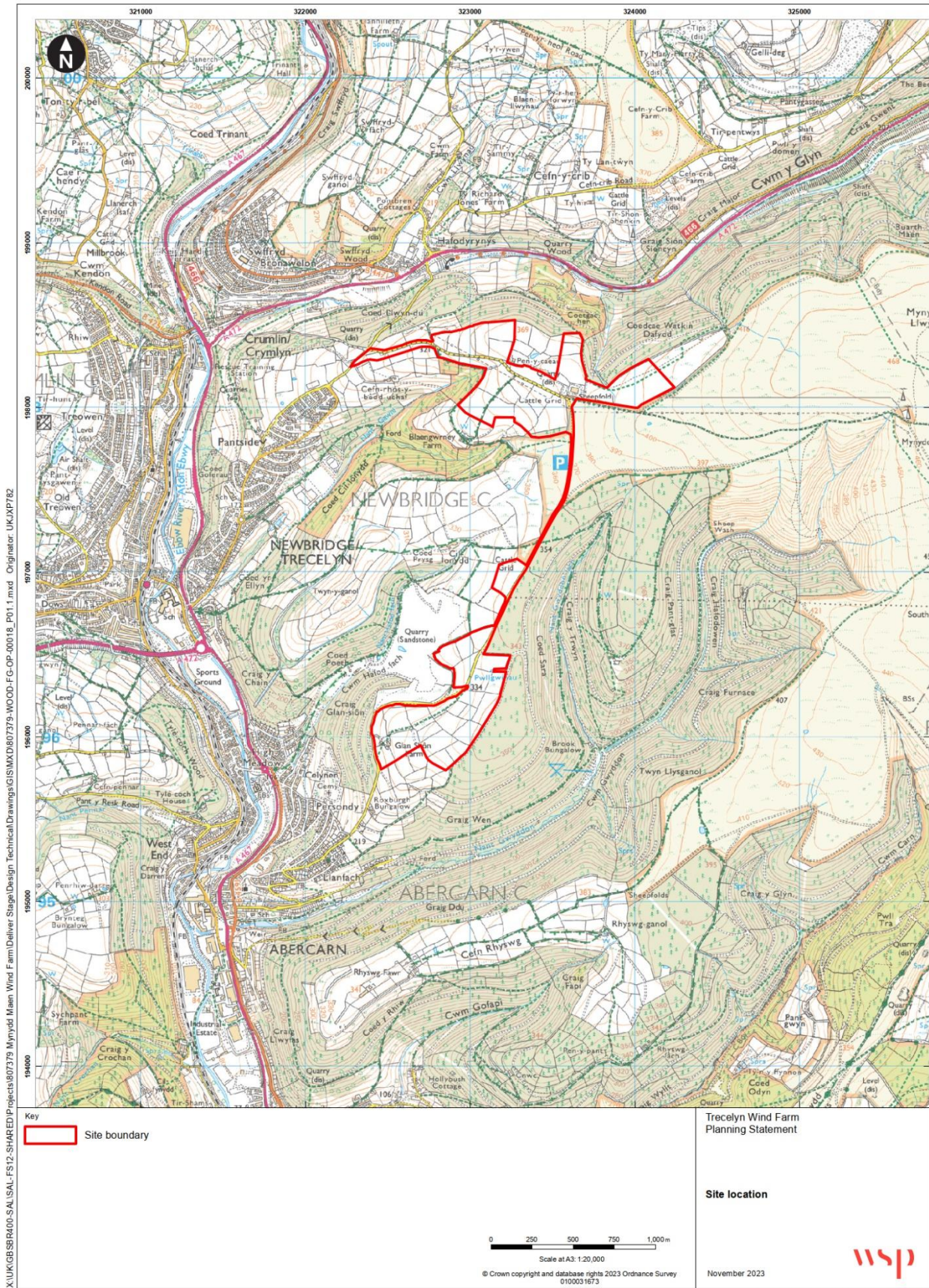
- 2.1.1 Pennant Walters Ltd (the Applicant) is seeking planning permission for the construction and operation of a wind farm of up to four turbines on three parcels of land at Trecelyn (the “Site”).
- 2.1.2 Based in Hirwaun, south east Wales, Pennant Walters Ltd is a Walters Group company with a focus on renewable energy having developed a wide variety of schemes including onshore wind, solar, small scale hydro and battery storage.

### 2.2 The Site

- 2.2.1 The Proposed Development would take place across three parcels of land (the “Site”) comprised of a mix of semi-improved and unimproved grassland. The location of the three parcels of land is identified below:
- Northern Parcel – Grid Reference ST 23440 98116
  - Central Parcel – Grid Reference ST 23193 96915
  - Southern Parcel – Grid Reference ST 22902 96117
- 2.2.2 The site lies within the CCBC administrative area.
- 2.2.3 The site is located on the upper slopes (between approximately 340 m and 400 m AOD) of ridges that extend to the west and south-west of the massif formed by Mynydd Llwyd, Mynydd Twyn-glas and Mynydd Maen. The southern and central parts of the site are separated from Mynydd Maen, to the east, by the deeply incised and heavily afforested valleys of Nant Gwyddon, which also extends to the immediate south of the Site before joining the Ebbw River at Abercarn.
- 2.2.4 To the north, the Site is separated from the Cefn Crib/Mynydd Llanhilleth massif by Cwm y Glyn, which runs eastward toward Pontypool, and by the valley of a minor tributary of the Ebbw River to the west. To the west of the site, several tributaries of the Ebbw River have created a complex of ridges and valleys that reduce in elevation westward toward the valley of the Ebbw River. The most southerly of these, adjacent to the southern and central parts of the Site, is the steep-sided Cwm Hafod-fach, the northern end of which is occupied by the Hafod sandstone quarry. The northern part of the Site extends westward as far as the much more open valley of Nant Gawni.
- 2.2.5 The settlement of Hafodyrynys lies approximately 400m to the north west of the Northern Parcel’s site boundary. The outskirts of Newbridge lie 1.5km to the west of the Central Parcel’s site boundary. The outskirts of Abercarn are approximately 600m away to the west from the Southern Parcel’s site boundary. The Central and Southern Parcels border Abercarn Forest.
- 2.2.6 The site has a total area of approximately 86.4ha. The site location is shown in **Figure 2.1**.



Figure 2.1 Site Location

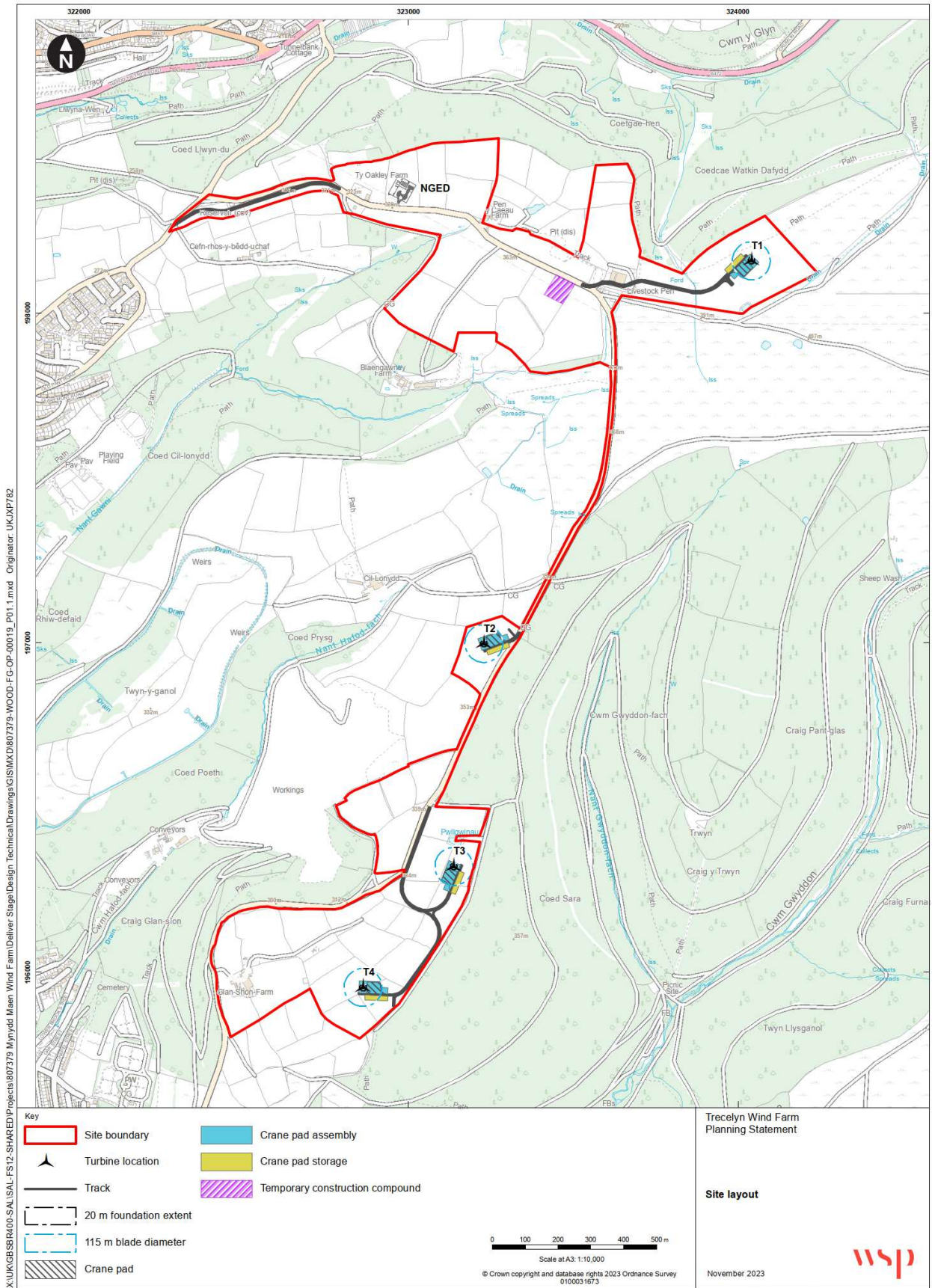




## 2.3 The Proposed Development

- 2.3.1 The Proposed Development is to construct and operate a wind farm of up to four turbines and associated infrastructure including underground cabling, access tracks, transformer and a substation.
- 2.3.2 The wind farm will be designed with an operational life of 30 years. At the end of this period the Applicant has three options; to decommission the wind farm and dismantle and remove the turbines; to apply for an extension to the operating period using existing equipment; or apply to install new equipment on the Site. For the purposes of the Draft ES assessment, it is assumed that the wind farm will be decommissioned.
- 2.3.3 The Proposed Development also includes:
- Access works - new access off the existing road together with new and improved internal wind farm tracks off the main internal access road;
  - Crane pads at each turbine location;
  - Turbine foundations;
  - Underground power cables linking the turbines and the on-site substation;
  - Temporary construction compounds, laydown, and storage areas; and
  - Grid connection infrastructure, including the on-site substation, control building and overhead connection into the existing overhead line, together with construction enabling works. The Site sub-station will connect the wind farm into the national distribution system on site (to be via a 132kV connection in the sub-station compound). National Grid (NG) will make this connection.
- 2.3.4 The layout of the site is contained in **Figure 2.2**.
- 2.3.5 A full description is provided in Draft ES **Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Development**.

Figure 2.2 Site Layout



## 2.4 Planning History

2.4.1 Relevant planning history within the Site is related to the approved consent for an anemometer mast:

- Ref 22/0886/FULL – Land At Ty Oakley Farm Abercarn Mountain Road Hafodyrynys Newport NP11 5AY – Description: Install anemometer mast of up to 80.2 m high (including instruments) for 3 years, with associated security fencing. Approved 19 December 2022.

## 2.5 Environmental Impact Assessment

2.5.1 Under Regulation 4A of The Developments of National Significance (Specified Criteria and Prescribed Secondary Consents) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 consent is required from the Welsh Ministers for the construction and operation of all energy generation projects between 10MW and 350MW. The Proposed Development therefore qualifies as a DNS.

2.5.2 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('the EIA Regulations' from here on) apply to DNS applications. The Proposed Development falls with Schedule 2, paragraph 3(i) ("*Installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms)*") due to exceeding the threshold for both the site area and hub height. For all Schedule 2 developments where it is decided that the particular development may have significant effects on the environment, whether on account of its nature, scale or location, an EIA is required.

2.5.3 A Scoping Report was prepared to identify the potentially significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development that needed to be assessed further and to outline the approach to undertaking the assessments of these effects and submitted to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022. The report enabled statutory and non-statutory organisations and others with an interest in the Proposed Development ('stakeholders') to comment on the proposed scope of the assessment.

2.5.4 Drawing on the consultation responses and previous and subsequent assessment work, the Draft ES reports the findings of an assessment of the potentially significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development. This reflects the requirement of the EIA Regulations for the Draft ES to discuss in depth only those effects that are likely to be significant.

2.5.5 The Draft ES should be read in conjunction with this Draft Planning Statement, the Draft DAS and other application documents.

## 3. Energy Policy

---

### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 There are a range of legislative, regulatory and policy imperatives that embed the need to reduce carbon emissions and increase the renewable energy capacity of Wales and the UK. This section therefore sets out the broad support for the development of proposals for renewable energy.

### 3.2 International Agreements

#### The Kyoto Protocol 1997<sup>1</sup>

- 3.2.1 The Kyoto Protocol sought to bind countries to limiting and then reducing the quantity of their greenhouse gases produced. The United Kingdom (UK) signed up to the Kyoto Protocol binding itself to ensuring it reduces its greenhouse gases produced to being 12.5 percent below base-year levels (1990 levels) at the end of the first commitment period (2008-2012)<sup>2</sup>. Whilst the Kyoto Protocol and its commitments are old, it demonstrates the UK's commitment to meeting and exceeding international greenhouse gas reduction targets and renewable energy is key to achieving such targets.

#### Paris Agreement 2015<sup>3</sup>

- 3.2.2 The UNFCCC is the major international body responsible for managing climate change and carbon emissions. In 2015, parties to the UNFCCC adopted the Paris Agreement, the aims of which are stated as: “*This Agreement, in enhancing the implementation of the Convention, including its objective, aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty, including by: a) Holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 °C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change; and (b) Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production.*” The agreement sets targets for countries' greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, but these are not legally binding or enforceable.

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations (1997). The Kyoto Protocol. (Online) Available at: [https://unfccc.int/kyoto\\_protocol#:~:text=In%20short%2C%20the%20Kyoto%20Protocol,accordance%20with%20agreed%20individual%20targets](https://unfccc.int/kyoto_protocol#:~:text=In%20short%2C%20the%20Kyoto%20Protocol,accordance%20with%20agreed%20individual%20targets). (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>2</sup> DEFRA (no date). The United Kingdom's Report on Demonstrable Progress under the Kyoto Protocol. (Online) Available at: <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/dpr/uk1.pdf> (Accessed June 2023). Page 6.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2015). Paris Agreement. (Online) Available at: [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf) (Accessed June 2023).



## Glasgow Climate Pact 2021<sup>4</sup>

- 3.2.3 The Conference of the Parties (COP 26) under the UNFCCC held in Glasgow in November 2021, resulted in almost 200 countries agreeing on: the acceleration of action on climate change this decade to reduce emissions (mitigation); helping those already impacted by climate change (adaptation); enabling countries to deliver on their climate goals (finance); and working together to deliver even greater action (collaboration). This agreement is in the form of the Glasgow Climate Pact which reaffirms the long-term goal to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and resolves to pursue efforts to achieve this, recognising that limiting global warming to 1.5°C “requires rapid, deep and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, including reducing global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 45% by 2030 relative to the 2010 level and to net zero around mid-century, as well as deep reductions in other greenhouse gases”.

