Torrance Wind Farm Extension II

PLANNING STATEMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a planning application, made by GreenGridPower3 Ltd for the development of a wind farm, comprising four wind turbines and associated infrastructure. The Proposed Development is located on land approximately 600 metres north of the centre of Harthill, North Lanarkshire, within the administrative boundary of North Lanarkshire Council.

This Planning Statement and the accompanying appendices provide all the relevant information required for the Council to make a positive determination of the Application.

The Planning Statement sets out the full extent of the on-site infrastructure; demonstrates the legislative and planning policy context against which the Proposed Development should be considered; and the need for renewable energy developments. The Planning Statement then assesses the Proposed Development against this context, and other material considerations, to determine its suitability for approval.

This Planning Statement addresses, in detail, all relevant policies from the North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan and determines that the Proposed Development fully accords with all relevant policies contained therein.

The embedded design, mitigation measures and the nature of the Proposed Development ensure that the Proposed Development fully accords with the provisions of national, regional and local planning policy and guidance.

This development proposal is for a suitable and well-designed development that is capable of contributing additional renewable energy development in Scotland within a short timeframe.

The Proposed Development is considered to accord with the individual policies, overriding aims and objectives of the national, regional and local planning policy and guidance, while responding to the 'climate emergency'. It is therefore requested that planning permission for the Proposed Development be granted.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Planning Statement ('the Statement') has been prepared to accompany a planning application ('the Application'), submitted to North Lanarkshire Council ('the Council') by Arcus Consultancy Services Ltd ('Arcus'), on behalf of GreenGridPower3 Ltd. ('the Applicant') for the installation and operation of Torrance Wind Farm Extension II, comprising four turbines with a combined generation capacity of up to 26.4 MW, and associated infrastructure ('the Proposed Development').

1.1.2 The Proposed Development is an extension to the operational Torrance Wind Farm Wind Park (Ref: 10/00973/FUL) and Torrance Farm Wind Park Extension (Ref: 12/00284/FUL), located approximately 600 m north of the centre of Harthill, North Lanarkshire ('the Site'). The location of the Site and layout of the Proposed Development are shown on Planning Drawings 1 and 2, respectively.

1.1.3 The Application for the Proposed Development is made under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997[1], as amended by the Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006[2] ('the Planning Act'). As defined by the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009[3], the Proposed Development exceeds the 2 hectares (ha) threshold for a 'major' planning application. As such, the Proposed Development is subject to the consultation and determination requirements for 'major' developments. The relevant planning history can be found in Section 2, whilst the consenting process for the determination of the Application is detailed in Section 3.

1.1.4 The Application is also supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report which sets out the findings of the EIA undertaken for the Proposed Development, which has been carried out in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017[4] ('the EIA Regulations').

[1] Scottish Government (1997) Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 [Online] Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/8/contents (Accessed 06/06/2022)
[2] Scottish Government (2006) The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 [Online] Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2006/17/contents (Accessed 06/06/2022)
[3] Scottish Government (2009) Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 [Online] Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/sdsi/2009/9780111001714/contents (Accessed 06/06/2022)
[4] Town and Country Planning (2017) Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations (2017). [online] Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/102/contents/made Accessed (06/06/2022)

1.2 The Applicant

1.2.1 GreenGridPower3 Limited is a subsidiary of Infinergy Ltd, a renewable energy company developing onshore wind farms throughout the United Kingdom.

1.2.2 Infinergy, and therefore the Applicant by extension, has the expertise and experience needed to design, develop, build and operate wind energy developments. The Applicant is committed to helping meet the United Kingdom's renewable energy targets, whilst developing sites responsibly and putting the right sized wind farms in the right place. Infinergy is a member of trade organisations RenewableUK and Scottish Renewables. For more information, please visit: http://www.infinergy.co.uk.

1.3 Purpose of Planning Statement

1.3.1 Section 25 of the 1997 Act requires that "where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination shall be made in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise".

1.3.2 The purpose of this Planning Statement is therefore to provide an assessment of the Proposed Development against the relevant Development Plan policies, and to consider any other material considerations, consistent with the requirements of Section 25 of the Act. The Planning Statement also considers the potential benefits and harm which may arise and concludes as to the overall acceptability of the Proposed Development in relation to the prevailing planning context.

1.3.3 The EIA Report and the associated design progression of the Proposed Development reflects the advice provided by the Planning Authority, associated technical stakeholders and statutory consultees in an EIA Scoping Opinion, dated 16th December 2020, and in responses provided in April-May 2022 as a result of the Applicant's re-consultation on Scoping. The design also reflects feedback provided from the local community during the pre-application consultation process. The EIA Report and other relevant accompanying documents are cross referenced throughout this Planning Statement.

1.3.4 The Planning Statement is set out as follows:

- **Section 1: Introduction** provides information about the Applicant, sets out the context of the Proposed Development and the relationship with Chapter 5 of the EIA Report, and summarises the consenting process;
- **Section 2: The Proposed Development** provides details of the Proposed Development's main components, the site and surroundings, as well as design evolution following consultation with the public and statutory consultees;
- **Section 3: Planning History** outlines the Pre-Application Engagement with the Council, the EIA Screening and Scoping process, the Proposal of Application Notice and briefly summarises the Pre-Application Public Consultation undertaken for the Application;

- **Section 4: Legislative Context** sets out the relevant legislation and consenting process for the Proposed Development, including the Planning Act and the Environmental Assessment Regulations;

- **Section 5: Energy Policy and Legislation: The Need to Address Climate Change** sets out the national and international energy and planning policy relevant to renewable energy development and climate change;

- **Section 6: Planning Policy and Guidance** sets out the relevant national and local planning policy, together with assessment of the Proposed Development against the national planning policies and legislative context;

- **Section 7: Assessment of the Proposed Development** assesses the suitability of the Proposed Development against the Local Planning Policies for North Lanarkshire Council;

- **Section 8: Other Material Considerations** sets out material considerations that are considered relevant to the Proposed Development in the determination process;

- **Section 9: Benefits of the Proposed Development** presents a summary of the wider socio-economic benefits of the Proposed Development; and

- **Section 10: Planning Balance and Conclusions** provides an overall summary of the Planning Statement and the reasons why the Application should be approved.

2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The Site and Surroundings

2.1.1 The Site covers an area of approximately 106.2 hectares (ha) and is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 289988, 665071, approximately 600 north of the centre of Harthill. The Site is wholly located within the administrative boundary of North Lanarkshire Council; however, the administrative boundary with West Lothian Council is adjacent to the Site's northern boundary. The Site lies to the north of the M8 transport corridor, between Edinburgh (east) and Glasgow (west).

2.1.2 The development proposal includes the creation of recreational paths. One of the proposed recreational paths extends across the boundary between North Lanarkshire Council and West Lothian Council (WLC). It is anticipated that a separate planning application will be submitted to WLC to complete the link between the proposed recreational path and the existing Core Path. This will provide Harthill with a further recreational route which links to the village of Blackridge to the north.

2.1.3 The topography in the east and south of the Site is relatively flat and low, and the topography in the northwest of the Site is gently sloping to face south. The elevation in the eastern and southern parts of the Site varies between 175 m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and 190 AOD while the elevation in the north-western portion of the Site gradually increases from approximately 190 AOD to 220 AOD. Overall, there is an undulating topography which generally slopes south and south-east in places.

