Planning Factsheet – Renewable and Low Carbon Development Policy

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This statement outlines the national stance on renewable energy and low carbon energy development.

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

The Welsh Government's planning policy framework includes Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and Planning Policy Wales (PPW), which set out the national strategy for renewable and low carbon energy development.

Future Wales identifies priority areas for large-scale wind and solar development and requires local development plans to reflect national energy targets. It supports the development of renewable energy infrastructure that is sensitive to local context.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 mandates net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, with interim targets and carbon budgets. Planning policy plays a key role in achieving these goals by promoting decarbonization across sectors.

National Policy Statement for Energy EN-1 Jan 2024

National Policy Statements form part of the overall framework of national planning policy, and may be a material consideration in determining planning applications. It is important to consider their context and material when assessing the proposed planning application.

NPS EN1 paragraphs 4.2.4 and 4.2.5 have introduced a critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure. Low carbon infrastructure for the purposes of this policy means for other energy infrastructure, fuels, pipelines and storage infrastructure, which fits within the normal definition of "*low carbon*".

NPS EN1 sets Criteria for Good Design for Energy Infrastructure, which must be read alongside NPPF policy on design (Para 135) and local plan policies guiding place, character and appearance (our emphasis):

"*4.7 Criteria for good design for Energy Infrastructure*

4.7.1 The visual appearance of a building, structure, or piece of infrastructure, and how it relates to



the landscape it sits within, is ***sometimes considered to be the most important factor in good design****.* ***But high quality and inclusive design goes far beyond aesthetic considerations. The functionality of an object – be it a building or other type of infrastructure – including fitness for purpose and sustainability, is equally important****.*

4.7.2 Applying good design to energy projects should produce sustainable infrastructure sensitive to place, including impacts on heritage, efficient in the use of natural resources, including land-use, and energy used in their construction and operation, matched by an appearance that demonstrates good aesthetic ***as far as possible****.* ***It is acknowledged, however that the nature of energy infrastructure development will often limit the extent to which it can contribute to the enhancement of the quality of the area****.*

4.7.3 Good design is also a means by which many policy objectives in the NPSs can be met, for example the impact sections show how good design, in terms of siting and use of appropriate technologies, can help mitigate adverse impacts such as noise. Projects should look to use modern methods of construction and sustainable design practices such as use of sustainable timber and low carbon concrete. Where possible, projects should include the reuse of material' .