## 3.3 Acts of Parliament and Regulations

### Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended)<sup>5</sup>

- 3.3.1 One of the key provisions of the original 2008 Act was the introduction of legally binding targets on GHG emissions comprising reductions of at least 80% GHG emissions by 2050, and reductions in emissions of at least 26% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline. The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019<sup>6</sup> came into force on 27 June 2019. This amended the legally binding target to reduce GHG emissions set in section 1 of the Climate Change Act 2008 from 80% to 100% against a 1990 baseline, achieving ‘net zero’ emissions. The Act also requires the Government to establish 5-year carbon budgets. The generation of electricity by renewable means such as wind energy is considered to be a key contributor towards meeting these targets.

### The Carbon Budgets Order 2009<sup>7</sup>

- 3.3.2 This legislation implements the carbon budgets set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. The budgets require the UK to continually reduce emissions in line with the carbon reduction commitments established under the Climate Change Act. The carbon budgets are:
- First carbon budget, 2009 to 2012, 3,018 mega tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) representing 25% reduction below 1990 levels;
  - Second carbon budget, 2013 to 2017, 2,782 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e representing 31% reduction below 1990 levels;

---

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2021). COP26 The Glasgow Climate Pact. (Online) available at: <https://ukcop26.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/COP26-Presidency-Outcomes-The-Climate-Pact.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>5</sup> UK Government (2008). Climate Change Act 2008. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>6</sup> UK Government (2019). The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111187654> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>7</sup> UK Government (2009). The Carbon Budgets Order 2009 (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2009/1259/contents/made> (Accessed June 2023).

- Third carbon budget, 2018 to 2022, 2,544 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e representing 37% reduction below 1990 levels by 2020;
- Fourth carbon budget, 2023 to 2027, 1,950 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e representing 51% reduction below 1990 levels by 2025;
- Fifth carbon budget, 2028 to 2032, 1,725 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e representing 57% reduction below 1990 levels by 2030; and
- Sixth carbon budget, 2033 to 2037, 965 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e representing a 78% reduction below 1990 levels by 2035.

### The Energy Act 2008<sup>8</sup>, 2011<sup>9</sup>, 2013<sup>10</sup>, 2016<sup>11</sup>

3.3.3 The Energy Act (2008) implemented the legislative aspects of the 2007 Energy White Paper. The content of the Bill included strengthening the Renewables Obligation to drive greater and more rapid deployment of renewables in the UK. The Energy Act (2011) sought to increase investment in energy efficiency whilst the Energy Act (2013) put in place measures to reform the UK energy market to attract investment. The Energy Act (2016) formally established the Oil and Gas Authority as a regulator for that sector whilst it signalled the closure of the Renewables Obligation for onshore wind.

### Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015<sup>12</sup>

3.3.4 This Act places a duty on public bodies (including Local Authorities) to carry out sustainable development. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals to help ensure that public bodies are all working towards the same vision of a sustainable Wales. The wellbeing goals are:

- A prosperous Wales;
- A resilient Wales;
- A healthier Wales;
- A more equal Wales;
- A Wales of cohesive communities;
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and
- A globally responsible Wales.

3.3.5 The wellbeing goals act together to ensure outcomes across economic, environmental, social and cultural sustainability strands. The Act defines sustainable development in Wales as “*The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-*

---

<sup>8</sup> UK Government (2008). Energy Act 2008. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/32/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>9</sup> UK Government (2011). Energy Act 2011. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/16/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>10</sup> UK Government (2013). Energy Act 2013. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2013/32/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>11</sup> UK Government (2016). Energy Act 2016. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/20/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>12</sup> UK Government (2015). Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. (Online) Available at: <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/150623-guide-to-the-fg-act-en.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

*being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.”*

- 3.3.6 One of the wellbeing goals – achieving a prosperous Wales – specifically recognises the benefits of developing a low carbon society that recognises the limits of the environment and uses resources efficiently.

### Planning (Wales) Act 2015<sup>13</sup> and the Developments of National Significance (Wales) Regulations 2016 (as amended)<sup>14</sup>

- 3.3.7 The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 and the Developments of National Significance (Wales) Regulations 2016 (as amended) alongside subsequent regulations, provides the statutory basis for DNS. Any proposal to construct or operate a power generation scheme with a capacity greater than 10MW and under 350MW falls within the DNS system and requires the consent of Welsh Ministers.

### Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (as amended)<sup>15</sup>

- 3.3.8 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (as amended) places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to reduce GHG emissions in Wales by at least 100% in 2050<sup>16</sup>. The target of net zero emissions (rather than 80% as originally stated in the Act) reflects the Welsh Government’s acceptance of the independent CCC recommendation<sup>17</sup> that Wales could achieve a net zero reduction in emissions, which had previously been considered unfeasible. The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (as amended) requires Ministers to set a series of interim targets and five-year carbon budgets to achieve the 2050 target. For 2021-26 this stands at 37% reduction compared to the baseline and for 2026-30 this is set at an average of a 58% reduction<sup>18</sup>.

### Wales Act 2017<sup>19</sup>

- 3.3.9 The Wales Act 2017 sets out a number of changes to the model of devolution and provides further powers for the Welsh Government. Amongst its provisions, decisions are devolved for energy planning development consent for projects up to 350MW onshore and offshore in Welsh waters. The Act effectively removes the Secretary of State’s power under the Planning Act 2008 to grant development consent in relation to electricity generating stations, up to those of 350MW (with no limit for onshore wind). Such projects are effectively transferred into the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) regime in Wales, if they are located onshore.

<sup>13</sup> UK Government (2015). Planning (Wales) Act 2015. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2015/4/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>14</sup> UK Government (2016). The Developments of National Significance (Wales) Regulations 2016. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2016/56/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>15</sup> UK Government (2016). Environment (Wales) Act 2016. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/3/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>16</sup> The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Amendment of 2050 Emissions Target) Regulations 2021 changed the statutory target within the Environment Act from 80% to 100% and came into force on 12 March 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Climate Change Committee’s (2020) The path to Net Zero and progress on reducing emissions in Wales.

<sup>18</sup> The Climate Change (Carbon Budgets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021 amended the 2021-2025 carbon budget from an average reduction of 33% to 37% lower than the baseline and came into force on 19 March 2021. The regulations set the carbon budget for the 2026-2030 period and limit to an average of 58% lower than the baseline.

<sup>19</sup> UK Government (2017). Wales Act 2017. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/4/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

## Draft Infrastructure (Wales) Bill 2023<sup>20</sup>

- 3.3.10 The Draft Infrastructure (Wales) Bill 2023 was laid before the Senedd Cymru (Welsh Parliament) on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 for consideration. It is currently predicted that the final version of the bill would come into force during the summer of 2025. The purpose of the bill is to help simplify the consenting process for significant infrastructure projects and would replace the Developments of National Significance process. This would include new electricity infrastructure projects, which wind generating stations (wind farms) would sit under and be considered.

## The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017<sup>21</sup>

- 3.3.11 The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations) apply to applications falling under the DNS regime. The EIA Regulation Schedules define the applicability of the regulations. EIA development is defined as either:
- Schedule 1 development; or
  - Schedule 2 development, which is considered to be “*development likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.*”
- 3.3.12 In the context of the Proposed Development, Schedule 2 is the relevant schedule. In particular, paragraph 3(i) (“*Installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms)*”) provides the relevant thresholds against which the applicability of EIA regulations are assessed. The Proposed Development subject to this Draft ES qualifies as EIA development due to it being above the threshold for quantum (set at more than 2 turbines) and hub height (being more than 15 metres).
- 3.3.13 Schedule 4(3) sets out the requirements for the assessment to be included in the ES: “*A description of the aspects of the environment likely to be significantly affected by the development, including, in particular, population, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, including the architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the inter-relationship between the above factors.*”

## 3.4 UK Wide Strategies and Plans

### UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2009)<sup>22</sup>

- 3.4.1 The UK Renewable Energy Strategy (HM Government, 2009) outlined the UK’s commitment to source 15% of energy from renewable sources by 2020, whilst reducing its fossil fuel consumption by 10% and gas imports by 20-30%. The aim was to generate more than 30% of the UK’s electricity needs, 12% of its heating needs and 10% of its transport energy with renewables. The strategy put in place the financial mechanisms

---

<sup>20</sup> Welsh Government (2023) Infrastructure Wales Bill 2023. Available at: [Infrastructure \(Wales\) Bill \(senedd.wales\)](https://www.senedd.wales.gov.uk/infrastructure-wales-bill-2023) (Accessed August 2023).

<sup>21</sup> UK Government (2017). The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017. (Online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/567/contents> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>22</sup> HM Government (2009). The UK Renewable Energy Strategy. (Online). Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/228866/7686.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228866/7686.pdf) (Accessed June 2023).



necessary for the advancement of these goals with around £30 billion to be invested between 2009 and 2020. The Strategy was supported by the Renewable Energy Action Plan and Road Map which sought to increase onshore wind capacity.

- 3.4.2 In 2020, 13.6% of final energy consumption in the UK was generated by renewables, below the 15% target. Of the total electricity generated, renewable electricity amounted to 43.1% (BEIS, 2021)<sup>23</sup> Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES): renewable sources of energy).

### Clean Growth Strategy (2017)<sup>24</sup>

- 3.4.3 The key message of the Clean Growth Strategy (CGS): Leading the Way to a Low Carbon Future (BEIS, 2017) is that clean growth means growing our national income while cutting GHG emissions. The CGS sets out a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of 'clean growth' i.e., deliver increased economic growth and decreased emissions. The Strategy draws on the UK's commitments under the Climate Change Act 2008 and the associated 'Carbon Budgets'.

### Industrial Strategy (2017)<sup>25</sup>

- 3.4.4 The Industrial Strategy entitled Building a Britain fit for the future (HM Government, 2017) aims to create an economy that boosts productivity and earning power throughout the UK. The Strategy identifies four 'Grand Challenges' that are set to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future and one of these is 'Clean Growth', including "*use of low carbon technologies, systems and services that cost less than high carbon alternatives*".

### Net Zero – The UK's Contribution to Stopping Global Warming 2019<sup>26</sup>

- 3.4.5 This report sets out a number of key findings including: the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) recommendation of a new emissions target for the UK: net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050 (acted upon by The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019). For Wales, the report recommended a 95% reduction in the amount of greenhouse gases it produces by 2050. Subsequently, the Welsh Government has adopted a 100% reduction (net zero) target.

### National Infrastructure Strategy (2020)<sup>27</sup>

- 3.4.6 The National Infrastructure Strategy (HM Treasury, 2020) presents the UK Government's plans to deliver significant improvements to UK infrastructure which will enable economic growth and progress towards the net zero by 2050 ambition.

---

<sup>23</sup> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) (2021). Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES): renewable sources of energy.

<sup>24</sup> HM Government (2017). The Clean Growth Strategy. Leading the way to a low carbon future. (Online) Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/700496/clean-growth-strategy-correction-april-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700496/clean-growth-strategy-correction-april-2018.pdf) (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>25</sup> HM Government (2017). Industrial Strategy. Building a Britain fit for the future. (online) Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664563/industrial-strategy-white-paper-web-ready-version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664563/industrial-strategy-white-paper-web-ready-version.pdf) (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>26</sup> Climate Change Committee (2019) Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming. (Online) Available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>27</sup> HM Treasury (2020). National Infrastructure Strategy. Fairer, faster, greener. (online) Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/938539/NIS\\_Report\\_Web\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938539/NIS_Report_Web_Accessible.pdf) (Accessed June 2023).

- 3.4.7 At page 51 the strategy recognises the need to increase capacity from onshore wind: “*To deliver net zero, the share of generation from renewables needs to dramatically increase. While the UK leads the world in the deployment of offshore wind, greater generation capacity will need to come from onshore wind and solar as well.*”

### Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021)<sup>28</sup>

- 3.4.8 The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (BEIS, 2021) provides the overarching UK wide strategy to reach the UK’s target for net zero emissions in 2050. The strategy set outs a delivery pathway to achieve net zero in 2050 with policies and proposals to keep the UK on track for emissions reductions targets to up to the sixth carbon budget covering the period 2033-2037. Amongst its policies, the strategy seeks to fully decarbonise the UK power system by 2035. Key to achieving this is the commitment to “*transform (the UK’s) energy system away from fossil fuels to low carbon sources of energy, such as renewable electricity generated in the UK*” (page. 39).

### British Energy Security Strategy (2022)<sup>29</sup>

- 3.4.9 The British Energy Security Strategy (BEIS, 2022) provides the overarching UK wide strategy to accelerate the transition away from oil and gas, providing a Ten-point plan for the green industrial revolution. Amongst its strategy, it supports the work underway by the Welsh Government, Ofgem and networks to improve grid connections for onshore wind developments.

### Powering Up Britain – March 2023 Energy Security Secretary Statements<sup>30</sup>

- 3.4.10 On 30th March 2023, the UK Government announced a commitment and drive to improve the energy market and energy security within Britain. The Energy Security Secretary identified billions of pounds of additional funding would be provided to the industry in order to develop and implement more green energy development. The fifth round of Contracts for Difference has a budget of £205 million to directly provide support for the development of renewable energy within Britain. The main Powering Up Britain document identified that onshore wind should be recognised in planning as an efficient, cheap and widely supported technology<sup>31</sup>.

### Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (March 2023)<sup>32</sup>

- 3.4.11 The Carbon Budget Delivery Plan 2023 has been designed and adopted to aid in the achievement of the goals contained within the UK’s Sixth Carbon Budget. The Delivery Plan estimates that currently the UK would not be able to meet the requirements of the Sixth Carbon Budget, barely missing its target by 3% (reaching 97% of the required

---

<sup>28</sup> HM Government (2021). Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener. (Online). (Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf) (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>29</sup> HM Government (2022). British Energy Security Strategy. (Online). Available at: [British energy security strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/british-energy-security-strategy.pdf) (Accessed June 2023)

<sup>30</sup> HM Government (2023). Shapps sets out plans to drive multi billion pound investment in energy revolution. (Online) Available at: [Shapps sets out plans to drive multi billion pound investment in energy revolution - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/shapps-sets-out-plans-to-drive-multi-billion-pound-investment-in-energy-revolution). (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>31</sup> HM Government (2023). Powering Up Britain. (Online) Available at: [Powering Up Britain - Joint Overview \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/powering-up-britain-joint-overview.pdf). (Accessed June 2023). Page 23.

<sup>32</sup> HM Government (2023). Carbon Budget Delivery Plan. (Online) Available at: [Carbon Budget Delivery Plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/carbon-budget-delivery-plan.pdf). (Accessed June 2023).

carbon savings by 2037) (page 15). However, the Delivery Plan highlights the need for continued research into low-carbon technologies and their use to enable the Sixth Carbon Budget to be met and exceeded and the Delivery Plan is confident such technologies would ensure the achievement of the Sixth Carbon Budget's requirements in reality. (page 15-16)

- 3.4.12 Onshore wind is identified as one of the key technologies that are helping the UK meet the requirements of the Carbon Budgets. Part of the Delivery Plan's advice is for the UK to establish local partnerships that can develop onshore wind farm development.
- 3.4.13 The Delivery Plan identifies onshore wind as an efficient, cheap, and widely supported technology (page 49). The Delivery Plan also identifies that establishing energy connections to renewable energy development (including onshore wind) should be made easier, to help provide assurance and savings to energy development developers.