2.1.4 The Proposed Development is situated in an area which is predominantly used for agricultural purposes, specifically sheep farming. The lower topography to the south and southeast of the Site is dominated by coniferous woodland with smaller areas of neutral grassland to the southeast, near Netherton Farm. The southwest of the Site largely comprises improved grassland, neutral grassland, and marsh/grassland with smaller areas of flush, spring and broadleaved woodland. The northwest of the Site is dominated by improved grassland, whereas the northeast of the Site is largely neutral grassland and marsh/grassland. There are stretches of degraded hedgerow, hedgerow trees and post and wire fences demarcating south and west field boundaries.

2.1.5 The Site is located on the edge of an area of upland moorland and more settled farmland. The immediate locality of the Proposed Development is predominantly rural and commercial forestry. However, there are a number of small towns within the local area, the closest of which is Harthill, the centre of which is approximately 600 m to the south of the Site.

2.1.6 The Site is adjacent to the original Torrance Wind Park and Torrance Extension (hereafter referred to as the "Existing Windfarm"). Five turbines and ancillary infrastructure have already been installed to the east of the Site as part of the Existing Windfarm, the closest of which is approximately 200 m northeast of the Site boundary.

2.1.7 In addition to wind turbines, there are numerous tall telecommunications masts and pylons located within the landscape.

2.1.8 There are a number of watercourses within the Site, all of which drain to the south into How Burn, which continues to flow east from the Site for approximately 1.88 km before discharging into the River Almond.

2.1.9 The B718 runs north-south through the east of the Site, and there are two forestry access tracks running east to west within the Site, either side of the B718.

2.1.10 Access to the site will be afforded from the M8 that abuts the Site's southern boundary. Abnormal Load Vehicles will exit the M8 at Harthill Services and will turn directly into the Abnormal Load Site Entrance. General Construction Traffic will enter the Main Site Entrance from the B718, via the M8 and the B7066. The Applicant is currently in dialogue with the operators of the Harthill service station to explore whether the 'Abnormal Load Site Entrance' can also be utilised by general construction traffic (HGVs) during the peak months of the construction phase; this is not a confirmed option at the time of writing.

2.1.11 Netherton Farm is situated in the south-eastern corner of the Site and Loan Farm is located directly west of the B718. No other built infrastructure lies within the application boundary. The closest village is Harthill, the centre of which is located approximately 600 m south of the Site, however the closest property out with the Site is Hill Farm which stands alone adjacent to the Site's north-western boundary on Blairmuckhole and Forrestdyke Road.

2.1.12 There are a further two farms located nearby the Site. Blairmuckhill Farm is approximately 170 m northwest of the Site and Treebanks Farm is approximately 200 m west of the south-western Site boundary.

2.1.13 There are no statutory designated sites within or immediately surrounding the Site.

2.1.14 The Site has been selected as a suitable site for wind farm development because it meets the following criteria:

- Suitable and proven high annual mean wind speed across the Site;
- Viable grid connection;
- Suitable and proven port of delivery and road access for the delivery of large components;
- Suitable road access;
- Sufficient distance from nearest residential properties to ensure compliance with appropriate noise limits;
- Limited peat on site;
- The Site does not support any international or national ecological or landscape designations; and
- Located adjacent to existing operational wind farms, where the Site would be often seen as an extension to the existing wind farms.

2.1.15 Further site context is provided within the relevant technical chapters of the accompanying EIA Report.

2.1.16 The Site Location can be seen below in Planning Drawing 1.

2.2 Development Overview

2.2.1 The Applicant is seeking planning permission for a wind energy development comprising of the construction, 40-year operation and subsequent decommissioning of up to 4 turbines with a combined generation capacity of up to 26.4 MW; together with on-site access tracks, wind turbine hardstanding and crane pad areas, a network of underground cables and onsite electricity substation and control/maintenance building. During construction, a temporary construction compound will be required which will house a site office and welfare facilities. The purpose of the Proposed Development would be to generate electricity from the 4 proposed wind turbines.

2.2.2 The Proposed Development is an extension to the operational Torrance Wind Farm Wind Park and Torrance Farm Wind Park Extension.

2.3 Proposed Development Infrastructure

2.3.1 The Proposed Development will consist of the following components, as shown on the Site Layout Plan (Planning Drawing 2):

- 4 wind turbines with a maximum blade tip height of 200 meters (m) together with associated turbine foundations, wind turbine hard-standings, and crane pads;
- A series of on-site access tracks connecting each of the turbine locations;
- A network of underground cables linking the turbines to an on-site electricity substation ad control/maintenance building;
- A Temporary Construction Compound; and
- An anemometer mast to measure wind speed and wind direction.

A full description of the Proposed Development, including Development components, construction, operation, and decommissioning is available in Chapter 3 of the EIA Report. Key parameters are also set out in Table 3.1 of the Design and Access Statement. The Site Layout Plan can be seen below in Planning Drawing 2.

2.4 Development Design

2.4.1 The design of any wind energy development is driven by the key objective of positioning turbines to ensure the Proposed Development generates electricity in the most efficient manner possible, whilst minimising environmental effects.

2.4.2 Where necessary, embedded mitigation has been used to minimise any predicted environmental effects, and where this is applicable to a specific technical assessment, it is detailed in the relevant chapter within the EIA Report. This is particularly relevant to the avoidance of direct effects. By employing an iterative design process, undertaken in conjunction with the EIA process, a number of potential effects have been avoided completely.

2.4.3 Various economic, technical and environmental factors were considered in the iterative design process. These were informed through a variety of baseline surveys and consultation with a range of stakeholders.

2.4.4 Prior to the finalisation of the design, the views of technical consultees were sought, including both North Lanarkshire and West Lothian Councils' advisers on landscape and visual matters, Environmental Health Officers on noise, Historic Environment Scotland on historic environment interests and NatureScot on landscape and visual and ecology and ornithology. Public Consultation has been a key part of the EIA process and two in-person events were held with local communities to discuss the proposals on 16th and 17th August 2022. Further information of the consultation exercises which have been undertaken are included Section 3 of this Planning Statement and in the Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report accompanying the submission.

2.4.5 The final layout, as presented in the EIA Report, has been the subject of a number of iterations and refinements which mitigate, by design, predicted adverse effects as far as reasonably practicable. The Proposed Development balances the environmental and technical constraints, whilst producing an economically viable project. Design changes made as a consequence of the key constraints are considered to be mitigation which is 'embedded' in the design. Further consideration of the design evolution, technical constraints and embedded mitigation is available in the accompanying Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) and Chapter 2 of the EIA Report.

2.4.6 The final design as assessed in the EIA Report is considered to meet the balance of increasing the renewable energy generation capacity of the Site whilst minimising the introduction of new environmental effects. This Statement goes on to assess the Proposed Development in policy terms.

3 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1 Planning Application History

3.1.1 The extent of the recent planning application history within the site relates to the Proposed Development.

3.1.2 The Proposed Development is to extend the existing Torrance Wind Farm (the Consented Wind Farm) which comprises turbine and associated infrastructure, granted planning permission on 24th February 2011 under the planning application reference 10/00973/FUL. In August 2011 a request for a scoping opinion was then submitted for an extension to Torrance Wind Farm of up to four turbines in which the scoping opinion advised that a further EIA application was required. (Planning Authority Reference 11/00906/EIASCO).