### Powering Up Britain – The Net Zero Growth Plan<sup>33</sup>

- 3.4.14 Released in March 2023, the Net Zero Growth Plan seeks to reduce emissions across the economy of the UK and support the transition of its economy to being net zero, whilst maintaining economic growth. The Net Zero Growth Plan states the following with regard to the future of the UK's energy sector: "*A secure, reliable, cost-effective, decarbonised power sector is critical for a modern industrial economy.*" (page 26) Demand for renewable energy is only going to increase in the future as the Net Zero Growth Strategy identifies that the demand for energy is likely to increase by up to 60% by 2035, making it harder to achieve decarbonisation goals (page 27). The Net Zero Growth Plan reiterates the statement that onshore wind is an efficient, cheap and widely supported technology. (page 27)

## Welsh national strategies and plans

### A Low Carbon Revolution: Wales' Energy Policy Statement (2010)<sup>34</sup>

- 3.4.15 The Energy Policy Statement (EPS) set the objective for Wales to become a world leader in low carbon energy following consultation on the Energy Route Map. The EPS summarises the pressing arguments to tackle climate change highlighting that: "*unless we quickly reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases, the world will probably be another 3°C hotter by 2060 and there will be much higher risks of catastrophic global climate changes*". The headline target contained within the EPS is "*to renewably generate up to twice as much electricity annually by 2025 as we use today*" (page 26). With regard to onshore wind the target identified is "*to have 4.5 kWh/d/p of installed onshore wind generation capacity by 2015/2017*" (page 14). It recognises that the average electrical power consumption per person per day in Wales is approximately 22 kWh/d/p, so this target represents 20% of electricity consumption coming from onshore wind within the seven years following publication (to 2017).

<sup>33</sup> HM Government (2023). Powering Up Britain – The Net Zero Growth Plan. (Online) Available at: [Powering Up Britain - The Net Zero Growth Plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1154447/powering-up-britain-the-net-zero-growth-plan.pdf). (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>34</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2010). A Low Carbon Revolution – The Welsh Assembly Government Energy Policy Statement. (Online) Available at: <http://www.marineenergywales.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WAG-low-carbon-revolution2.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

## The Climate Change Strategy for Wales (2010)<sup>35</sup>

- 3.4.16 This document sets out the Welsh Government's commitments to and strategy for managing climate change in Wales through reducing GHG emissions and enabling effective adaptation in Wales. The Strategy sets targets to reduce GHG emissions in Wales by 3% every year and achieve at least a 40% reduction by 2020 compared to figures from the 1990 baseline. The commitments have subsequently been superseded by the legal requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

## Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition (2012)<sup>36</sup>

- 3.4.17 Energy Wales sets out the how the Welsh Government will work in partnership with private, public and social sectors to ensure the transition to a low carbon economy to secure a wealthier, more resilient and sustainable future for Wales. Amongst other measures, the document states that the Welsh Government seeks to make the best use of commercially proven renewable energy sources, facilitate appropriate deployment to deliver against Wales's low carbon objectives and realise the significant wealth generating opportunities Wales has.
- 3.4.18 The Welsh Government wants to provide leadership on the energy agenda in Wales. It aims to improve a number of areas to ensure the energy agenda progresses to a more low carbon format. In specific relation to delivering renewable energy the statement explains that in 2010 capacity from wind farms was 562MW, with 62% of renewable energy coming from wind or solar. The aim is to make best use of proven renewable sources, including onshore wind, and deliver against low carbon objectives. This will include improvements to the planning and consenting regime and ensure that the necessary infrastructure for a diverse portfolio of renewable energy is delivered.

## Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition Delivery Plan (2014)<sup>37</sup>

- 3.4.19 The Energy Wales Delivery Plan sets out how the Welsh Government would develop proposals set out in the Energy Wales (2012) document. The Delivery Plan includes a number of themes and priority project areas which are within the gift of the devolved administration to support.

## Energy Generation Targets for Wales: Statement to Assembly Members (2017) and 2023 Update<sup>38</sup>

- 3.4.20 In September 2017, the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs announced to the Welsh Assembly that the Welsh Government was setting a target for Wales to generate 70% of its electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030 and a target for 1GW of renewable electricity capacity in Wales to be locally owned by 2030. Additionally, it set a target for all renewable energy projects to have an element of local ownership.

---

<sup>35</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2010). Climate Change Strategy for Wales. Delivery Plan for Emission Reduction. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/climate-change-research-emission-reduction-scenarios.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>36</sup> Welsh Government (2012). Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/energy-wales-a-low-carbon-transition.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>37</sup> Welsh Government (2014). Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition Delivery Plan. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-07/energy-wales-a-low-carbon-delivery-plan.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>38</sup> Welsh Government (2017) Lesley Griffiths high on ambition for clean energy. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/lesley-griffiths-high-ambition-clean-energy> (Accessed June 2023).



- 3.4.21 In January 2023 the Welsh Government (Welsh Government, 2023a)<sup>39</sup> consulted on an updated target to meet 100% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035 and to achieve 1.5GW of renewable energy capacity within local ownership by 2035. These targets were adopted in July 2023 (Welsh Government, 2023b)<sup>40</sup>.

### Policy Statement: Local Ownership of Energy Generation in Wales – Benefitting Wales Today and for Future Generations (2020)<sup>41</sup>

- 3.4.22 This policy statement places considerable importance on moving from polluting energy generating technologies to renewables. It also identifies that Wales has made considerable and impressive gains in ensuring energy generating facilities have some form of public ownership, contributing to local economies considerably more than traditional ownership methods.
- 3.4.23 The Policy Statement clarifies the definition of local ownership as “*energy installations, located in Wales, which are owned by one or more individuals or organisations wholly owned and based in Wales, or organisations whose principal headquarters are located in Wales. This includes the following categories: Businesses; Farms and estates; Households and other domestic scale generation; Local Authorities; Other public sector organisations; Registered Social Landlords; Third sector organisations including social enterprises and charities, their subsidiaries, trading arms and special purpose vehicles.*”

### Energy Generation in Wales Report 2021 (2022)<sup>42</sup>

- 3.4.24 The latest Energy Generation in Wales Report covering 2021 sets out the latest data on energy generation from renewables. In 2021, Wales managed to meet approximately 55% of its electricity consumption through the use of renewable sources. It is estimated that 28% of total electricity generation within Wales originates from renewable sources, with 897mw of renewable energy capacity being locally owned. Of the 27.1TWh of electricity generated within Wales in 2021, 7.7TWh of it originated from renewables. The majority of renewable energy within Wales originates from onshore and offshore wind developments (70%).
- 3.4.25 The Report identifies that further work needs to be done to ensure Wales reaches its target of 70% of annual energy consumption be met by renewable energy by 2030. This is demonstrated by renewable energy generation has increased by over 600% since 2005 but has only increased by 12% since 2016. This highlights that the development of renewable energy generating developments has slowed considerably since 2016. Electricity consumption within Wales has increased faster than renewable energy generating developments have been developed in 2021, which is emphasised by the total percentage of electricity consumption being met by renewable energy falling from 56% in 2020 to 55% in 2021.

<sup>39</sup> Welsh Government (2023a) Climate Change Minister - Wales aims to meet 100% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035 (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/wales-aims-meet-100-its-electricity-needs-renewable-sources-2035> (Accessed October 2023)

<sup>40</sup> Welsh Government (2023b) Written Statement: Publication of Summary of Responses to the Consultation on Wales' Renewable Energy Targets(Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-publication-summary-responses-consultation-wales-renewable-energy-targets> (Accessed October 2023)

<sup>41</sup> Welsh Government (2020). Policy Statement: Local Ownership of Energy Generation in Wales – Benefitting Wales Today and for Future Generations. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-02/policy-statement-local-ownership-of-energy-generation-in-wales.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>42</sup> Welsh Government (2022). Energy Generation in Wales 2021. (Online) Available at: [energy-generation-in-wales-2021.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-02/energy-generation-in-wales-2021.pdf). (Accessed June 2023).

## Programme for Government (2021)<sup>43</sup>

- 3.4.26 The Welsh Government's Programme for Government published in June 2021 sets out the actions that the Welsh Government intend to take over the lifetime of the Senedd. It seeks to ensure that tackling the climate and nature emergencies is at the heart of Welsh Government activity. One of the ten well-being objectives is "*Embed our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do.*"

## Net Zero Wales (2021)<sup>44</sup>

- 3.4.27 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (as amended) Act requires the publication of a report setting out policies and proposals for each carbon budget period. In October 2021, the Welsh Government published Net Zero Wales: Carbon Budget 2 (2021 to 2025) which builds upon their previous plan Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales (Welsh Government, 2019). This sets out a large number of policies for action in the five-year carbon budget period and proposals for action in the longer term to ensure that Wales meets the required average reduction of 37% in GHG emissions against the baseline and is on track to achieve net zero emissions in 2050.
- 3.4.28 The Plan reinforces the importance of delivering energy generation from renewable sources to meet the energy needs of Wales. The plan plays an important role in meeting challenges posed by the climate emergency declared by the Welsh Government in April 2019.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Welsh Government (2021). Programme for Government: Well-being Statement. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-06/programme-for-government-2021-to-2026-well-being-statement.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>44</sup> Welsh Government (2021). Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021-25). (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-10/net-zero-wales-carbon-budget-2-2021-25.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>45</sup> Welsh Government (2019) Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths Welsh Government makes climate emergency declaration

## 4. Planning Policy Review

---

### 4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 This section of the statement sets out the key planning policies relevant to the consideration of the Proposed Development at the UK, Wales and local level. It begins with an assessment of performance against UK and Welsh planning policy. It is followed by consideration of the scheme against the key policies contained within the CCBC LDP and the guidance in non-statutory Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

### 4.2 UK planning Policy

- 4.2.1 This section sets out the relevant UK wide policy context set out in National Policy Statements (NPS). Developments of National Significance applications are determined in accordance with *Future Wales: The National Plan 2040* (considered in detail in the next section of this Planning Statement) in line with the revised legal framework since the NPS were enacted in 2011. However, the NPS provide broader energy policy context that applies across England and Wales and are therefore briefly reviewed here.

#### Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2011)

- 4.2.2 EN-1 was enacted in 2011 and sets out the national policy on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP). It reiterates Government policy on energy and energy infrastructure, setting out the roadmap to 2050 and emphasising the urgency with which global emissions must start to fall and the need for the UK to move away from a high carbon energy generation mix. At paragraph 3.4.5 the NPS states “*It is necessary to bring forward new renewable electricity generating projects as soon as possible. The need for new renewable energy electricity generation projects is therefore urgent.*”
- 4.2.3 Section 3.4 sets out the role of renewable energy as envisaged by Government. EN-1 also provides advice on ‘good design’. Paragraph 4.5.3 states that applicants may have opportunities to demonstrate good design in terms of siting relative to existing landscape character, landform and vegetation. The NPS includes a reference that it can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

#### Draft National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (2023)

- 4.2.4 A new version of draft NPS EN-1 was published for consultation in September 2021 and a revised version of the draft was published for consultation in March 2023. In Section 2 the NPS refers to the target of net zero in 2050 and a 78% reduction in GHG emissions by 2035. This reflects the latest legislation. The NPS also includes revisions that recognise that decisions on renewable energy developments up to 350MW and all onshore wind (above 10MW) are devolved within Wales whilst onshore wind is removed from the NSIP regime. Other changes include incorporation of references to the consideration biodiversity net gain in NSIP. The Proposed Development would support the overarching aims of EN-1 by delivering renewable energy that would contribute to the achievement of net zero in 2050.

## National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) (2011)

- 4.2.5 The 2011 NPS provides policy on a range of renewable energy technologies and their potential for likely significant effects. With regard to onshore wind, it notes at 2.7.1 that:
- “Onshore wind farms are the most established large-scale source of renewable energy in the UK. Onshore wind farms will continue to play an important role in meeting renewable energy targets”*
- 4.2.6 With specific relevance to Landscape and Visual issues, it notes at 2.7.48 that *“Modern onshore wind turbines that are used in commercial wind farms are large structures and there will always be significant landscape and visual effects from their construction and operation for a number of kilometres around a site.”*
- 4.2.7 It goes on to state that the arrangement of turbines should be designed to minimise effects while meeting technical and operational siting requirements. However, recognition is also given to the potentially significant changes which could reduce electrical output from a resulting reduction in scale.

## Draft National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-3) (2023)

- 4.2.8 A new version of NPS for Energy (EN-3) was published for consultation in September 2021 with a revised version published for consultation in March 2023. The draft NPS removes reference to onshore wind in line with the Infrastructure Planning (Onshore Wind Generating Stations) Order 2016 which removed all onshore wind generating stations in England and Wales from the definition of nationally significant energy generating stations. In England such development is to be considered through TCPA applications.
- 4.2.9 As established elsewhere in this Planning Statement, the Welsh Government sees onshore wind as a key element of the infrastructure required in Wales and schemes over 10MW are considered to be of a scale to be nationally significant. This is embedded in *Future Wales: the National Plan* and *Planning Policy Wales 11*. In decision making it is considered that no weight should be given to the fact that the draft NPS removes references to onshore wind.

## 4.3 Welsh Planning Policy

### Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (2021)<sup>46</sup>

- 4.3.1 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Future Wales) was published by the Welsh Government in February 2021. Future Wales sets out the national development framework for Wales and has development plan status. As the highest tier of the development plan it provides the framework for the development of regional level Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) (which have yet to be produced) and LDPs. Future Wales is the Welsh Government’s *“strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong eco systems and improving the health and well-being of our communities”* (page. 6). Future Wales is the policy document against which DNS (including the Proposed Development subject to this Draft ES) must

---

<sup>46</sup> Welsh Government (2021). Future Wales: The National Plan 2040. (online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/future-wales-the-national-plan-2040.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).



be determined in accordance with unless material considerations indicate otherwise, in line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 4.3.2 Future Wales has been prepared to provide a clear, long term spatial direction for Government policy, action and investment in Wales. It sets out a framework for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, inclusive of decarbonisation. It states (page. 46): *“Future Wales together with Planning Policy Wales will ensure the planning system focuses on delivering a decarbonised and resilient Wales through the places we create, the energy we generate, the natural resources and materials we use and how we live and travel.”*
- 4.3.3 Future Wales recognises the role that Wales can play in supporting the use of renewable energy. It recognises that *“Wales can become a world leader in renewable energy technologies”* (page. 48). Furthermore, it recognises that *“Our wind and tidal resources, our potential for solar generation, our support for both large and community scaled projects and our commitment to ensuring the planning system provides a strong lead for renewable energy development, mean we are well placed to support the renewable sector, attract new investment and reduce carbon emissions”* (page. 48).
- 4.3.4 Future Wales sets out 11 outcomes to provide a vision for change to 2040. Outcome 11 seeks *“A Wales where people live ... in places which are decarbonised and climate-resilient”* (page. 56). Further it states, *“The challenges of the climate emergency demand urgent action on carbon emissions and the planning system must help Wales lead the way in promoting and delivering a competitive, sustainable decarbonised society”* (page. 56).
- 4.3.5 Future Wales reaffirms the Welsh Government’s commitment to maximising renewable and the Welsh Government targets (which have subsequently been updated as outlined):
- For 70% of electricity consumption to be generated from renewable energy by 2030 (which has now been superseded by Welsh Government (2023b) to 100% by 2035);
  - For one gigawatt of renewable energy capacity to be locally owned by 2030 (which has been superseded by Welsh Government (2023b) to 1.5 gigawatt by 2035); and
  - For new renewable energy projects to have at least an element of local ownership from 2020.
- 4.3.6 Future Wales confirms that energy generation accounted for 29% of GHG emissions in 2018 and is clear that large scale renewable electricity generation is vital meeting renewable energy and climate change targets and alternatives would not meet the targets (page. 97):
- “The Welsh Ministers have considered alternatives to the need for new large-scale electricity generation infrastructure, including building-mounted installations and energy efficiency measures. Although we believe that these measures have an important part to play in meeting our energy, decarbonisation and climate change targets, they will not enable us to meet these objectives on their own.”*
- 4.3.7 Future Wales identifies 10 Pre-assessed Areas (PAAs) for wind within which there is a presumption in favour of large-scale wind development under Future Wales’ Policy 17 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure subject to detailed criteria in Policy 18 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance. Policy 17 states that *“The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs”* whilst decision makers are required to give *“significant weight”* to the need to meet international commitments and Wales’ target to generate 70% of energy from renewables by 2030. Policy 18 provides a detailed decision-making framework for the renewable and low carbon energy developments.

- 4.3.8 Additionally, Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure states that the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals. Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys sets out the overall strategic view for development in the South East which includes the area covered by CCBC. Amongst its provisions, the Policy states that *“The Welsh Government supports co-ordinated regeneration and investment in the Valleys area to improve well-being, increase prosperity and address social inequalities.”*

## Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) (2021)<sup>47</sup>

- 4.3.9 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. PPW Edition 11 was adopted in February 2021 to coincide with the publication of Future Wales. PPW, with the supporting Technical Advice Notes (TAN), Circulars and Policy Clarification letters comprise national planning policy but do not form part of the development plan.
- 4.3.10 At para 3.30 PPW states that *“In 2019 the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in order to coordinate action nationally and locally to help combat the threats of climate change. The planning system plays a key role in tackling the climate emergency through the decarbonisation of the energy system and the sustainable management of natural resources.”*
- 4.3.11 Chapter 5: Productive and Enterprising Places sets out the planning policy approach to energy within Wales. Para 5.7.6 states that *“The planning system should secure an appropriate mix of energy provision, which maximises benefits to our economy and communities whilst minimising potential environmental and social impacts. This forms part of the Welsh Government’s aim to secure the strongest economic development policies, to underpin growth and prosperity in Wales, recognising the importance of decarbonisation and the sustainable use of natural resources, both as an economic driver and a commitment to sustainable development.”*
- 4.3.12 PPW11 reaffirms the Welsh Government’s targets for renewable energy generation and local ownership. Para 5.7.7 states that *“The benefits of renewable and low carbon energy, as part of the overall commitment to tackle the climate emergency and increase energy security, is of paramount importance.”* PPW11 states that the planning system should (Para 5.7.7):
- *“Integrate development with the provision of additional electricity grid network infrastructure;*
  - *Optimise energy storage;*
  - *Facilitate the integration of sustainable building design principles in new development;*
  - *Optimise the location of new developments to allow for efficient use of resources;*
  - *Maximise renewable and low carbon energy generation;*
  - *Maximise the use of local energy sources, such as heat networks;*
  - *Minimise the carbon impact of other energy generation; and*
  - *Move away from the extraction of energy minerals, the burning of which is carbon intensive.”*

---

<sup>47</sup> Welsh Government (2021). Planning Policy Wales Edition 11. (Online) Available at: [https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11\\_0.pdf](https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf) (Accessed June 2023).

- 4.3.13 PPW states that local planning authorities should ensure “*development plan policies are supportive of renewable and low carbon energy development in all parts of Wales, direct developments to the right locations and set out clearly the local criteria against which proposals will be evaluated*” (Para 5.9.10). PPW11 is also clear that local planning authorities should not seek to amend the PAAs identified in Future Wales within their LDPs.
- 4.3.14 PPW11 affirms that planning applications for onshore wind generating projects over 10MW are made directly to Welsh Ministers as part of the DNS process and are to be considered under the policies of Future Wales.
- 4.3.15 In October 2023, through a letter to the heads of planning<sup>48</sup> Welsh Government updated the wording of Chapter 6 of PPW. This includes the requirement ‘DECCA Framework’ to follow and the ‘Step-wise approach’ for delivery of net benefit for biodiversity. The changes also require Green Infrastructure Statements to accompany all applications. For the purposes of the draft application, the Green Infrastructure Statement is included in **Section 4.7**.

## Technical Advice Notes

### Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)<sup>49</sup>

- 4.3.16 TAN 5 provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation within Wales. It sets out the key principles of planning for nature conservation for both local development plans and when deciding planning applications that may affect nature conservation. These include:
- Being mindful of the principles of sustainable development, environmental limits, the precautionary principle;
  - Contributing to the protection and improvement of the environment;
  - Promoting the conservation and enhancement of statutorily designated areas and undeveloped coast;
  - Ensuring that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance;
  - Protecting wildlife and natural features in the wider environment;
  - Ensuring that all material considerations are taken into account and decisions are informed by adequate information about the potential effects of development on nature conservation;
  - Ensuring that the range and population of protected species is sustained; and
  - Avoiding harm to nature conservation, minimising unavoidable harm by mitigation measures, offsetting residual harm by compensation measures and looking for new opportunities to enhance nature conservation.

---

<sup>48</sup> Welsh Government (2023) Addressing the nature emergency through the planning system: update to Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales <https://www.gov.wales/addressing-nature-emergency-through-planning-system-update-chapter-6-planning-policy-wales> (Accessed October 2023)

<sup>49</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2009). Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan5-nature-conservation.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

## Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)<sup>50</sup>

4.3.17 TAN 6 provides guidance on sustainable rural economies, rural services and housing and agriculture. It notes that planning authorities should support the diversification of the rural economy and that the planning system has a key role to play in supporting the delivery of sustainable rural communities. It goes on to consider the range of rural matters that the planning system should address from homes and employment opportunities to rural services whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and safeguarding the countryside and open spaces. It also notes the need to respond to the challenges posed by climate change and identifies that one method which can contribute to this is renewable energy generation, particularly using local renewable sources. In paragraph 3.7.2, TAN6 considers farm diversification and notes the range of activities which can be sustainably located on farms and notes that the production of renewable energy is likely to be an appropriate use.

## Technical Advice Note 11: Noise (1997)<sup>51</sup>

4.3.18 TAN 11 provides advice on how the planning system can be used to minimise the adverse impact of noise, without placing unreasonable burdens on applicants. Local planning authorities must ensure that noise generating development does not cause an unacceptable degree of disturbance. They should also bear in mind that if subsequent intensification or change of use results in greater intrusion, consideration should be given to the use of appropriate conditions.

## Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)<sup>52</sup>

4.3.19 The purpose of this TAN is to equip all those involved in the design of development with advice on how 'promoting sustainability through good design' may be facilitated through the planning system and the preparation and validation of mandatory design and access statements. There are a number of key objectives in relation to design which are set out by TAN 12:

- Access - Ensuring ease of access for all;
- Character - Sustaining or enhancing local character, promoting legible development, promoting a successful relationship between public and private space, promoting quality, choice and variety and promoting inclusive design;
- Community Safety - Ensuring attractive, safe public spaces and security through natural surveillance;
- Environmental Sustainability - Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources, enhancing biodiversity and designing for change; and
- Movement - Promoting sustainable means of travel.

---

<sup>50</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2010). Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan6-sustainable-rural-communities.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>51</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (1997). Technical Advice Note 11: Noise. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan11-noise.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>52</sup> Welsh Government (2016). Technical Advice Note 12: Design. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan12-design.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).



## Technical Advice Note 19: Telecommunications (2002)<sup>53</sup>

- 4.3.20 This TAN deals with both the creation of telecommunication links and also the potential for radio interference from proposed developments. It notes that large prominent structures such as wind farms can cause disruption to television and other telecommunications services due to the physical obstruction. It puts the onus on local planning authorities to satisfy themselves that the potential for interference has been fully taken into account in the siting and design of such developments, and appropriate mitigation built into the scheme if necessary.

## Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development (2014)<sup>54</sup>

- 4.3.21 TAN 23 sets out guidance for the approach to economic development. Under section 3, TAN 23 reaffirms the importance of sustainable economic development in rural areas. Under paragraph 2.1.13 the TAN restates that the planning system should support (inter alia) the low-carbon economy. TAN 23 states that the balance between economic benefits and social and environment impacts need to be carefully weighed up and decisions on each case will depend on local circumstances.

## 4.4 The Local Development Plan

- 4.4.1 As described in **Section 4.3** above, Future Wales forms the highest tier of the Development Plan and contains the primary planning policies against which DNS are determined. This section of the Planning Statement sets out the key LDP policies relevant to the consideration of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development is located within the CCBC administrative area.

## Caerphilly County Borough Council Local Development Plan<sup>55</sup>

- 4.4.2 CCBC adopted its LDP in November 2010, which sets policies to guide development up to 2021. The policies of relevance to the Proposed Development are identified below in **Table 4.1**.

**Table 4.1 Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021**

Adopted LDP policy	Policy summary
<b>SP2 Development Strategy – Development in the Northern Connections Corridor.</b>	Requires development within the Northern Connections Corridor to be sustainable, well sited, make efficient use of existing infrastructure and encourage sustainable modes of travel, whilst also protecting the area's natural heritage.
<b>SP3 Development Strategy – Development in the</b>	Requires development within the Southern Connection Corridor to make efficient use of existing infrastructure and encourage sustainable modes

<sup>53</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2002). Technical Advice Note 19: Telecommunications. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan19-telecommunications.pdf> (Accessed August 2023).

<sup>54</sup> Welsh Government (2014). Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development. (Online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan23-economic-development.pdf> (Accessed August 2023).

<sup>55</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council (2010) Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021. (Online) Available at: [https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/business/planning-and-building-control-for-business/local-development-plan/local-development-plan-2010-\(adopted\)/the-adopted-ldp](https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/business/planning-and-building-control-for-business/local-development-plan/local-development-plan-2010-(adopted)/the-adopted-ldp) (Accessed August 2023).

<b>Southern Connection Corridor.</b>	of travel, is well designed to ensure it does not compromise the social, economic and heritage functions/character of the area.
<b>SP6 Place Making.</b>	This policy seeks to ensure development contributes positively to an area through the creation of sustainable places that have regard to the local natural, historic and current built environment. The policy contains eight criteria to help ensure development is sustainable and range in their scope from a criteria relating to developments being a high standard of design to the efficient use of resources.
<b>SP8 Minerals Safeguarding.</b>	The Proposed Development is located within a sandstone resource area and policy SP8 seeks to balance the need to maintain/safeguard the mineral resources of Caerphilly County Borough alongside allowing development within such areas.
<b>SP10 Conservation of Natural Heritage.</b>	Requires development to conserve and protect the natural heritage of the region. Natural heritage comprises local geology, geomorphology, biodiversity, landscape and amenity value.
<b>CW1 Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion.</b>	This policy relates to development that could generate a significant number of travel related trips. Development is required to ensure walking and cycling is encouraged and where a larger number of freight trips are created, that the least damaging route would be utilised.
<b>CW2 Amenity.</b>	Seeks to ensure that development is in accordance with its neighbouring land uses. Development cannot result in unacceptable impacts upon the amenity and function of neighbouring land uses or constrain their future development.
<b>CW3 Design Considerations – Highways.</b>	Requires development to ensure it is adequately and safely connecting into local highways and infrastructure whilst also incorporating sufficient pedestrianisation where relevant.
<b>CW4 Natural Heritage Protection.</b>	Affords protection to the locally designated natural heritage features of the Caerphilly County Borough. This includes protecting Special Landscape Areas (SLA), Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILL), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), Green Corridors, and Local Priority Habitats and Species. Developments that have a clear and strong needs case that outweigh the potential effects on the identified designations can be permitted.
<b>CW5 Protection of Water Environment.</b>	Development is required to ensure it would not have unacceptable adverse effects upon the local water environment and properly manages its groundwater and surface water effects.
<b>CW6 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection.</b>	Requires development to ensure it protects trees, woodlands and hedgerows from harm.
<b>CW15 General Locational Constraints.</b>	Identifies a list of general locational constraints but highlights that certain development might fall outside of these constraints, in which national planning policy would apply.
<b>CW19 Locational Constraints – Rural Development and Diversification.</b>	Development located within rural areas are required to be consistent to the scale of their surroundings and compatible with neighbouring uses, including neighbouring natural and heritage features.
<b>CW22 Locational Constraints – Minerals.</b>	The Proposed Development is within a mineral safeguarding area. Development within such areas are permitted where it can be shown

that the minerals being safeguarded has no value/are no longer needed and the needs case for the development outweighs any disbenefits. Developments within mineral safeguarding are viewed more favourably when temporary.

**CW23 Locational Constraints – Mineral Site Buffer Zones**

This policy only supports development within Mineral Site Buffer Zones where the development is not sensitive in nature. The site is partially within a mineral site buffer zone.

**Area Specific Policies for the Northern Connection Corridor (NCC)**

**NH2 Visually Important Local Landscapes.**

- NH2.3 Abercarn.

Seeks to protect the distinctive visual and sensory landscapes contained within identified (Abercarn) Visually Important Local Landscapes.

**NH3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).**

- NH3.112 Coed Cil-Lonydd, East of Newbridge.
- NH3.113 Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge.
- NH3.124 Gwydon Valley Woodlands, Abercarn.
- NH3.128 Cwm Hafod-Fach Woodlands, North of Abercarn.
- NH3.134 Cwm Gofapi Woods, Cwmcarn.

The policy provides protection to Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, which are designated due to the biodiversity, priority habitats and species that are located within them. The Proposed Development would only be approved so long as it does not generate any unacceptable effects on the identified Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation it is within/close to.

**MN1 – Mineral Site Buffer Zones.**

- MN1.3 Hafod Fach Quarry – Active.

Identifies the Mineral Site Buffer Zones that exist around the mineral sites within the Caerphilly County Borough. Policy CW23 provides the protection for these buffer zones.

**LE5 Protection of Informal Open Spaces.**

- LE5.11 Pantside, Newbridge.

Requires development to not compromise spaces that are considered to be Informal Open Spaces.

**Area Specific Policies for the Southern Connection Corridor (SCC)**

**NH2 Visually Important Local Landscapes.**

- NH2.3 Abercarn.

Seeks to protect the distinctive visual and sensory landscapes contained within identified (Abercarn) Visually Important Local Landscapes.

## 4.5 Other Local Planning Considerations

### Supplementary Planning Guidance

#### LDP4 – Trees and Development<sup>56</sup>

- 4.5.1 This SPG stresses the importance hedgerows and trees play in a places character, setting and provide considerable benefits for local species. It identifies that development should be designed to retain trees and hedgerows as much as possible and for the planting of new trees and hedgerows. The SPG provides further guidance on the tree survey information that should be submitted alongside development proposals to ensure their potential effects on trees located on site or adjacent to a development site are identified and addressed.

#### LDP10 – Buildings in the Countryside<sup>57</sup>

- 4.5.2 This SPG provides further guidance on development within the countryside (rural development). Rural development is required to ensure its location, scale, design, use of materials and effects on an areas setting are all appropriate to the rural environment it is located within.

#### Planning Guidance for Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Developments – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Requirements<sup>58</sup>

- 4.5.3 Whilst this SPG is primarily concerned with small scale wind farm development (wind farm development that would generate 5MWs or less), it does provide general landscape and visual effects guidance that can inform all wind farm developments. This SPG identifies the level of information Landscape Visual Impact Assessments should contain when supporting a wind farm application.

#### Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development – Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study Final Report November 2021 (part 2)<sup>59</sup>

- 4.5.4 This SPG identifies the landscape character types and their ability to accommodate wind farm development. The SPG identifies that the location of the Proposed Development is in an area at high sensitivity to large wind turbine development and a mixture of medium and low sensitivity to medium wind farm development.
- 4.5.5 The SPG also provides general guidance for wind farm development relating to their design, size, scale, siting and supporting infrastructure. It also provides guidance that

---

<sup>56</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council (2017). Trees and Development. (Online) Available at: <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillydocs/planning/ldp4-trees-and-development.aspx> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>57</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council (2012) Buildings in the Countryside. (Online) Available at: <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillydocs/planning/spg-ldp-10-buildings-in-the-countryside.aspx> (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>58</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council (2015). Planning Guidance for Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Requirements. (Online) Available at: [https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillydocs/ldp/pg\\_smaller\\_scale\\_wind\\_turbine\\_developments.aspx](https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillydocs/ldp/pg_smaller_scale_wind_turbine_developments.aspx) (Accessed June 2023).