3.1.3 A Pre-Application Notice (PAN) was submitted in March 2022 for a proposed extension to Torrance Wind farm for the erection of up to ten turbines with tip heights of up to 200m and associated infrastructure.

3.2 EIA Criteria, Screening and Scoping

3.2.1 Regulation 2 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations (2017)[5] ('the EIA Regulations') defines EIA development as either:

- Schedule 1 Development - development of a type listed in Schedule 1 always requires EIA; or
- Schedule 2 Development - development of a type listed in Schedule 2 requires EIA if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location.

3.2.2 Wind energy development is not listed in Schedule 1 of the regulations but under Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations a development area threshold of 0.5 ha is applied to category 3 (a) industrial installations for the production of electricity. The Proposed Development exceeds the Schedule 2 area threshold of 0.5 ha and, as such, whether the Proposed Development is EIA development or not depends on an assessment against the screening selection criteria, as set out in Schedule 3 of the EIA Regulations, which comprise:

- Characteristics of the development;
- Location of the development; and
- Characteristics of the potential impact.

3.2.3 As this Site effectively forms an extension to previously approved windfarm developments to the east which were subject to EIA, the proposal has been considered likely to also result in significant (and complex) environmental effects and therefore an EIA has been prepared for the Proposed Development.

[5] Scottish Governcopment (2017) the Town and Country Planning (EIA) (Scotland) Regulations 2017 [Online] Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/102/contents/made (Accessed 08/06/2022)

3.2.4 A request for a Scoping Opinion was submitted to North Lanarkshire Council on 13th November 2020. The Council provided a detailed Scoping Opinion on 16th December 2020 (Ref: 20/01408/EIASCO) outlining the subject areas which were required to be included in the Environmental Impact Assessment for the Proposed Development.

3.2.5 As a result of the Scoping Responses received, further environmental work was completed on-site. Considerable design iterations to the proposal were therefore undertaken and subsequently re-consultation for revised Scoping Opinions was assumed in April 2022.

3.3 Proposal of Application Notice

3.3.1 As acknowledged in Section 1.1 of this Statement, the Proposed Development is classed as 'major'. As such, there is a statutory requirement for the Applicant to submit a Proposal of Application Notice ("PAN") to the Council, at least 12 weeks prior to the submission of the Application. The purpose of the PAN is to inform members of the public about the consultation and allow for input prior to the submission of the full planning application.

3.3.2 The PAN (Reference: 22/00269/PAN) was submitted to the Council on 9th March 2022 and was validated on 9th March 2022. As such, no application could be submitted to the Council until the 12-week period expired on 1st June 2022.

3.4 Pre-Application Public Consultation

3.4.1 In accordance with the *Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Scotland) Regulations 2008*, a pre-application consultation must be carried out in support of any planning application that is classed as a 'major development' under the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Development) (Scotland) Regulations 2009.It is to be noted that a recent Circular (3/2022) of these regulations were issued in October 2022 which supersedes circular 3/2013 however these regulations are not yet in force.

3.4.2 The consultation measures undertaken by the Applicant were as follows:

- In the summer of 2022, the Applicant began dialogue with the local Community Councils and Community Benefit Funding Body Chairs to introduce the project, outline the plans for public consultation, and seek feedback.
- A project website was launched in Summer 2022 with information regarding the proposed project, including the Scoping Request documentation. The website was developed to provide information for residents and their representatives about the proposed development and allow them to give initial feedback via the dedicated email facility, then followed by the online consultation process which included an online feedback form.
- Following consultation with the local Community Councils, advertising of the initial round of public consultation events was undertaken via social media pages (Facebook and Twitter, making use of the well followed Harthill Community pages as well as through the distribution of posters.
- The second round of public consultation events were promoted in the West Lothian Courier as well as via social media pages, again making

use of the well followed Harthill Community Pages as well as through the distribution of posters to both locations and promotion via attendance at both local Community Council meetings.

3.4.3 It is noted that all distributed materials, including the advertisement and the leaflet, contained the web address for the dedicated consultation website and the direct telephone number for enquiries about the project.

4 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

4.1 Planning Application Process

4.1.1 Regulation 2(1) of the Town and County Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 states that development will be classed as a "Major Development" where the applicable threshold in Schedule 1 of the Regulations is met or exceeded. In this instance, the proposal would be classified as 'Other Development', with the threshold for being considered a 'Major' development as where:

(a) The gross floor space of any building, structure or erection constructed as a result of such development is or exceeds 5,000 square metres;

or

(b) The area of the site is or exceed 2 hectares.

4.1.2 In this instance, the Site area exceeds 2 hectares and therefore triggers the second threshold.

4.1.3 As such, it is anticipated that determination of the Application will be taken by North Lanarkshire Council Planning Committee.

4.2 Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997

4.2.1 Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) states:

"Where, in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, the determination is, unless material considerations indicate otherwise– a) to be made in accordance with that plan."

4.2.2 Section 37(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) states:

"In dealing with such an application the authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations".

4.2.3 Based on the above, the process for determining a planning application made under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) can therefore be defined as:

- Identification and consideration of the key provisions within the Development Plan;
- Clarification of whether the Proposed Development is in accordance with the Development Plan;
- Identification and consideration of relevant material considerations; and
- Conclusions on whether planning consent is justified.

4.2.4 Section 5 of this Statement reviews the relevant policy and legislation as it pertains to energy and climate change; Sections 6 and 7 review and assess the key planning policies that are applicable to the Site; and Section 8 addresses any further material considerations. The aim of these Sections is to establish the key implications of the Proposed Development and consider its standing against the determination criteria listed above, in order to aid the Council during the determination process.

4.3 Environmental Assessment Regulations

4.3.1 The EIA Regulations implement European Union (EU) Directive 2014/52/EU which amended Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment.

4.3.2 The EIA Regulations outline

- The process of an EIA and the criteria that would determine if an EIA is necessary or not;
- The relevant environmental studies and statements; and
- How the information is evaluated by the Scottish Ministers, Planning Authorities and consultative bodies.

4.3.3 Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations determines whether an EIA is required for certain types of development where there are likely to be significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as the nature, size or locations of the Proposed Development.

4.3.4 The results of the EIA are presented in the accompanying EIA Report which, as prescribed in the EIA Regulations, is required to include a *"description of the likely significant effects"* of the Proposed Development; the effects which are not considered to be significant do not need to be described. It is therefore necessary for the scope of the EIA to be appropriately and clearly defined to ensure that any likely significant effects are described and assessed.

4.3.5 The EIA Report conveys the findings of the assessment of the potential significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development during construction, operation and decommissioning.

5 ENERGY POLICY AND LEGISLATION: THE NEED TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

5.1.1 This section of the Planning Statement sets out the international, European, UK and Scottish energy policy and legislation. It provides the framework of international agreement and binding targets upon which national energy policy is based. The international and national policy described and summarised below demonstrates the need for renewable energy from which the Proposed Development can draw a high level of support.