<sup>59</sup> Caerphilly County Borough Council (2015). Caerphilly County Borough Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development (part 2). (Online) Available at: [https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillydocs/planning/wind\\_turbines/smaller\\_scale\\_wind\\_turbine\\_development\\_landscape.aspx](https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillydocs/planning/wind_turbines/smaller_scale_wind_turbine_development_landscape.aspx) (Accessed June 2023).



wind farm developments must consider all their potential effects, ranging from potential landscape effects to effects on local biodiversity and natural resources (woodlands & trees).

## Emerging LDP

- 4.5.6 CCBC is currently preparing a replacement LDP covering the period up to 2035 and consulted on a Pre-Deposit Plan (Preferred Strategy) in autumn 2022.<sup>60</sup> Draft Policy PS6: Climate Change states that all development proposals “*must make a positive contribution towards addressing the causes of, and adapting to the impacts of, climate change*” whilst Draft Policy PS7: Renewable Energy Generation states that “*the Council will support and promote schemes for the generation of energy from renewable and zero carbon sources*”. Other relevant emerging policies seek the protection of green and blue infrastructure (Policy PS9: Green and Blue Infrastructure) and the safeguarding of mineral resource (Policy PS22: Minerals).
- 4.5.7 The Pre-Deposit Plan (Preferred Strategy) identified a number of key land use issues that an up-to-date LDP would be required to help address. Key land use issues applicable to the Proposed Development are outlined below:
- Nr1 – The need to tackle climate change.
  - Nr3 – Wales is seeking to decarbonise all aspects of its economy and the Council identifies that it needs to promote zero carbon energy generating development..
  - En1 – CCBC has declared a climate emergency and identifies the promoting and delivering of renewable energy generation schemes as one of the key components to addressing this key land use issue.
  - Cu3 – The emerging LDP highlights that the heritage assets of the borough are at risk.

## 4.6 Other Relevant Strategies

### Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

#### Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCR) Energy Vision and Strategy (2021)<sup>61</sup>

- 4.6.1 Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCR) (which includes CCBC) has developed an Energy Vision and Strategy in partnership with the Welsh Government. The Strategy seeks to set out a route to decarbonisation that will enable the region to achieve a net zero energy system by 2050, which includes supporting low carbon technologies. The vision is guided by three core principles, which seek to:

1. Act as an enabler to a sustainable regional economy: deliver inclusive employment, profits and skills, lower costs and open up markets, and stimulate

<sup>60</sup> Documents available via: <https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/business/planning-and-building-control-for-business/local-development-plan/2nd-replacement-ldp-up-to-2035/pre-deposit-public-consultation> [Accessed July 2023]

<sup>61</sup> Welsh Government Energy Service (2021) Cardiff Capital Region Energy Strategy. (online) Available at: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-11/regional-energy-strategy-cardiff-capital-region.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

public and private investment in capital projects that deliver low carbon improvements across the region.

2. Contribute wider benefits to the region: including alleviating fuel poverty, sparking innovation and developing local training and skills.

3. Decarbonise the energy system to meet national targets as a minimum: carbon reductions across all sectors, energy efficiency as a core focus, and to have a multi-vector system that includes a range of low carbon technologies.

4.6.2 The Strategy also seeks to decarbonise the regions public transport through electrification.

## Cardiff Capital Region Regional Economic & Industrial Plan 2023-2028<sup>62</sup>

4.6.3 The CCR Regional Economic & Industrial Plan 2023-2028 establishes the economic and industrial strategy and future for the region. The Plan seeks to ensure that the economy of the region is “*bigger, fairer and greener*”. (Page 3)

4.6.4 The Plan seeks to decarbonise the regions environment by 2050 and highlights that adopting a business as usual approach would ensure the region misses its decarbonisation goals (only achieving 26% decarbonisation by 2035, instead of the needed 55%). The Plan therefore seeks to encourage the development of green technologies within the region and for fundamental changes to occur within its energy market/supply towards green energy. The Plan also identifies that green energy is needed in order to secure the regions/Wales’s energy security.

## 4.7 Planning considerations

### Assessment of compliance with national policy

4.7.1 Future Wales is the primary planning policy document against which applications qualifying as DNS are to be assessed as the highest tier of the development plan. Future Wales (page. 96) confirms:

*“As set out in legislation, applications for Developments of National Significance must be determined in accordance with Future Wales, which is the national development plan for Wales.”*

Future Wales is the most up-to-date development plan and in accordance with the latest PPW. Therefore, an assessment of the Proposed Development against the policies of Future Wales is crucial to establishing the planning merits of the Proposed Development. However, understanding the compliance with the aims of PPW is also crucial to understanding the compliance with national policy.

### Benefits of the Proposed Development

4.7.2 Future Wales Policy 17 states that “*Proposals should describe the net benefits the scheme will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities.*”

---

<sup>62</sup> Cardiff Capital Region (2023). Cardiff Capital Region Regional Economic & Industrial Plan 2023-2028. (Online) Available at: <https://www.cardiffcapitalregion.wales/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ccr-reip-2023.pdf> (Accessed June 2023).

- 4.7.1 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (as amended) places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to reduce GHG emissions in Wales by at least 100% in 2050<sup>63</sup>. As demonstrated above, under Policy 17 of Future Wales, “*significant weight*” must be given by decision makers to the need to meet Wales’ international commitments on climate change and the target to meet 70% of consumed energy by renewable sources by 2030<sup>64</sup>. PPW (para 5.7.15) states that “*The planning system has an active role to help ensure the delivery of these targets, in terms of new renewable energy generating capacity and the promotion of energy efficiency measures in buildings*” whilst PPW (para 5.7.7) is also clear that “*The benefits of renewable and low carbon energy, as part of the overall commitment to tackle the climate emergency and increase energy security, is of paramount importance.*” Therefore, the benefits of the Proposed Development in this regard are crucial to meeting the national policy framework requirements.
- 4.7.2 It is recognised that the 70% target in policy (which has been subsequently updated to 100% by 2035 by Welsh Government) is to be achieved through increasing renewable energy generation alongside a reduction in energy consumption through improved efficiency. Therefore, it is not solely related to installed capacity of renewable infrastructure. However, Future Wales is clear that Ministers have considered alternatives to large scale electricity generating infrastructure (including energy efficiency) and they are not considered to be able meet the targets alone. Future Wales is clear that “*The Welsh Ministers have considered alternatives to the need for new large-scale electricity generation infrastructure, including building-mounted installations and energy efficiency measures. Although we believe that these measures have an important part to play in meeting our energy, decarbonisation and climate change targets, they will not enable us to meet these objectives on their own.*” (Welsh Government, 2021a: 97).
- 4.7.3 Therefore, to address the climate emergency declared by the Welsh Government in 2019 through the planning system’s key role (as per PPW para 3.3.0), the delivery of nationally significant renewable energy projects under the DNS regime is central to achieving the required response. This is synthesised through Future Wales Policy 17 which is clear that “*The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs.*”
- 4.7.4 The Proposed Development would see the delivery of a combined rated output of up to 20MW<sup>65</sup> of electrical power. The Energy Generation in Wales 2021 report<sup>66</sup> sets out the data on energy generation from renewables. The report states that capacity has increased in Wales in recent years. It set out that 7.7TWh of energy in Wales was from renewables and by the end of 2021 Wales had 1,266MW of onshore wind capacity, equivalent to 36% of renewable generation capacity in Wales. In 2021, it was estimated that achievement towards the target for 70% of electricity consumption by 2030 stood at 55% (down from 56% in 2021). The Draft ES has considered a candidate turbine of 4.2MW, meaning a maximum annual generation of 16.8MW which is equivalent to the domestic needs of

---

<sup>63</sup> The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Amendment of 2050 Emissions Target) Regulations 2021 changed the statutory target within the Environment Act from 80% to 100% and came into force on 12 March 2021.

<sup>64</sup> As noted the target has been updated to 100% of Wales’s electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035.

<sup>65</sup> The Draft ES assessment is based on turbines with an output of 4.2M per turbine.

<sup>66</sup> Welsh Government (2022) Energy Generation in Wales 2021. (Online) Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-12/energy-generation-in-wales-2021.pdf> (Accessed August 2023).

approximately 11,492 average households<sup>67,68</sup>. The Proposed Development would therefore demonstrably help support an increase in renewable generation; contributing to the achievement of Welsh Government targets.

- 4.7.5 PPW (Welsh Government, 2021b: para 5.7.6) is clear that “*The planning system should secure an appropriate mix of energy provision, which maximises benefits to our economy and communities whilst minimising potential environmental and social impacts*”. The balance is weighed between maximising the benefits to the economy and communities and minimising the potential environmental and social impacts. Effectively this is reached when taking into consideration the policy imperatives of Policy 17 and Policy 18 of Future Wales.
- 4.7.6 In addition to the positive benefits for addressing climate change and enhancing the supply of renewables, the Proposed Development would see economic benefits for the area. The Proposed Development would include the provision of approximately 28 FTE (full time equivalent) jobs during construction and 2 during operation. It is estimated that the expenditure in Wales associated with the construction phase would total £6.66m whilst for the operation phase would equate to £0.65m per annum.<sup>69</sup> This level of investment would support the outcomes that Policy 33 of Future Wales which seeks to deliver investment in the South East region.
- 4.7.7 The Applicant (Pennant Walters) is a business registered in Wales, headquarter in Hirwaun, and therefore meets the Welsh Government’s definition of local ownership (Welsh Government, 2020a). The Proposed Development would therefore contribute to the Welsh Government’s local ownership of renewable energy target and support PPW paras 5.7.14 and 5.9.24.
- 4.7.8 With regards to cultural improvements the development will include the recording of archaeology, where the limited intrusive groundworks are required – the exact approach will be secured through DNS condition.

## Impacts of the Proposed Development

### *Landscape*

- 4.7.9 Within Policy 17 of Future Wales, the presumption in favour of large-scale wind energy development in the PAA for Wind Energy (including repowering) subject to the criteria in Policy 18 is set out. The Proposed Development is within PAA for Wind Energy (area 10).
- 4.7.10 Policy 17 acknowledges that the areas identified in the PAA for Wind Energy have already been modelled for “*the likely impact on the landscape and [the Welsh Government] has found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way*”. Policy 18 is therefore clear that Criterion 1 (“*outside of the Pre-Assessed Areas for wind developments and everywhere for all other technologies, the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape (particularly on the setting of*

---

<sup>67</sup> Assuming a rated capacity of 33.6MW (based on 4.2MW for each turbine) and load factor of 27.4% which takes into account the intermittent nature of the wind, the availability of the wind turbines and array losses.

<sup>68</sup> Homes Equivalent = rated capacity of wind farm (kW) x average load factor for wind x number of hours in a year / average household energy consumption (MWh)

<sup>69</sup> Based on assumptions informed by Regeneris Consulting Ltd and Welsh Economy Research Unit, Cardiff Business School for Renewables UK Cymru, Welsh Government (2013) Economic Opportunities for Wales from Future Onshore Wind Development



*National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty*”) only applies for windfarm projects qualifying as DNS that are proposed outside PAA for Wind Energy.

- 4.7.11 Notwithstanding the fact that the Proposed Development sits within a PAA and that landscape impacts have already been considered acceptable, effects upon the landscape have been assessed within Draft ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The LVIA considers that there are no direct impacts on the nationally designated Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP) from the Proposed Development. An 27% proportion on potential indirect effects on the special qualities for which the BBNP is designated (based on composite Landscape Character Areas (LCAs)) has been undertaken. The LVIA has assessed that there would be no significant landscape effects upon the distinctive characteristics and character of the LCAs within the BBNP that coincide with the blade tip zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV) (LCA 9: Mynyddoedd Llangatwg and Llangynidr; and LCA 15: Blorenge Hills and Slopes) from the Proposed Development alone with magnitude of change ranging from Low/ Very Low to Zero. There would be no significant effects on relevant special qualities for which the BBNP is designated.
- 4.7.12 The likely effects on locally designated Visually Important Local Landscape (VILL) have also been assessed in the LVIA. Direct effects have been assessed for NH2.3 Abercarn VILL with the level of effect identified as ranging from Major and Significant to None and Not Significant. The LVIA notes that the alteration to a proportion of some of the landscape qualities and features as a consequence of the introduction of the wind farm would give rise to a *“Medium magnitude of change across a large proportion of the VILL, reducing to Zero across areas outside ZTV coverage.”*
- 4.7.13 Indirect effects have also been assessed for some VILLs and Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) entirely or partly located within 10km of the Proposed Development. The following landscape effects are assessed:
- ENV2.1 St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides SLA – The effect of the Proposed Development would consequently range from Moderate and Significant to None.
  - NH1.6 Mynyddislwyn SLA – The effect of the Proposed Development would range from Moderate and Significant to None.
  - ENV2.4 Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn & Cefn yr Arail SLA – The effect of the Proposed Development would range from Major/ Moderate and Significant to None.
- 4.7.14 The Proposed Development has been designed so as to minimise the effects on these local landscape designations through the use of non-reflective pale grey on the rotor blades and upper towers.
- 4.7.15 The LVIA also assesses cumulative landscape effects which is concerned with the evaluation of the effects that could be generated were the Proposed Development to become operational along with some or all of the other wind energy developments that are either already operational, have been consented or are proposed i.e. planning application or scoping opinion, within an extended 23 km radius cumulative study area. The focus of the assessment is to identify which, if any, of the landscape or visual receptors that would not experience significant effects as a result of the introduction of the Proposed Development alone, may experience significant effects as a result of the incremental contribution of the Proposed Development.
- 4.7.16 The LVIA assesses the effects under two scenarios:
- Scenario One includes other operational (and under construction) and consented wind energy developments;

- Scenario Two includes proposed wind energy developments (subject of a formal planning application or EIA Scoping Opinion). In reality, not all of these wind energy developments may be granted planning consent, and as such, the scenario represents a worst-case scenario that may never come to pass.