5.1.2 These sections all demonstrate the clear and consistent policy support at all levels for the deployment of renewable energy, particularly onshore wind, to

- Combat climate change;
- Diversify the mix of energy sources and achieve greater security of supply; and
- Achieve legally binding renewable energy targets.

5.1.3 The Proposed Development would make a significant contribution to help Scotland meet its renewable energy production targets, while supporting CO_2 reduction to combat climate change and increasing the security of electricity supplies.

5.2 International and European Policy Context

COP 21 Paris Agreement

5.2.1 On 12 December 2015, 196 Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted the Paris Agreement[6], a legally-binding framework for an internationally coordinated effort to tackle climate change. The Paris Agreement's key aim is to strengthen the global response to climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. The UK is legally bound through commitment to the Paris Agreement.

Committee on Climate Change Net Zero Report May 2019

5.2.2 In May 2019 the Committee on Climate Change published Net Zero – The UK's Contribution to Stopping Global Warming[7]. This report responds to a request from the Governments of the UK, Wales and Scotland, asking the Committee to reassess the UK's long-term emissions targets. The report recommends a new emissions target for the UK: net zero gases by 2050, and recommends a 2045 net-zero target for Scotland to reflect Scotland's greater relative capacity to remove emissions than the UK as a whole. The Report highlights the falling cost of key renewable technologies, which are now generally comparable or lower in cost than power from fossil fuels, whilst bringing significant co-benefits such as reduced air pollution.

The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019

5.2.3 On 27 June 2019, the Climate Change Act 2008[8] was amended to introduce a target for at least a 100% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK[9] by 2050. This 'net zero' target is likely to affect and increase future Government renewable and low carbon energy targets and create a more positive policy environment for renewable energy.

UK Net Zero Strategy

5.2.4 Published on 2 December 2020, the National Audit Office report[10] to the UK Government examines the main risks to achieving net zero effectively and efficiently. The report is forthright that most of the UK reductions in emissions has come about from the switch away from coal in electricity generation. Whilst reducing emissions further will require wider changes to the UK economy, further investment in renewable electricity generation will be required.

5.2.5 The former BEIS (The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) projects that the UK will not meet its targets for emissions reduction unless action is taken to reduce the shortfall in achieving the targets set in the fourth and fifth carbon budgets. At paragraph 6 of the summary the report states that:

> "Achieving net zero is a colossal challenge and significantly more challenging than the Government's previous target to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050."

5.2.6 At paragraph 13 of the Summary, the report confirms that BEIS would launch a net zero strategy prior to COP26 in November 2021. The strategy[11] was published on 19th October 2021 and set out the Government's vision for transitioning to a net zero economy by 2050, encompassing all sectors that need to decarbonise, and closing the gap that currently exists in meeting the targets in the fourth and fifth carbon budgets. The strategy set the level for the sixth carbon budget, reviewing the cost of net zero and how it should be paid for, and establishing meeting net zero as part of the wider economic response to Covid-19.

[6] United Nations Climate Change - The Paris Agreement (2015) [Online] Available at: https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[7] Committee on Climate Change (2019) Net Zero – The UKs contribution to stopping global warming [Online] Available at: https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/net-zero-the-uks-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming/ (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[8] UK Government (2008) Climate Change Act 2008 [Online] Available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[9] UK Government (2019) The Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 (2019 No. 1056) [Online] Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/1056/made (Accessed 09/06/2022).
[10] National Audit Office (2020) Achieving Net Zero [Online] Available at: https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Achieving-net-zero.pdf (Accessed 09/06/2022).
[11] UK Government (2021) Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/net-zero-strategy (Accessed 09/06/2022)

The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK's path to Net Zero

5.2.7 On 9 December 2020, the Climate Change Committee ('The CCC') released The Sixth Carbon Budget[12] which updates intermediary targets for the UK's progress to net zero.

> "Our recommended pathway requires a 78% reduction in UK territorial emissions between 1990 and 2035. In effect, it brings forward the UK's previous 80% target by nearly 15 years. There is no clearer indication of the increased ambition implied by the Net Zero target than this."

5.2.8 These targets must be considered as a factor in the determination of applications for viable wind energy projects. In establishing intermediary targets towards net zero, the context exists for Local Authorities to recognise the action that must be taken sooner rather than later. As concluded in the Sixth Carbon Budget:

> "The implication of this path is clear: the utmost focus is required from government over the next ten years. If policy is not scaled up across every sector; if business is not encouraged to invest; if the people of the UK are not engaged in this challenge – the UK will not deliver Net Zero by 2050."

5.2.9 When modelling the expansion of low-carbon energy supplies, the Sixth Carbon Budget states:

> "New demands from transport, buildings and industry (moderated by improving energy efficiency) mean electricity demand rises 50% to 2035, doubling or even trebling by 2050."

5.2.10 On 20th April 2021 BEIS and the Prime Minister's Office jointly announced that the Sixth Carbon Budget will limit the volume of greenhouse gasses emitted over the 5-year period from 2033 to 2037, equivalent to a 78% reduction by 2035 compared with 1990 levels. The UK Government is already working towards a reduction of 68% by 2030, and states that the goal of achieving 78% by 2035 constitutes the world's most ambitious climate change target.

5.2.11 For the first time, the Carbon Budget will incorporate the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions. The statement also notes that the UK continues to break records in renewable energy generation, which has more than quadrupled since 2010, with low carbon electricity accounting for over 50% of total generation.

5.2.12 The new target was given statutory force as of 24th June 2021, with legislation introduced prior to this through Parliament on 21st April 2021.

[12] The CCC (2020) The Sixth Carbon Budget: The UK's path to Net Zero [Online] Available at: https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf (Accessed 09/06/2022)

HM Government Energy White Paper – Powering our Net Zero Future December 2020

5.2.13 On 14 December 2020, Alok Sharma MO, then Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced the launch of the Energy White Paper[13]. The White Paper set out the UK Government's strategy to put net zero into practice and for fighting climate change, following the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution[14]. As part of this strategy, the target for offshore wind is raised to 40 GW, enough to power every home in the UK.

5.2.14 The White Paper reiterates the compelling case to urgently address climate change and avert the dangerous consequences that will arise if global temperatures increase and are not kept at well below 2%, as per the Paris Agreement. The White Paper sets out the measures that need to be put in place to achieve the carbon emissions targets for the UK. These entail a major shift in energy use from fossil fuels to electricity and hydrogen. Clean electricity is to become the predominant form of energy, with a consequent doubling of demand. This transition must be secured whilst retaining reliability, resilience and affordability. Delivering this will require billions of pounds of investment in clean energy infrastructure, including offshore wind farms and new nuclear plants.

5.2.15 The White Paper is clear that in addition to offshore wind, other low-cost renewable technologies will need sustained growth if net zero is to be achieved. Onshore Wind (and solar) will be key building blocks in the energy mix, with the aim to deploy around 12 GW of new low-cost renewable generation capacity.