- 4.7.17 Under Scenario One, the Proposed Development would be physically separate and distinct from all other cumulative wind energy developments. As such, it is considered that there would be no significant cumulative effect upon landscape elements and patterns additional to those identified for the Proposed Development alone. With regard to potential cumulative effects upon the BBNP, the LVIA considers that there would be a minor incremental effect that the geographically limited presence of the Proposed Development would have upon the nationally designated landscape. Consequently, under Scenario One the introduction of proposed turbines 28pprod not result in any significant cumulative landscape effects upon the BBNP.
- 4.7.18 Under Scenario Two, the addition of the Proposed Development would reinforce the significant effects upon the parts of three nearby SLAs: NH1.6 Mynyddislwyn, ENV2.1 St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides and Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail as a result of the scoping response scheme at Mynydd Maen, although there would be no potential to notably increase the extent of the designation significantly affected by wind turbines i.e., there would be no significant cumulative landscape effect. The introduction of the Mynydd Maen wind farm scheme (with 16 turbines<sup>70</sup> up to 149.9m to tip) would have significant effects within the NH2.3 Abercarn VILL, the designation which also hosts the Proposed Development. Consequently, there would be a significant cumulative landscape effect upon the NH2.3 Abercarn VILL as a result of the Proposed Development and the Mynydd Maen scheme in that the wind energy developments could be perceived as becoming a characteristic of the designation but would not alter its valued attributes i.e., a 'landscape with wind farms'.
- 4.7.19 The Mynydd Llanhilleth, Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Abertillery schemes would also result in significant landscape effects of their own 'host' landscape designations and adjoining local landscape designations including Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James, St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides, Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail, C2/8 Western Uplands, Mynydd Eglwysilan and Mynyddislwyn. Consequently, the addition of the Proposed Development to this scenario would only reinforce, but not extend the significant landscape character effects within the local landscape designations established as a result of other planning application and scoping request schemes. Additionally, the addition of the Proposed Development to this scenario would have only a very modest contribution to the overall magnitude of landscape change within the Mynydd Eglwysilan SLA that would be significant as a result of the Twyn Hywel Wind Farm.
- 4.7.20 With regards to the BBNP, the LVIA considers that the addition of the Proposed Development to this scenario would have only a modest contribution to the overall magnitude of landscape change experienced within the BBNP that would be significant as a result of the wind farm schemes at Mynydd Maen and Abertillery as well as the planning applications schemes at Mynydd Llanhilleth, Pen March and Manmoel. As a result, the Proposed Development would not affect the special qualities of the BBNP to the extent that such effects could be considered unacceptable.
- 4.7.21 The Welsh Government has already modelled the likely impact on the landscape within the PAA for Wind Energy (as clearly set out in Future Wales Policy 17) and has found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way. Therefore, although some localised significant effects are concluded by the LVIA, it is not considered

---

<sup>70</sup> Note that the scheme promoters have proposed to reduce the number of turbines to 13 since the cumulative LVIA was undertaken.

that the presence of the turbines would exceed the capacity of landscape to accommodate the development.

### Policy 18 Criteria

- 4.7.22 Policy 18 sets out a range of criteria for DNS applications which inform consideration of impacts. The majority of the criteria (2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9) refer to ‘unacceptable adverse impacts’ which implies that a planning judgement has to be made to determine acceptability (or otherwise) of any adverse impacts.
- 4.7.23 As demonstrated in **Table 4.2**, when taken as a whole, and the planning merits weighed, the Proposed Development accords with the criteria in Policy 18.

**Table 4.2 Assessment against Future Wales Policy 18 requirements**

Policy 18 Criteria	Compliance
<b>1. Outside of the Pre-Assessed Areas for wind developments and everywhere for all other technologies, the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape (particularly on the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)</b>	This criterion is not relevant to the consideration of the Proposed Development given that the proposal is wind energy, and the site is within a PAA for wind energy.
<b>2. There are no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individuals;</b>	<p>Draft ES Chapter 6: LVIA assesses the likely visual impacts of the Proposed Development. The LVIA assessment finds that there are likely significant visual effects on a range of residential receptors.</p> <p>The site is located on high ground with a number of relatively small, often linear settlements in the valleys which bound it. Areas within the following settlements could experience significant visual effects during the operational phase depending upon local topography, screening and orientation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abercarn;</li> <li>• Swffryd/ Hafodyrynys;</li> <li>• Newbridge/ Trecelyn;</li> <li>• Pantygasseg;</li> <li>• Llanhilleth/ Brynithel/ Glandwr;</li> <li>• Trinant/ Pent-wyn;</li> <li>• Croespenmaen/ Oakdale;</li> <li>• Blackwood/ Pontllanfraith;</li> <li>• St Illtyd.</li> </ul> <p>The final ES will include the full Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA) appendix. Preliminary findings outlined in Draft ES Chapter 6: LVIA identify that significant visual effects are anticipated from up to 23 residential properties or small groups of properties within 2km of the proposed turbines. However, the Proposed Development is not expected to compromise the residential visual amenity of any properties, affect living standards,</p>

or render any property an unattractive place to live when judged objectively, in the public interest.

The LVIA assesses that there will be some significant visual effects on recreational receptors:

- Regionally promoted footpaths from some locations along: Taith Torfaen Anytime Challenge; Ebbw Vale Walk; Cambrian Way; Cistercian Way (Wales); Torfaen Trail; Raven Walk; Celtic Way; Sirhowy Valley Ridgeway Walk; Monmouthshire Way; and Rhymney Valley Ridgeway Walk.
- From a localized section of national cycle route NCN466 for the ~1.0km section through Swffryd.
- From elements of Blackwood Golf Club and Sirhowy Valley Country Park.
- Some parts of Open Access land and ProW within 5km of proposed turbines and some parts of Open Access land between 5km-10km.

Additionally significant visual effects are identified on localised sections of one transport route (the A472).

Under Scenario One (see para 4.6.16), the cumulative assessment finds that overall, due to the significant separation and topographical changes between the Proposed Development and the other wind energy schemes, it is assessed that there is no potential for the addition of the Proposed Development to result in significant visual effects where these would not arise in relation to either the Proposed Development or one or more of the other wind energy schemes alone.

Under Scenario Two of the cumulative assessment (the worst case scenario as in reality not all developments may be granted planning consent), the LVIA concludes that introduction of the Proposed Development into this scenario would not result in significant visual effects where these would not arise in relation to either the proposed turbines or one of the other wind farm schemes alone.

Embedded measures to reduce visual effects in the scheme include recognition that the turbine rotors and upper towers will be largely visible against the sky and therefore a non-reflective pale grey colour (with RAL 7035 identified) will be selected to minimise contrast.

Wind farms by their nature create visual effects and the role of the decision maker is to consider the extent to which these effects outweigh the positive benefits of the project such that the visual effects associated with the Proposed Development subject to the planning application could be considered unacceptable. Recognition should also be given to the fact that the ES assessment commonly considers views of wind turbines to be negative when the experience of the individual may often be more nuanced.

Future Wales calls for significant weight to be attached to the positive benefits of onshore wind. The significant effects identified within the ES are those which could be anticipated as arising from

a development of this kind and are not so significant or widespread as to outweigh the benefits which would derive from its operation.

**3. There are no adverse effects on the integrity of Internationally designated sites (including National Site Network sites and Ramsar sites) and the features; for which they have been designated (unless there are no alternative solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and appropriate compensatory measures have been secured);**

International designations include Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar sites. Draft ES Chapter 8 assesses that there are no likely significant effects on international site receptors given distance and spatial separation from the Site and nearest turbine.

Draft ES Chapter 9: Ornithology identifies international sites designated for their ornithological value. There is only one site within 20km of the site; the Severn Estuary Special Protection Area and Severn Estuary Ramsar Site. The chapter concludes that the Proposed Development will not result in any likely significant adverse effects on the integrity of the lesser black-backed gull population supported by the Severn Estuary Ramsar/SPA or Flat Holm and Steep Holm SSSI, as the Proposed Development does not provide functional habitat for the gulls, the recording of this species is largely restricted to birds flying over the Survey Boundary with only limited foraging and resting, and collision risk to these species is not of sufficient magnitude to have a significant adverse effect on the breeding population of this species.

It is assessed that there would be no adverse effects on the integrity of internationally designated sites as a result of the Proposed Development.

**4. There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on national statutory designated sites for nature conservation (and the features for which they have been designated), protected habitats and species;**

National designations include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs). Draft ES Chapter 8: Biodiversity assesses that there are no likely significant effects on any SSSIs or NNRs given distance and spatial separation from the Site and nearest turbine.

An Ecological Construction Method Statement (ECMS) will be prepared which will set out in detail the measures to be implemented to protect important ecological features during the construction phase of the Proposed Development. This can be secured by planning condition. The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would ensure appropriate management measures in place. Additionally, a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will be prepared for the Proposed Development to ensure the appropriate management and maintenance of all retained and newly created habitats/features proposed over the lifetime of the development.

The Draft ES assesses that there would be no significant effects on protected habitats and species with embedded measures. The assessment scopes in Commuting and Foraging Bats; Roosting Bats; Great Crested Newt and Common Reptiles. With regards to bats a Collision Mitigation and Monitoring Strategy (CMMS) will be secured via DNS condition.

Draft ES Chapter 9: Ornithology records that there are no national statutory designated sites (i.e. SSSIs or NNRs) that list



ornithological features within 2km of the Site. As noted above, the development will not result in any likely significant adverse effects on the integrity of the populations at Flat Holm or Steep Holm SSSI. A CMMS will be secured via DNS condition.

Therefore, it is assessed that there would not be unacceptable adverse impacts.

**5. The proposal includes biodiversity enhancement measures to provide a net benefit for biodiversity;**

The Applicant is committed to preparing a LEMP which will set out the objectives for biodiversity protection, mitigation, monitoring and habitat enhancement measures (where applicable). This will be developed in consultation with CCBC following determination of the application. The requirement for a LEMP can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition.

**6. There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on statutorily protected built heritage assets;**

Chapter 7: Historic Environment of the Draft ES explores the likely effects on cultural heritage, including consideration of statutorily protected built heritage assets. There are no designated historic assets located within the Site boundary. One listed building group, farmhouse Swffryd-ganol including front garden wall, Barn Range including cow-house at Swffryd-ganol (Cadw 22673-22674) lies on the periphery of the 1km study area to the north-west of the Site. No scheduled monuments or registered park and gardens, conservation areas, or World Heritage Sites are located within 1km of the Site boundary.

The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site is 8 km to the north of the Site, with the majority, and the town of Blaenavon, not in the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV). The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site is partially within the ZTV at distances of over 10km from the Site. There is negligible change at this distance.

The assessment considers construction and operation and finds that there are no significant effects on statutorily protected built heritage assets. Therefore, it is concluded that the impacts are not unacceptable.

**7. There are no unacceptable adverse impacts by way of shadow flicker, noise, reflected light, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance;**

Draft ES Chapter 15: Shadow Flicker assesses the likely impacts by way of shadow flicker. The Applicant is committed to installing a shadow flicker control module where required. This module can control a specific turbine (or turbines) which would be programmed to shut down on specific dates at specific times when the sun is bright enough, there is sufficient wind to rotate the blades and the wind direction is such that nuisance shadow flicker could occur. Overall, no significant effects on residential properties are considered likely with this mitigation.

Draft ES Chapter 13: Noise assesses the impacts related to noise. The draft chapter does identify potential exceedances at some noise sensitive receptors which are identified primarily due to noise from the proposed Mynydd Maen Wind Farm, based on current understanding of that scheme, which the design of the proposed Mynydd Maen Wind Farm will need to respond to, to ensure that the ETSU-R-97 derived noise limits are not exceeded.

However, through the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that cumulative wind turbine noise levels will not exceed the ETSU-R-97 derived noise limits, resulting effects due to cumulative turbine noise will be not significant.

When preparing the Final ES, the latest information on other proposed and consented wind farms will be considered in the assessment, particularly any information relating to the Proposed Mynydd Maen Wind Farm. If, following further analysis, exceedances of the ETSU-R-97 derived noise limits are still indicated, then reduced power operating modes will be determined that will ensure compliance with the limits and reduce residual effects such that they are not significant. On this basis it is considered that the Proposed Development would not lead to unacceptable adverse impacts by way of noise.

With regards to electromagnetic disturbance draft ES Chapter 14: Aviation and Telecommunications identifies that degradation of signals is possible as a result of consultation with stakeholders. However, discussions are ongoing to agree a technical approach and a suitable planning condition(s) that would mitigate any microwave link impacts.

With regards to air quality the Draft Chapter 12 identifies that the construction phase would lead to negligible increases in traffic above baseline traffic in the construction phase. No construction traffic would be routed through the A472 which includes an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Hafodryns (with the exception of potentially a limited number of journeys required for abnormal indivisible loads (AIL)). No impacts on air quality.

**8. There are no unacceptable impacts on the operations of defence facilities and operations (including aviation and radar) or the Mid Wales Low Flying Tactical Training Area (TTA-7T);**

Chapter 14 of the Draft ES explores the likely effects on aviation and telecommunications. With regards to the MoD, the Site is within an area designated as 'Green' in relation to low flying operations. This is defined as "*an area with no military low flying concerns*" and an MoD objection on low flying grounds is not anticipated.

The site is also within a safeguarding area for National Air Traffic Services (NATS) En-route Navigation Aids. Further consultation is ongoing with NATS/Cardiff and Bristol Airports about the impacts and any potential mitigation options that could be required. The Draft ES concludes that the Proposed Development will have no impacts on the operation of defence facilities.

**9. There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the transport network through the transportation of components or source fuels during its construction and/or ongoing operation;**

Chapter 12 of the Draft ES examines the potential effects on the transport network and assesses the A4046 (Ebbw Vale), A4046 (Aberbeeg) and A467 (Newbridge) roads. Based on the construction programme the wind farm construction traffic results in an approximate peak of 48 HGV movements two-way per day 33approx.x. 24 arrivals plus 24 departures per day).

The assessment scopes out highways effects from further assessment based on the Environmental Assessment of Traffic and Movement (EATM) thresholds. There is negligible change on severance, driver delay, pedestrian delay and amenity, fear and

intimidation (of pedestrians and cyclists), and on accidents and safety. Operational traffic will be limited and the Draft ES scopes this out from assessment.

The Draft ES chapter is also supported by an Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AIL) access study (within Appendix 12A). The following route is identified as the preferred route for AIL transit: Avonmouth Port > M49 > M4 > A4042 > A472 > A467 > Central Avenue > Old Pant Road > Site. The study identifies temporary structural improvements are required at a number of junctions.

A Draft Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has also been prepared (Draft ES Appendix 12B). This sets out the management of daily delivery profiles and control construction vehicle movements and routing of HGVs to/from the site.

**10. The proposal includes consideration of the materials needed or generated by the development to ensure the sustainable use and management of resources;**

The Proposed Development has been "designed so as to minimise the materials needed during construction. The materials required include stone, which is anticipated to come from local quarries (see Chapter 4 of the Draft ES).

Draft ES Chapter 11 sets out the land subject to the Proposed Development is classified as Agricultural Land Classification Grade 4 (poor quality land) or lower. No land that is classed as the best and most versatile (Grades 1, 2, 3a) is therefore lost by the development. The maximum area of temporary or permanent soil loss is expected to be around 7.83ha which is not assessed as significant. Embedded measures will ensure that soil is reused on site where possible and low ground pressure machinery will be used where possible to minimise soil compaction.

All construction activities will be informed by a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which will be secured by condition. The CEMP will include measures to manage (inter alia) waste during construction. No materials will be generated or removed from site during operation of the windfarm. The CEMP refers to the Materials Management Plan (MMP) which will detail how temporary storage of soils is to be managed.

**11. There are acceptable provisions relating to the decommissioning of the development at the end of its lifetime, including the removal of infrastructure and effective restoration.**

Draft ES Chapter 4 sets out the likely approach to decommissioning. The options for the end of the 30 year lifespan are to apply for continuation of existing wind turbines, to repower the site using new turbines or for decommissioning and reinstatement of the site. For the purposes of the ES assessment decommissioning is assumed. The design allows for decommissioning and recycling/reuse of materials where appropriate to do so. No stone would be removed from site. Stone laid tracks would be left in situ and could be repurposed for other uses by the landowner or support recreational use.

**The cumulative impacts of existing and consented renewable energy schemes should also be considered.**

The Draft ES sets out an assessment of the cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in combination with existing and consented renewable energy schemes within the topic-related

specific chapters (Chapters 6 to 16). Chapter 2 of the Draft ES outlines the approach to the assessment.

Overall, whilst the cumulative assessment identifies significant effects will occur it is considered that the overwhelming need to reduce carbon and GHG emissions, meet climate targets, and increase renewable energy outweighs the harm.

4.7.24 **Section 4.3** sets out the TAN considered relevant to the Proposed Development. The performance of the Proposed Development against the TANs is set out within **Table 4.3**.