2022 Committee on Climate Change Progress Report to Parliament

5.2.16 The 2022 Committee on Climate Change (CCC) Progress Report to Parliament[15] was published in June 2022 and provides a review of Government efforts over the previous 12 months with regards to Climate Change and presents recommendations for reducing emissions and adapting to climate change. UK emissions are noted to have risen by 4% in 2021 compared with 2020 as the economy began to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

[13] HM Government (2020) Energy White Paper – Powering our Net Zero Future [Online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/943807/201214_BEIS_EWP_Command_Paper_LR.pdf (Accessed 09/06/2022)

[14] Prime Minister Boris Johnson outlines his Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution for 250,000 jobs.18 November 2018 [Online] Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-outlines-his-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution-for-250000-jobs (Accessed 09/06/2022)

[15] Committee on Climate Change (2022) 2022 Progress Report to Parliament [Online] Available at: 2022 Progress Report to Parliament - Climate Change Committee (theccc.org.uk) (Accessed 15/11/2022)

5.2.17 The CCC Report notes that there remains significant opportunity to reduce fossil fuel consumption across the UK on a timescale that will allow the population to cope with continually rising prices, with deployment of renewable sources helping to improve energy efficiency levels. It is also noted that the annual amounts of renewable energy developments entering construction will need to ramp up significantly over the next decade in order for the government to meet installed capacity targets.

5.2.18 There has been significant progress in the transition to renewables, with emissions in Scotland in particular, noted as having fallen by 50% between 2000 and 2020. However, the CCC report one again notes potential barriers to low-carbon generation at scale, including in the planning and consenting regime, which should be addressed urgently to enable the low carbon transition.

26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October – 13 November 2021

5.2.19 COP 26 brought together world leaders from over 200 countries to seek agreement on the measures necessary to address the effects of climate change. The agreement reached determines the key actions that will be taken over the next decade to achieve further cuts to emissions of CO2, with the aim of keeping the rise in global temperature to within 1.5ºC.

5.2.20 COP 26 ended with the Glasgow Climate Pact, a historic agreement to incorporating the aim of limiting temperature rise to 1.5ºC. All countries agreed to revisit and strengthen their current emissions targets to 2030, known as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), in 2022. This will be combined with a yearly political roundtable to consider a global progress report and a Leaders summit in 2023.

5.2.21 The Paris Rulebook, the guidelines for how the Paris Agreement is delivered, was also put in place after six years of discussions. This will allow for the full delivery of the landmark accord, after agreement on a transparency process which will hold countries to account as they deliver on their targets. This includes Article 6, which establishes a robust framework for countries to exchange carbon credits through the UNFCCC.

5.2.22 For the first time, heeding calls from the majority of world nations, including those countries most vulnerable to climate impacts, the COP 26 agreed action on phasing down fossil fuels.

27th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP27) in Sharm el-Sheikh on 6 November – 20 November 2022

5.2.23 COP27 was held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, where 92 heads of state and an estimated 35,000 representatives, or delegates, of 190 countries attended to discuss and negotiate the global commitment to tackling climate change in the face of the current energy crisis. COP27 noted that global emissions remain at record high levels and the world is on track to warming well in excess of 2°C, with intensifying climate damages.

5.2.24 COP27 established new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to address impacts which cannot or have not been adapted to.

5.2.25 The Sharm el-Sheik Implementation Plan (the COP27 political decision) reaffirms that keeping global warming to 1.5°C will require a 43% reduction in global greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 2030 relative to 2019 levels. It actions the mitigation work programme agreed at COP26, which will focus on urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation and the investment needed to unlock further mitigation action this decade. The Sharm el-Sheik Implementation Plan emphasizes the urgent need for immediate sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions by Parties across all applicable sectors, including through increase in low-emission and renewable energy, just energy transition partnerships and other cooperative actions.

5.2.26 COP27 concluded with a historic decision to establish and operationalize a loss and damage fund.

Speech by First Minister to Scottish Renewables Annual Conference 23 March 2021

5.2.27 In her speech at the 2021 Scottish Renewables Conference, the First Minister took the opportunity to emphasise the importance of COP26, to be held in Glasgow later that year in October and November 2021 as a 'make or break' event for the planet. Scotland wants to demonstrate to the world that Scotland is leading by example, to help lead the world into the net zero age. She also highlights the importance of the renewable energy sector in delivering the Scottish Government's vision.

IPCC Report – Climate Change 2022 – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability

5.2.28 On 27th of February 2022 the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its report *Climate Change 2022 – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*[16].

5.2.29 The report emphasises that there is only a brief window of time left to avoid the very worst consequences of climate change. Humans and nature are being pushed beyond their abilities to adapt, and over 40% of the world's population are highly vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. The report has a particular focus on transformation and system transitions in energy; land, ocean, coastal and freshwater ecosystems; urban, rural and infrastructure; and industry and society.

[16] IPCC (2022) Climate Change 2022 – Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability Report [Online] Available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/ (Accessed 09/06/2022)

5.2.30 These transitions are necessary to make possible the adaptation required for high levels of human health and wellbeing, economic and social resilience, ecosystem health, and planetary health. These system transitions are also important for achieving the low global warming levels that would avoid many limits to adaptation. The report also assesses economic and non-economic losses and damages, and the process of implementing mitigation and adaptation together in support of sustainable development for all as climate resilient development.

5.2.31 Professor Debra Roberts, co-chair of the IPCC states:

> "Our report clearly indicates that places where people live and work may cease to exist, that ecosystems and species that we've all grown up with and is a central to our cultures and inform our languages is may disappear. So this is really a key moment. Our report points out very clearly, this is the decade of action, if we are going to turn things round."

Overall Climate Change and Energy Policy Conclusion

5.2.32 Given the overview of relevant international policy on climate change and renewable energy, and the context of continued need for renewable energy development, it is clear that projects such as the Proposed Development would be encouraged due to their environmental, social and economic benefits. If consented, the Proposed Development would contribute to meeting the CO_2 emissions reduction targets, as well as the renewable energy targets. The recently published IPCC Report is a stark reminder of the urgency with which climate change must be addressed at UK, European and International levels. The Proposed Development is fully in accord with these objectives.

5.3 Scottish Climate Change Legislation

5.3.1 The following documents set out the Scottish Government's commitment to cut carbon emissions and combat climate change through the deployment of renewable energy, and sets out the national energy strategy alongside energy planning statistics.

Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

5.3.2 The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009[17] ("the Climate Change Act") creates a long-term framework for the current and successive administrations in Scotland to ensure a reduction in Scottish greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050 with an interim milestone of 42% by 2020.

[17] Scottish Government (2009) The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 [Online] Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2009/12/contents (Accessed 09/06/2022)

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019[18]

5.3.3 The Scottish government introduced the new Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill ("the Climate Change Bill") to Parliament on 23rd May 2018. It was passed on 25th September 2019, and received Royal Assent on 31st October 2019, becoming the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.

5.3.4 The Act amends the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and originally increased the 2050 target to 90%. In line with advice from the CCC on 2nd May 2019, the Scottish Government amended the Climate Change Bill to set a target date of 2045 for reaching net-zero emissions[19].

5.3.5 Setting a 'carbon neutral', net-zero target of 2045 is ambitious and ahead of the rest of the United Kingdom's target of 2050. Projects such as the Proposed Development play a key role in aiding the decarbonisation of the energy sector and in meeting the ambitious targets for carbon emission reductions which the Government has set.

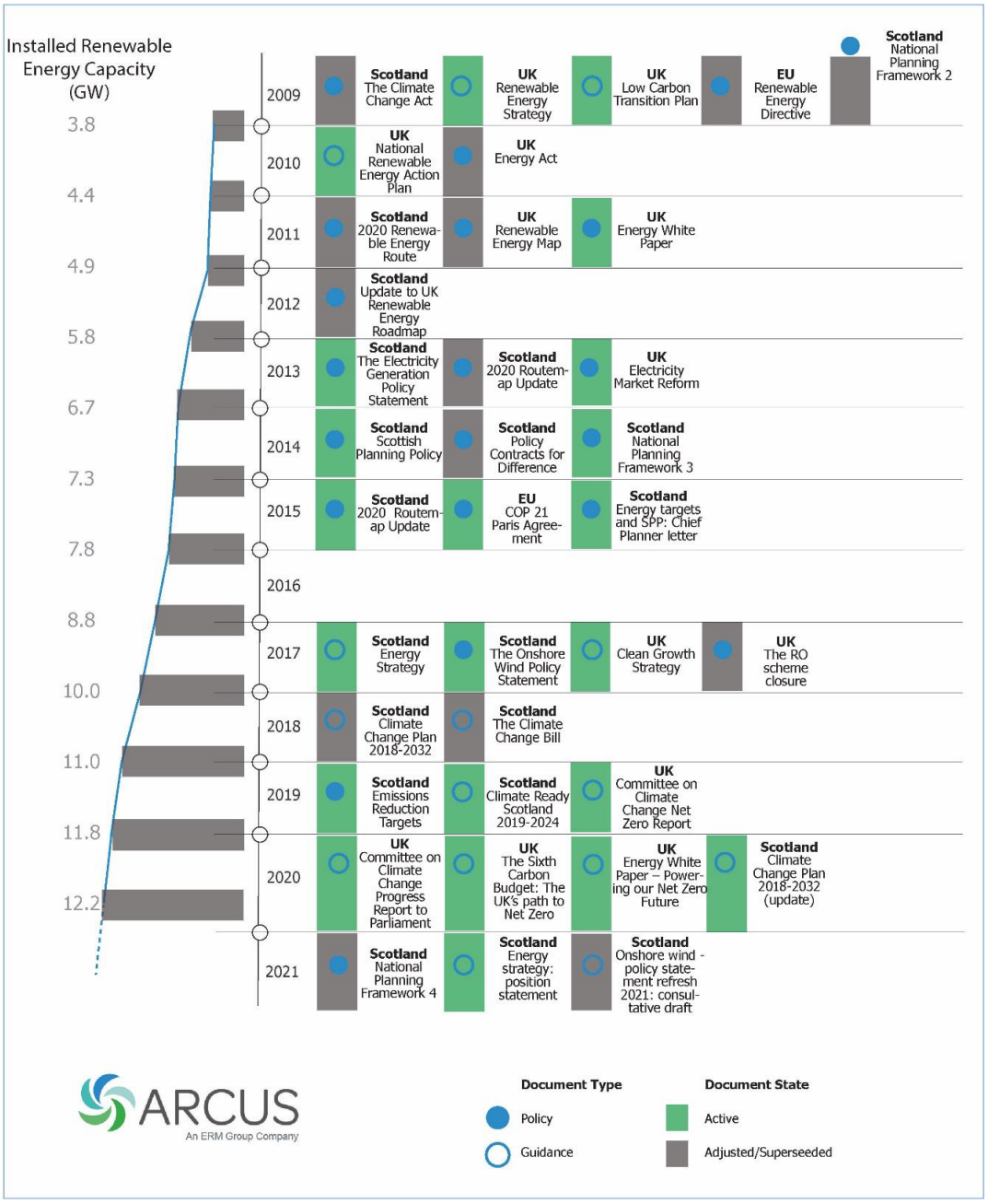
5.4 Scottish Climate Change and Energy Policy

5.4.1 Scotland is in a position of national climate emergency and action is required to combat the situation and achieve the target of net zero carbon emissions by 2045. There is a direct need to consent viable renewable energy developments in order to reach this goal.

5.4.2 The following Plate 1, shows the main legislative and policy developments between 2009 and 2021 at Scottish, UK and international level and also the growth in Scotland's renewable energy capacity.

[18] Scottish Government (2019) Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 [Online] Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/15/contents/enacted (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[19] Scottish Government (2019) Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill Marshalled List of Amendments for Stage 2 [Online] Available at https://www.parliament.scot/S5_Bills/Climate%20Change%20(Emissions%20Reduction%20Targets)%20(Scotland)%20Bill/SPBill30MLS052019.pdf (Accessed 09/06/2022)

Plate 1: Main Legislative and Policy Developments



Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland

5.4.3 Securing low carbon energy supplies is a key element in achieving the target of reducing emissions by 80% by 2050 with an interim milestone of 42% by 2020. In recognition of this, the Scottish Government has set further targets which include producing 100% of the country's demand for electricity from renewable sources. This is detailed within the 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland[20]. The Proposed Development has the potential to aid the achievement of these targets.

Scottish Onshore Wind Policy Statement

5.4.4 The Onshore Wind Policy Statement[21] ('OWPS') was published alongside the Energy Strategy in December 2017. The OWPS reaffirms the Scottish Government's existing onshore wind policy set out in previous publications, whilst protecting the environment (landscape and visual, ecological and other environmental impacts); protecting residential amenity; and maximising local benefits, for example through promoting shared ownership and community benefits. In the Ministerial Foreword to the OWPS, it is stated that *"onshore wind plays a valuable role in empowering and rewarding local communities located near developments".*

5.4.5 The Scottish Government is determined to influence, enable and deliver a clean and integrated and reliable energy system at an affordable cost.

5.4.6 Onshore Wind is recognised as a mature technology and amongst the lowest cost forms of electricity generation of any kind. Onshore Wind is expected to remain at the centre of a clean, reliable and low carbon energy future in Scotland. The OWPS states that:

> "In order for onshore wind to play its vital role in meeting Scotland's energy needs, and a material role in growing Scotland's economy, its contribution must continue to grow. Onshore wind generations will remain crucial in terms of our goals for a decarbonised energy system, helping to meet the greater demand from our heat and transport sectors, as well as making further progress towards the ambitious renewable targets which the Scottish Government has set."

5.4.7 As such, Scotland will continue to need more onshore wind development and capacity, including new and larger turbines in locations where it can be appropriately accommodated within the landscapes.

5.4.8 The OWPS is therefore clear and decisive in its support for new onshore wind projects. The OWPS reiterates that the Scottish Government "will continue to invite applicants to explain clearly how environmental impacts have been balanced against energy yield during design iteration, and reported as part of the information provided in support of applications".

[20] Scottish Government (2015) 2020 Routemap for Renewable Energy in Scotland – Update [Online] Available at: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00485407.pdf (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[21] Scottish Government (2017) Onshore Wind Policy Statement (Online) Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-9781788515283 (Accessed 09/06/2022)

5.4.9 This Statement and the accompanying EIA Report are produced in line with this guidance from the OWPS.

5.4.10 The Onshore Wind Policy Statement Refresh 2021 is considered in Section 5.5.1 of this Statement.

Scottish Energy Strategy

5.4.11 The Scottish Energy Strategy 2017: The Future of Energy in Scotland[22] sets out the Scottish Government's vision for the future energy system in Scotland, to 2050. It articulates the priorities for an integrated system-wide approach that considers both the use and supply of energy for heat, power and transport. The Energy Strategy is designed to strengthen the development of local energy, protect and empower consumers, and support Scotland's climate change ambitions while tackling poor energy provision.