**Table 4.3 Assessment against Technical Advice Note requirements**

TAN	Assessment of Proposed Development
<b>Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (1996)</b>	The Draft ES does not identify significant effects on nature conservation assets. The positioning and turbine dimensions are unlikely to adversely affect flora or fauna significantly. Opportunities have been identified to provide biodiversity enhancements.
<b>Technical Advice Note 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2000)</b>	The Proposed Development would comply with the TAN as the provision of renewable energy developments is considered likely to be an appropriate use at farm locations.
<b>Technical Advice Note 11: Noise (1997)</b>	Draft ES Chapter 13 assesses noise in line with the relevant guidance. It is considered at this stage that the Proposed Development would not result in a significant noise effect.
<b>Technical Advice Note 12: Design (2016)</b>	The Proposed Development is designed to make the most effective use of the land for wind power generation with effects mitigated as far as is possible for development of this type. The Draft DAS provides further detail about the site context and character, movement and access arrangements and considerations, and community safety. The Proposed Development complies with the requirements of TAN 12.
<b>Technical Advice Note 19: Telecommunications (2002)</b>	The Draft ES states that there is no interference to telecommunications or aviation, assuming the adoption of appropriate mitigation measures. This is demonstrated through the Draft ES (Chapter 14). Further consultation will take place with relevant consultees prior to finalisation of the ES.
<b>Technical Advice Note 23: Economic Development (2014)</b>	The Proposed Development would lead to investment in the local and regional economy and the provision of employment in the construction and operational phase. The Draft ES (Chapter 16: Socio-economics) sets out further consideration of the effects.

**Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (2017)**

The Draft ES concludes that there would be no significant effects upon sites, buildings and areas designated for their historical significance, as confirmed in ES Chapter 7: Historic Environment. The potential for effects upon unknown archaeology as a result of construction would be addressed via archaeological recording secured by a condition to the DNS consent

## Assessment of compliance with the Local Development Plan

- 4.7.25 **Table 4.4** summarises the development’s performance against what are considered to be the key LDP policy criteria set out on a topic basis. The conclusion of the assessment in **Table 4.4** is that, when taken as a whole, the proposed wind farm is compliant with the LDP. However, there is some conflict with the LDP approach in terms of protecting SLA and VILLs (as noted in the assessment of compliance with national policy).
- 4.7.26 The LDP is ‘time expired’ due to the lifetime of the plan having ended in 2021. Future Wales is the up-to-date development plan document for the site and therefore where policies conflict or provide criteria incompatible with Future Wales then weight attached to the policy is necessarily diminished when assessing the Proposed Development against the provisions.

**Table 4.4 Assessment against the LDP**

Adopted LDP policy	Policy summary	Compliance
<b>SP2 Development Strategy – Development in the Northern Connections Corridor.</b>	Promotes sustainable development within the Northern Connections Corridor that is well sited, makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and encourages sustainable modes of travel, whilst also protecting the area’s natural heritage.	The policy imperatives support the achievement of broader policy aims for development in the Northern Connections Corridor. The Proposed Development would not conflict with the achievement of the policy aims. The Draft ES assesses the impacts on natural heritage, and these are acceptable, within the context of the development type proposed.
<b>SP3 Development Strategy – Development in the Southern Connection Corridor.</b>	Promotes sustainable development within the Southern Connections Corridor that is well sited, makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and encourages sustainable modes of travel, whilst also	The policy imperatives support the achievement of broader policy aims for development in the Southern Connections Corridor. The Proposed Development would not conflict with the achievement of the policy aims. The Draft ES assesses the impacts on natural heritage, and these are acceptable, within the context of the development type proposed.



protecting the area's natural heritage.

<b>SP6 Place Making.</b>	<p>This policy seeks to ensure development contributes positively to an area through the creation of sustainable places that have regard to the local natural, historic and current built environment. The policy contains eight criteria to help ensure development is sustainable and range in their scope from a criteria relating to developments being a high standard of design to the efficient use of resources.</p>	<p>The Draft DAS and Draft ES Chapter 4 provides further information on the design of the Proposed Development and the approach undertaken to inform the design. This has included consideration of the site context and character, with further detail set out in topic specific Draft ES chapters. The Proposed Development would support effective design of a wind farm that takes into account the environmental impacts and is an efficient use of land.</p> <p>The Proposed Development would help to meet the need to generate renewable energy targets supporting the policy's aims to ensure effective use of resources. As identified in Draft ES Chapter 10: Water Environment, SuDS principles will be utilised in the construction and operation phase.</p>
<b>SP8 Minerals Safeguarding.</b>	<p>The Proposed Development is located within a sandstone resource area and policy SP8 seeks to balance the need to maintain/safeguard the mineral resources of Caerphilly County Borough alongside allowing development within such areas.</p>	<p>Draft ES Chapter 16: Socio-economics considers the potential impacts on sandstone resource. The Proposed Development is located within the safeguard sandstone resource area. However, the sandstone resource area covers an extensive area of the CBCC area overall and the majority of its central belt. The Proposed Development would not affect the ability to maintain a 10 year supply. The Proposed Development would be decommissioned after 30 years.</p>
<b>SP10 Conservation of Natural Heritage.</b>	<p>Requires development to conserve and protect the natural heritage of the region. Natural heritage comprises local geology, geomorphology, biodiversity, landscape and amenity value.</p>	<p>The Draft DAS and Draft ES Chapter 4 provides further information on the design of the Proposed Development and the approach undertaken to inform the design.</p> <p>The impacts on landscape and visual amenity are assessed in Draft ES Chapter 6: LVIA. As noted previously there are inevitable impacts associated with wind turbines. These are not considered to be unacceptable when assessed in accordance with the policy provisions of Future Wales and the site's location within PAA for wind energy 10.</p> <p>Draft ES Chapter 11: Ground Conditions assesses that there would be no significant effects on geology. The Draft ES is supported by a Phase 1 geo-environmental study (Appendix 11a). Additionally, a Coal Mining Risk Assessment (CMRA) has been undertaken. The</p>

requirement for a detailed Phase 2 investigation, informed by the findings of the phase 1 study and the findings of the CMRA, to be undertaken prior to construction commencing can be secured via planning condition. There are no Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGs) within the site or the study area.

Draft ES Chapter 8: Biodiversity identifies no significant effects on local biodiversity with the embedded mitigation measures. The Proposed Development includes a range of measures including application of the LEMP that would improve biodiversity assets.

**CW1 Sustainable Transport, Accessibility and Social Inclusion.**

This policy relates to development that could generate a significant number of travel related trips. Development is required to ensure walking and cycling is encouraged and where a larger number of freight trips are created, that the least damaging route would be utilised.

Draft ES Chapter 12 provides an assessment of the impacts on traffic and transport. No significant effects are assessed on transport routes. The Construction Traffic Management Plan will secure effective access provisions during construction whilst operation impacts would be minimal. Due to the location and poor proximity to settlements it is not considered feasible to support construction access via walking and cycling methods whilst the operational traffic will be minimal.

**CW2 Amenity.**

Seeks to ensure that development is in accordance with its neighbouring land uses. Development cannot result in unacceptable impacts upon the amenity and function of neighbouring land uses or constrain their future development.

Draft ES Chapter 6: LVIA assesses the impacts on adjacent occupiers in terms of visual impacts. As outlined in this Draft Planning Statement, there are inevitable visual impacts but these are not considered to be unacceptable within the context of the type of development proposed.

The effects of noise on sensitive receptors have been assessed in Draft ES Chapter 13: Noise and it is considered that compliance with noise limits can be achieved so as to ensure no significant effects. With regards to shadow flicker, Draft ES Chapter 15 identifies that no significant effects on residential properties are considered likely with the implementation of shadow flicker control mitigation.

The Proposed Development would not constrain development compatible with the Site's rural location. As noted below in consideration of compliance with policies EN1 and CW23, the Proposed Development is not minerals development or sensitive development and would not conflict with the aims of the mineral safeguarding buffer zone.

Overall, it is considered that the Proposed Development would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of occupiers or uses adjacent to the Site.

<b>CW3 Design Considerations – Highways.</b>	Requires development to ensure it is adequately and safely connecting into local highways and infrastructure whilst also incorporating sufficient pedestrianisation where relevant.	The proposed windfarm is capable of being adequately and safely connected to the local highway network. Draft ES Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport assesses no significant effects. The CTMP outlines the approach for ensuring suitable construction access.  As noted above, pedestrianisation is not considered to be relevant to the Proposed Development given the type of development subject to the application.
<b>CW4 Natural Heritage Protection.</b>	Affords protection to the locally designated natural heritage features of the Caerphilly County Borough. This includes protecting Special Landscape Areas (SLA), Visually Important Local Landscapes (VILL), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), Green Corridors, and Local Priority Habitats and Species. Developments that have a clear and strong needs case that outweigh the potential effects on the identified designations can be permitted.	Draft ES Chapter 6: LVIA assesses the impacts on landscapes including SLAs and VILLs. As noted in response the national policy (and detailed SLA and VILL specific policies below) there are significant impacts on VILLs and SLAs, two of which are within the CCBC area. However, the impacts are not considered unacceptable.  As outlined in this draft Planning Statement there is an overriding need to deliver renewable energy within Wales and Future Wales identifies the area as being suitable for onshore wind as it is located within the PAA for wind energy.  Draft ES Chapter 8 assesses that there are no significant effects on SINC (Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge SINC; Pwllgwinau, East of Newbridge SINC; Coed Cil-Lonydd, East of Newbridge SINC; Gwydon Valley Woodlands, Abercarn SINC; Cwm Hafod-Fach Woodlands, North of Abercarn SINC; Craig Gwent Wood Ancient Woodland SINC; River Ebbw SINC); habitats or protected species with the application of the embedded mitigation measures.  There are no RIGS within or close to the Site as confirmed in Draft ES Chapter 11: Ground Conditions.
<b>CW5 Protection of Water Environment.</b>	Development is required to ensure it would not have unacceptable adverse effects upon the local water environment and properly manages its groundwater and surface water effects.	Draft ES Chapter 10: Water Environment assess the effects on the water environment including flood risk. It concludes there would be no significant adverse effects on surface and groundwaters during the construction and operation phases. A range of embedded measures are included within the Proposed Development to ensure appropriate water management including through CEMP. Detailed drainage design will be in accordance with the Drainage Strategy included within the Flood Consequence Assessment (Appendix 10A).
<b>CW6 Trees, Woodland and</b>	Requires development to ensure it protects	Draft ES Chapter 8: Biodiversity sets out an assessment of likely effects tree and hedgerow habitats and identifies

<b>Hedgerow Protection.</b>	trees, woodlands and hedgerows from harm.	likely mitigation, compensation or management requirements. The findings of the assessment have been informed by a tree survey which has been undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards and guidance (Appendix 8B). Mitigation will ensure that any potential loss is compensated for onsite.
<b>CW15 General Locational Constraints.</b>	Identifies a list of general locational constraints but highlights that certain development might fall outside of these constraints, in which national planning policy would apply.	The Proposed Development is for wind farm infrastructure qualifying as a DNS in an area identified in Future Wales as suitable for large scale wind turbines (identified as a PAA for wind energy). The Proposed Development accords with the type of development permitted outside of settlement boundaries identified in the policy.
<b>CW19 Locational Constraints – Rural Development and Diversification.</b>	Development located within rural areas are required to be consistent to the scale of their surroundings and compatible with neighbouring uses, including neighbouring natural and heritage features.	The development would support the economy in a rural location. As assessed in Draft ES Chapter 16: Socio-economics the Proposed Development would support job creation in the construction and operation phases, which may support rural diversification. The Draft ES (Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9) considers the implications of the Proposed Development on natural and heritage features, the findings of which are outlined in response to the various policies in the LDP. The Proposed Development is acceptable in the rural location in principle under the policy provisions of Future Wales as the location is within a PAA for wind energy.
<b>CW22 Locational Constraints – Minerals.</b>	The Proposed Development is within a mineral safeguarding area. Development within such areas are permitted where it can be shown that the minerals being safeguarded has no value/are no longer needed and the needs case for the development outweighs any disbenefits. Developments within mineral safeguarding are viewed more favourably when temporary.	The Proposed Development is within the safeguarding area for sandstone. As identified in Draft ES Chapter 16: Socio-economics the overall site area within the red line boundary is very small compared to the overall area of sandstone safeguarded, whilst the permanent development land take is substantially less (at around 4.25ha). Although the Proposed Development is temporary (as in the wind turbines are assumed to be decommissioned after 30 years) some Proposed Development elements will remain. The policy recognises that development can be approved in the safeguarding areas where there is an overriding need for the development (or various other criteria are met). The overriding need for the Proposed Development is established in Future Wales. It is considered that the overwhelming need to reduce carbon and GHG emissions, meet climate targets, and increase renewable energy outweighs the very limited loss of land in the safeguarding area.
<b>CW23 Locational Constraints –</b>	This policy only supports development	The Proposed Development is located in the mineral buffer zone related to Hafod Fach quarry. Approximately

<b>Mineral Site Buffer Zones</b>	within Mineral Site Buffer Zones where the development is not sensitive in nature or mineral development.	350m of proposed new access track is located in the buffer zone. The Proposed Development is not minerals development or sensitive development and would not conflict with the aims of the buffer.
----------------------------------	---	--

### Area Specific Policies for the Northern Connection Corridor (NCC)

<b>NH2 Visually Important Local Landscapes.</b>	Seeks to protect the distinctive visual and sensory landscapes contained within identified (Abercarn) Visually Important Local Landscapes.	The LVIA notes that the alteration to a proportion of some of the landscape qualities and features as a consequence of the introduction of the wind farm would give rise to a “Medium magnitude of change across a large proportion of the VILL, reducing to Zero across areas outside ZTV coverage.” The level of effect would therefore range from Moderate and Significant to None. The LVIA notes that the nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), direct, and adverse.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NH2.3 Abercarn.</b></li> </ul>		The Proposed Development has been “designed so as to minimise the effects on these local landscape designations through the use of non-reflective pale grey on the rotor blades and upper towers.
		It is not considered that the presence of the turbines would exceed the capacity of landscape to accommodate the development.
		The majority of PAAs include land designated as SLAs or VILLs such that it is clear that Welsh Government does not see such local designations as being a barrier to large-scale wind farm development (as identified in Policy 17 of Future Wales). Whilst a matter to be included within the planning balance, the presence of significant effects upon local landscape designations is not considered to be fundamental to the consideration of the application.
<b>NH3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).</b>	The policy provides protection to Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, which are designated due to the biodiversity, priority habitats and species that are located within them. The Proposed Development would only be approved so long as it does not generate any unacceptable effects on the identified Sites of Importance for	Draft ES Chapter 8 considers the potential for impacts on SINCs. Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge SINC and Pwllgwinau, East of Newbridge SINC overlaps with the boundaries of the Site whilst, Coed Cil-Lonydd, East of Newbridge SINC, Gwydon Valley Woodlands, Abercarn SINC, Cwm Hafod-Fach Woodlands, North of Abercarn SINC and Craig Gwent Wood Ancient Woodland SINC lie directly adjacent to the Site boundaries. With the exception of Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge SINC, which overlaps with the existing road within the Site, the Proposed Development footprint is outside of the SINC boundaries.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NH3.112 Coed Cil-Lonydd, East of Newbridge.</b></li> </ul>		Draft ES Chapter 8 assesses that there are no significant effects on SINCs. The ECMS and CEMP will ensure protective measures are implemented during construction, whilst any habitats lost within Mynydd
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NH3.113 Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge.</b></li> </ul>		



- **NH3.124 Gwydon Valley Woodlands, Abercarn.** Nature Conservation it is within/close to. Maen, East of Newbridge SINC (which would not be significant given limited potential for loss) would be reinstated upon completion of construction. Therefore, it is considered that there are no unacceptable effects on SINC.
- **NH3.128 Cwm Hafod-Fach Woodlands, North of Abercarn.**
- **NH3.134 Cwm Gofapi Woods, Cwmcarn.**

**MN1 – Mineral Site Buffer Zones.** Identifies the Mineral Site Buffer Zones that exist around the mineral sites within the Caerphilly County Borough. Policy CW23 provides the protection for these buffer zones.