5.4.12 In March 2021 the Scottish Government published 'Scotland's Energy Strategy Position Statement'[23] ('2021 SES') which builds on the support for onshore wind outlined in the 2017 SES. The 2021 SES notes that:

> "The Scottish Government is committed to supporting the increase of onshore wind in the right places to help meet the target of Net Zero. In 2019, onshore wind investment in Scotland generated over £2 billion in turnover and directly supported approximately 2,900 full-time equivalent jobs across the country."

5.4.13 The Position Statement also identifies the Scottish Government's key priorities for energy, which amongst others includes a refresh of the Onshore Wind Policy Statement.

Low Carbon Scotland: Climate Change Plan – Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032[24]

5.4.14 This document was published in September 2018 and provides an overview of the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan 2018-2032. The document contains what, at the time, were the most up-to-date renewable electricity generation data available from Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES). In the summary document[25], progress so far is addressed in the following terms:

[22] Scottish Government (2017) Scottish Energy Strategy [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/energystrategy (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[23] Scottish Government (2021) Scotland's Energy Strategy Position Statement [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-energy-strategy-position-statement/ (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[24] Scottish Government (2018) Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032 [Online] Available at: http://www.low-carbonscotland.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Climate-Change-Plan-Scotland.pdf (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[25] Scottish Government (2018) Climate Change Plan: Third Report on Proposals and Policies 2018-2032 (RPP3) - Summary [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-climate-change-plan-third-report-proposals-policies-2018-9781788516488/ (Accessed 09/06/2022)

> "In 2015, Scotland had reduced its emission by 41% from the 1990 baseline, and in 2017 Scotland generated 68.1% of its electricity requirements from renewables. Scotland's success in decarbonising electricity paves the way for transformational change across all sectors of the economy and society, particularly as electricity will be increasingly important as a power source for heat and transport".

5.4.15 The plan envisages that by 2032 Scotland will have reduced its emissions by 66% relative to the baseline, while growing the economy, increasing the wellbeing of the people of Scotland and protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Furthermore, the plan proposes that by 2032 Scotland's electricity system will be largely decarbonised and increasingly important as a power source for heat and transport.

5.4.16 The Proposed Development is in keeping with the climate change plan, as it has the potential to aid CO_2 emissions reduction, have positive effect on the local and national economy, whilst leaving a minimal footprint on the environment.

A stronger and more resilient Scotland: The Programme for Government 2022 to 2023

5.4.17 In September 2022, the Scottish Government published 'A Stronger and More Resilient Scotland' the programme for Government for 2022-23, which sets out the actions the Government will take in the forthcoming year. The Programme reiterates the continuous support for renewable energy. The development of renewable energy presents an immense opportunity for Scotland to lead by example, ensuring that progress towards net zero is environmentally and economically beneficial.

5.4.18 If consented, the Proposed Development has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the Government's objectives for reducing emissions, by increasing the widespread deployment of the renewables industry; encouraging further onshore wind development, as well as encouraging investment in renewable energy, to achieve sustainable economic growth.

Reducing emissions in Scotland – 2021 Progress Report to Parliament[26]

5.4.19 The CCC's 10th annual progress Report to the Scottish Parliament advises that Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions fell by a further 2% in 2019, compared to 2018, and are now 44% below 1990 levels. The reductions were largely driven by the manufacturing and construction, and fuel supply sectors, with electricity generation remaining the biggest driver of emissions cuts over the past decade (2009-2019). The potential for further emissions savings from electricity generation has, however, largely run out.

[26] Committee on Climate Change (2021) Reducing emissions in Scotland Progress Report to Parliament [Online] Available at: https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2020-progress-report-to-parliament/ (Accessed 15/11/2022)

5.4.20 The focus must now shift to ensuring that rapid emissions reductions are delivered with no further delay to allow Scotland to meet its legislated 2030 target. The Report identifies a number of clear priorities for the Scottish Government.

5.4.21 It highlights that some highly ambitious targets have been set by the Scottish Government over the next decade, however to meet these, delivery of rapid emissions reductions cannot wait.

5.4.22 A comprehensive, detailed policy framework must now be completed for decarbonisation in Scotland, so the focus can be on implementation and delivery of real-world progress in reducing emissions at the necessary rate. Progress must also be monitored closely, and policy corrected as appropriate, to ensure that delivery stays on track.

5.4.23 A key theme of the report is that whilst there has been a lot of progress, particularly from a policy perspective, real-world action and physical development is now required. In order to do this the planning system and upcoming NPF4 will have a key role in supporting decarbonisation and renewable generation through facilitating the project application process and taking into account the development of the necessary infrastructure.

Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018 – 2032 – Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero

5.4.24 On 16th December 2020 the Scottish Government published an update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan[27]. It therefore covers the period in which the Scottish Government committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030. The plan sets out the approach to delivering a green recovery, and a pathway to meeting world leading climate change targets for the period to 2032 The Plan states that by then, amongst other things, *"our electricity system will have deepened its transformation for the better, with over 100% of Scotland's electricity demand being met from renewable sources"*. There will have been a substantial increase in renewable generation, particularly through offshore and onshore wind capacity, with the vision being that:

> "Renewable generation will increase substantially between now and 2032, and we expect to see development of between 11 and 16 GW of capacity during this period, helping to decarbonise out transport and heating energy demand.

5.4.25 Whilst much of Scotland's electricity generation has decarbonised over the last decade, there is a need for increased investment in renewable energy, particularly onshore and offshore wind. The energy consenting process will be reviewed to reduce determination timescales and enable projects awarded consent to proceed more quickly, benefitting onshore wind in particular. A new Energy Strategy Position Statement (see Section 5.4.12) was produced in 2021 and an update Electricity Generation Policy Statement is expected in 2022[28].

[27] Scottish Government (2020) Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032 – update [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/ (Accessed 09/06/2022)

5.4.26 Planning is a key delivery mechanism for many of the policies within the Climate Change Plan update, across all sectors. By making the right choices about where and what development should take place in the future, planning can help to reduce emissions whilst improving the wellbeing of communities and the quality and resilience of places across Scotland. The Draft NPF4 has now been released as of November 2021 and as noted within Section 8.1.1 – 8.1.14 the latest (and what is expected to be the final draft) was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 8th November 2022.

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation

5.4.27 Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation[29] ('the National Strategy') was published by the Scottish Government on 1st March 2022. The overall aim of the National Strategy is to clearly demonstrate the main priorities related to the continued development of Scotland's economy as well as any action(s) required to be taken in order to maximise opportunities for economic improvement and wellbeing over the next decade, until the year 2032.

5.4.28 Within the foreword of the publication, there is immediate mention of the crucial role which the economy will play in helping to drive a green recovery and maximising continued investment in key sectors such as energy, helping to meet important climate change and nature targets.