• **MN1.3 Hafod Fach Quarry – Active.**

The Proposed Development is not for minerals development or a sensitive use and would not impact on the reasons for the designation of the buffer. There is very limited development within buffer (limited to approximately 350m of access tracks). As assessed in Draft ES Chapter 16: Socio-economics the development would have negligible effects on the buffer.

- LE5 Protection of Informal Open Spaces.** Requires development to not compromise spaces that are considered to be Informal Open Spaces.
- **LE5.11 Pantside, Newbridge.**
- The Proposed Development would not impact on informal community uses protected by the policy.

**Area Specific Policies for the Southern Connection Corridor (SCC)**

- NH2 Visually Important Local Landscapes.** Seeks to protect the distinctive visual and sensory landscapes contained within identified (Abercarn) Visually Important Local Landscapes.
- **NH2.3 Abercarn.**
- Consideration of the impacts on the VILLs are outlined above under the NCC policies consideration. Whilst a matter to be included within the planning balance, the presence of significant effects upon local landscape designations is not considered to be fundamental to the consideration of the application.

**NH1 Special Landscape Areas are identified and will be protected at the following locations:** Seeks to protect the distinctive visual and sensory landscapes contained within identified Special Landscape Areas.

The LVIA notes that the alteration to a proportion of some of the landscape qualities and features of the NH1.6 Mynyddislwyn SLA as a consequence of the introduction of the wind farm which would give rise to indirect effects ranging from Moderate and Significant to none. The LVIA notes that the nature of these effects would be long-term (reversible), indirect, and adverse. In addition, the LVIA finds indirect landscape effects ranging from Major and Significant to none on ENV2.1 St. Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides SLA and the ENV2.4

**NH1.4 North  
Caerphilly**

Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn and Cefn yr Arail SLA, both of which are located in the Blaenau Gwent CBC area.

**NH1.5 South  
Caerphilly**

The Proposed Development has been designed so as to minimise the effects on these local landscape designations through the use of non-reflective pale grey on the rotor blades and upper towers.

**NH1.6  
Mynyddislwyn**

It is not considered that the presence of the turbines would exceed the capacity of landscape to accommodate the development.

The majority of PAAs include land designated as SLAs or VILLs such that it is clear that Welsh Government does not see such local designations as being a barrier to large-scale wind farm development (as identified in Policy 17 of Future Wales). Whilst a matter to be included within the planning balance, the presence of significant effects upon local landscape designations is not considered to be fundamental to the consideration of the application.

4.7.27 As noted in **Section 4.4** the Council is preparing a replacement LDP covering the period up to 2035. The Proposed Development would support the overall aims of the emerging policy. This is outlined below:

- Policy PS6: Climate Change— The Proposed Development would aid in combatting climate change by providing a source of renewable energy, promote decarbonisation and would be designed to be resilient to, and mitigate for, the impacts of climate change.
- Policy PS7: Renewable Energy Generation – The Proposed Development is a scheme for the generation of energy from renewable sources and would be supported by this emerging policy.
- Policy PS9: Green and Blue Infrastructure – The Proposed Development would include biodiversity enhancements secured through the LEMP.
- Policy PS22: Minerals – The Proposed Development would not have a significant effect on the safeguarding of sandstone resource.

Given that the emerging LDP, although in its infancy, identifies a clear demand and need for renewable energy developments the Proposed Development would therefore be supported in principle by these emerging policy provisions. However, the weight that can be attached to the emerging policy is very limited at this stage.

## Green Infrastructure Statement

4.7.28 As noted in **Section 4.3** the Welsh Government recently issued a Heads of Planning Letter (Welsh Government, 2023) regarding changes to Chapter 6 of PPW. The changes bring into practice updated policies and approaches including the use of the 'DECCA Framework' and the 'Step-wise approach' for delivery of net benefit for biodiversity. Amongst the changes is also the identification of the need for all planning applications to be supported by a Green Infrastructure Statement proportionate to the development proposed. For the purposes of the draft application this section brings together consideration of the key elements required to be included in a Green Infrastructure

Statement. The Heads of Planning Letter Appendix (Welsh Government, 2023) outlines the indicative requirements for the Green Infrastructure Statement:

- *“In most cases the green infrastructure statement should highlight any baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, including but not limited to, habitats and species surveys, arboricultural surveys and assessments, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans, open space assessments and green space provision and active travel links.”* (page 8)
- *“green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multifunctional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.21) has been applied.”* (page 8)
- *“providing evidence in the Green Infrastructure Statement that the step-wise approach has been followed, a scheme of enhancements must be provided to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity.”* (page 12)

4.7.29 This Green infrastructure Statement will be developed further as necessary prior to submission of the application.

### Baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken

4.7.30 The baseline biodiversity conditions are described in Draft ES Chapter 8: Biodiversity with the findings detailed in Appendix 8A and Appendix 8B. The baseline conditions have been established through the following methods:

- Desk study – this involved collating information from both statutory and non-statutory bodies in 2020, 2022 and 2023.
- Extended Phase 1 surveys undertaken in 2020 – The principal habitats within the Site together with their dominant/characteristic plant species were identified during the Extended Phase 1 survey.
- Detailed (Phase 2) surveys:
  - ▶ Botanical survey 2021 and 2023.
  - ▶ Bat activity surveys in 2020, 2021 and 2023.
  - ▶ Bat roost surveys undertaken during 2022 and 2023.
  - ▶ Badger surveys undertaken during 2020, 2021 and 2023.
  - ▶ Dormouse surveys undertaken during 2020 and 2021.
  - ▶ Great Crested Newt Survey including habitat suitability assessment of waterbodies and environmental DNA sampling in 2020 and 2023.
  - ▶ Great Crested Newt Population Assessment.
- Tree Survey compliant with BS 5837:2012 undertaken in 2023.

4.7.31 Additionally, with regards to ornithology the baseline conditions are described in Draft ES Chapter 9: Ornithology and detailed in Appendix 9A. The baseline was informed by the following:

- Desk study examining ornithology in 2020, 2022 and 2023.
- Vantage point surveys from 2020 to 2022.
- Moorland and Breeding Bird Surveys in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

- Breeding Raptor Surveys in 2020 and 2021.
- Nightjar and Owl Surveys in 2020, 2021 and 2023.
- Winter Transect Surveys 2020-2021 and 2021-2022
- Barn Owl Surveys in 2022 and 2023.

- 4.7.32 The information used to understand the existing baseline conditions has therefore been informed by detailed consideration of a range of desktop data and numerous surveys. Draft ES Chapter 8: Biodiversity and Draft ES Chapter 9: Ornithology outline the assessment. No significant effects on ecological features have been assessed as outlined in the assessment against the national and local policy framework within this Planning Statement.
- 4.7.33 In addition to the ecological aspects of the Proposed Development, consideration has been given to landscape impacts (Draft ES Chapter 6: LVIA), with extensive surveys undertaken and embedded measures included to reduce impacts, and to sustainable drainage with detailed drainage design to be delivered in accordance with the Drainage Strategy (included within the Flood Consequence Assessment (Appendix 10A)). Additionally, consideration has been given to public access and recreation, and with embedded measures included, no significant effects are assessed.
- 4.7.34 The approach undertaken to desktop study and surveys, design, and assessment outlined in the Draft ES, show how the use proposed can exist within, and support use of, multifunctional green infrastructure.

### Demonstrating how the step-wise approach has been complied with

- 4.7.35 Full details of the approach to mitigation and enhancement are provided in Draft ES Chapter 8: Biodiversity and Draft ES Chapter 9: Ornithology and the various supporting documents which have been produced. The key aspects of the step-wise approach are outlined below.

#### *Avoid and minimise*

- 4.7.36 The application area does not contain sites statutorily designated for habitats and/or species. Infrastructure has been re-designed to avoid the most sensitive habitats within the SINC's that are partly located in the Site (Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge SINC and Pwllgwinau, East of Newbridge SINC). With the exception of Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge SINC, which overlaps with the existing road within the Site, the Proposed Development footprint is outside of the SINC boundaries. Existing roads have also been used to design the access routes for the wind farm, avoiding greater loss of habitats.
- 4.7.37 Measures to avoid and minimise impacts on Protected and Priority Species are detailed in Draft ES Chapters 8: Biodiversity and Chapter 9: Ornithology. This includes the identification of best practice measures to be employed during the construction phase such the use of a CEMP and ECMS and for ongoing management and monitoring in operational phase through preparation of a LEMP.

#### *Mitigate or Restore*

- 4.7.38 Key mechanisms for delivery of mitigation and restoration associated with the Proposed Development will be outlined in the LEMP and CMMS and likely to include a range of measures including;
- Restoration of any temporary loss/damage to improved and poor-semi-improved grasslands.

- Provision of new native hedgerow and tree planting utilising species of local provenance to further strengthen the existing vegetated field boundaries through infill planting and habitat creation.
- Habitat management and manipulation to minimise risk of collision for Priority species (including bat species and target bird species).
- Great crested newt mitigation measures under license.

### *Compensate on site*

- 4.7.39 The embedded measures outlined in Draft ES Chapter 8 are designed to improve the ecological value of the retained habitats, compensating for the temporary and permanent loss of habitats associated with the Proposed Development. Due to the absence of significant impacts, no offsite compensation has been included with all impacts and mitigation measures delivered within the footprint of the Proposed Development.
- 4.7.40 The Applicant is committed to preparing a LEMP which will set out the objectives for biodiversity protection, mitigation, monitoring and habitat enhancement measures (where applicable). This will be developed in consultation with CCBC following determination of the application. The LEMP will set out in the detail those ecological management prescriptions for defined management compartments to be retained and/or created, in addition to the monitoring of biophysical changes to sensitive habitats including: terrestrial succession and scrub encroachment within retained, enhanced and newly created habitats; botanical monitoring of sensitive habitats retained, translocated and restored; the monitoring of new habitats/features installed/created across the Site; and any additional monitoring and remedial action required. The LEMP can be secured by way of a suitably worded pre-commencement planning condition attached to the planning permission.

### DECCA Framework

- 4.7.41 The DECCA Framework sets out the approach to net benefit through five key attributes;
- Diversity;
  - Extent;
  - Condition;
  - Connectivity; and
  - Adaptation
- 4.7.42 Although the requirements for the Green Infrastructure Statement do not explicitly reference the DECCA Framework, the approaches described in Draft ES Chapters 8 and 9 and supporting documentation and how they apply to the DECCA Framework are summarised below.

### *Diversity*

- 4.7.43 The Step-Wise approach has sought to avoid or minimise all impacts relating to biodiversity. Enhancement and mitigation will seek to enhance degraded habitats through reactive management and long-term restoration of retained habitats.

### *Extent*

- 4.7.44 Steps to avoid loss of sensitive habitat have been included throughout the design phase included siting of infrastructure away from key habitats and making use of existing roads



for proposed access routes. Habitat restoration and long-term management of the site through the LEMP will help to increase resilience of habitats.

### *Condition*

- 4.7.45 The long-term management and monitoring of habitats and species associated with the Proposed Development will help to enhance the condition of habitats on site and increase diversity and therefore overall condition of the site. By securing and enhancing non-statutory designated habitats, it will help to safeguard the site in the long-term and drive improvements of condition which would be unlikely to occur in the absence of the Proposed Development.

### *Connectivity*

- 4.7.46 Measures to enhance the site will increase potential connectivity between the site and adjacent habitats. In addition, restoration of existing habitats is designed to decrease fragmentation to improve broader connectivity throughout the site.

### *Adaptation*

- 4.7.47 The step-wise approach has been used to ensure that loss of habitat is avoided and minimised and impacts on protected and priority species are appropriately mitigated where necessary. Enhancement of the site to increase extent, condition and connectivity serve to increase resilience of the site to change. The long-term approach to management will be set out in the LEMP.
- 4.7.48 The proposed mitigation measures should ensure that the site condition is retained and enhanced in such a way that biodiversity of the site is increased, securing biodiversity net benefit which would be unlikely to occur in the absence of the Proposed Development.

## 5. Conclusion

---

### 5.1 The Planning Balance

- 5.1.1 Future Wales is clear that decision makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and to generate 70% of energy used from renewable sources by 2030 (which has been revised to 100% by 2035 by Welsh Government in 2023). The Proposed Development would see the delivery of a combined rated output of up to 20MW of renewable energy, dependent on final turbine choice, which would support the electricity needs of around 11,492 homes<sup>71</sup>.
- 5.1.2 Additionally, the Proposed Development would support investment in the economy and employment with approximately 28 FTE (full time equivalent) jobs during construction and 2 FTE during operation. It is estimated that the expenditure in Wales associated with the construction phase would total £6.66m whilst the operation phase would equate to £0.65m per annum. The Proposed Development would also be locally owned.
- 5.1.3 Such benefits in terms of contributing to energy targets and economic benefit have to be balanced against the adverse impacts.
- 5.1.4 With regards to landscape and visual impacts, the acceptance of some degree of landscape change is outlined in Future Wales Policy 17 and the identification of PAA for Wind Energy. Policy 17 recognises that the Welsh Government "*has already modelled the likely impact on the landscape and has found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way*". The Draft ES identifies that there will be some significant effects on local landscape designations (within two Visually Important Local Landscapes and Special Landscape Areas). There are no significant landscape effects on the nationally designated Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP). The LVIA considers that the addition of the Proposed Development to the worst-case cumulative scenario would have only a modest contribution to the overall magnitude of landscape change experienced within the BBNP that would be significant as a result of the wind farm schemes at Mynydd Maen, Abertillery, Mynydd Llanhilleth, Pen March and Manmoel. As a result, the Proposed Development would not affect the special qualities of the BBNP to the extent that such effects could be considered unacceptable.
- 5.1.5 Additionally, the LVIA identifies that there will be some visual effects on residential receptors. Although, significant visual effects are anticipated from up to 23 residential properties or small groups of properties within 2km of the proposed turbines there is no change that would lead to the residential areas becoming an unattractive place to live (as opposed to less attractive) when judged objectively, and in the public interest. The consideration of whether such impacts are unacceptable also has to be weighed against the overriding imperative required by Policy 17 to meet Wales' international commitments and to generate renewable energy that meets the Welsh Government's targets.
- 5.1.6 With regards to the historic environment no significant effects on heritage assets have been identified in the Draft ES for the Proposed Development.
- 5.1.7 With regards to biodiversity, the Draft ES assesses that there are no unacceptable impacts on protected species or habitats. There will be no adverse effects on the integrity of any internationally designated sites. The Proposed Development would have no effect on the integrity or conservation status of SINCs within the site boundary or adjacent to the

---

<sup>71</sup> Based on the generation of the candidate turbines used in the Draft ES assessment with a 4.2MW capacity.

site. A range of embedded measures will ensure that protected species are safeguarded during construction including pre-construction surveys, method statements for vehicle movements, excavations, site lighting and construction activities. A LEMP will set out the objectives for biodiversity protection, mitigation, monitoring and habitat enhancement measures in the operational phase.

- 5.1.8 Overall, the Proposed Development is considered to accord with Policy 17 and Policy 18 of Future Wales. The benefits of the Proposed Development and the impacts have been outlined in this Draft Planning Statement and environmental impacts assessed in the accompanying Draft ES. It is considered that the planning balance weighs heavily in favour of the Proposed Development.