5.4.29 The National Strategy acknowledges that there is a significant opportunity for Scotland to continue to be an industry leader with regards to renewable energy development *"with Scotland enjoying a quarter of Europe's wind potential"* and the country being home to a wide range of globally leading businesses, currently operating within the renewable energy market.

Scottish Climate Change and Energy Policy Conclusion

5.4.30 Overall, the Proposed Development draws significant support from the national policy on energy and climate change. The Proposed Development, if consented, would contribute to decarbonising the energy sector, whilst providing clean and secure energy supply. It has been designed in a way to minimise environmental effects whilst maintaining economic viability.

5.4.31 The Application has to be viewed in the context of national climate emergency and net-zero emissions targets. There is a requirement to produce deliverable renewable energy developments in order to meet targets.

[28] Scottish Renewables (2020) Policy Briefing December 2020 – Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032 [Online] Available at: https://www.scottishrenewables.com/assets/000/001/300/Update_to_the_Climate_Change_Plan-Briefing_original.pdf?1608568194 (Accessed 09/06/2022)
[29] Scottish Government (2022) Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-strategy-economic-transformation/documents/ (Accessed 09/06/2022)

5.4.32 Furthermore, the Proposed Development would maximise the benefits for the local communities through the community benefit fund and the proposal for Shared Ownership. The Shared Ownership will provide the opportunity for local community organisations to invest in the Proposed Development as a meaningful financial partner. The Applicant is committed to the concept of shared ownership for communities near their windfarms. Economic benefits of the Proposed Development are considered further in Section 7.11 of this Statement.

5.4.33 As such, the Proposed Development accords with the national policy objectives for clean energy and climate change.

5.5 Draft Energy Policy

Onshore Wind Policy Statement Refresh 2021 Consultative Draft (October 2021)

5.5.1 The Ministerial Foreword to the Onshore Wind Policy Statement Refresh 2021[30] ('the Draft OWPS') recognises that onshore wind remains vital to Scotland's future energy mix and that more will be needed in order to progress legally binding net-zero targets.

5.5.2 The Draft OWPS sets out the legislative requirements and targets as noted earlier in this statement. Whilst the Scottish Government target of generating the equivalent of 100% of gross electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2020 was narrowly missed (at 95.9%) it exemplifies the support for onshore wind and its effectiveness. The Scottish Government acknowledges that the next decade will see a substantial increase in demand for electricity to support net zero delivery across all sectors. The CCC has suggested electricity demand could double over this period. There will therefore need to be a substantial increase in installed capacity across all renewable technologies, including onshore wind.

5.5.3 Chapter 2 of the Draft OWPS examines the current levels of deployment and what can be expected to be required by 2030 to achieve Net Zero, stating that:

> "The transition to net zero means that our demand for green electricity will increase substantially over the course of the next decade. This means that a consistently higher rate of onshore wind, and other renewables capacity, will be required year on year."

5.5.4 The CCC has estimated that the UK will require a total capacity of 25 to 30 GW of onshore wind by 2050 to meet Net Zero, in effect doubling the current level of deployment in the UK.

5.5.5 The Scottish Government is therefore seeking views on an ambition that an additional 8 to 12 GW of onshore wind capacity should be installed in Scotland by 2030 to help achieve Net Zero commitments.

[30] Scottish Government (2021) Onshore wind – policy statement refresh 2021: consultation draft [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-policy-statement-refresh-2021-consultativedraft/pages/3/#:~:text=Onshore%20wind%20%2D%20policy%20statement%20refresh%202021%3A%20consultative%20dr

5.5.6 The Draft OWPS considered the value in installing taller turbines for greater efficiency and technological advancement:

> "The Scottish Government acknowledged that tip-heights for onshore wind farms are increasing and welcomes the resulting efficiencies in generation that this enables."

5.5.7 Whilst there is an acknowledgement that not all landscapes and environments can accommodate tall turbines, there is an in-principle support for development of this nature, subject to an assessment of impact.

5.5.8 Under Chapter 3, the Draft OWPS considers the technical barriers to deployment, including amongst other things aviation issues, and aviation lighting. Chapter 4 addresses environmental factors which can pose a barrier to deployment. These factors include but are not limited to noise; peatlands and carbon rich soils; forestry; and landscape and visual matters.

5.5.9 With regard to landscape and visual issues, the Draft OWPS acknowledges that whilst cherished landscapes are a key part of the natural and cultural heritage and should be afforded protection, it is also important to recognise that climate change and Net-Zero ambitions require decisive action, stating:

> "We also recognise that climate change, and our net zero ambitions, require decisive action, will change how Scotland looks and that we will need to deploy significant volumes of onshore wind generation over the next decade to help us meet our challenging legal obligations. This is likely to comprise modern, efficient turbines which will maximise the generation possible at each site and a mix of current technologies and taller turbines."

The UK's Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan

5.5.10 The UK draft National Energy and Climate Plan ('NECP')[31] was produced in January 2020 and sets out the UK Government's climate and energy objectives, targets, policies and measures covering the five dimensions of the Energy Union. The NECP highlights the role of advanced solar PV technologies in the delivery of cost efficient, clean and secure supplies of electricity.

aft,-Published%3A%2028%20Oct&text=Seeks%20views%20on%20our%20ambition,economic%20benefit%20from%20these%20developments. (Accessed 10/06/2022)

[31] Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (2019) The UK's Draft Integrated National Energy and Climate Plan [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-national-energy-and-climate-plan-necp (Accessed 15/11/2022)

6 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

6.1.1 This section sets out the relevant planning policy on national and local level. Assessment of the local planning policy is set out in Section 7 of this Statement.

6.2 National Planning Policy

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)

6.2.1 Scotland 2045 – Our Fourth National Planning Framework[32] was initially published for consultation on 10th November 2021 and was formally adopted on the 13th February 2023. The consultation period ended 31st March 2022 and following this, NPF4 was laid before the Scottish parliament on 8th November 2022, along with an explanatory report and delivery programme. The latter states that *"Planning will play a crucial leadership role by co-ordinating and choreographing the activities and decisions required. Stakeholder and community engagement will be needed to both inform and contribute to the programme as it evolves and to support delivery on the ground. This will help to address delivery risks and identify opportunities for innovation"*.

6.2.2 Planning Minister Tom Arthur said: "The window of opportunity to act to reduce emissions and adapt to already locked-in changes is narrowing. Our statutory and moral obligation to tackle climate change means change is necessary and urgent.

> "This final version of the framework makes clear that we won't compromise on climate change. It also clarifies what is to be delivered, and how. And it is now clear through the weighting to be applied to different policies, that the climate and nature crises are the priority.
>
> "It is timely that we have tabled final proposals during COP27, as we set out to do when Glasgow hosted COP26 last year. This shows that Scotland's ambition and commitment to delivering on international calls for action are unwavering.
>
> "There is now a clear expectation of the role that planning must play in delivering the expansion of renewable energy needed to realise the just transition from reliance on fossil fuels.
>
> "This framework creates the foundation upon which to build the fairer, greener Scotland we want to see for the benefit of future generations."

6.2.3 The final draft of NPF4 was discussed by the Scottish Parliament before being subject to a vote in the chamber. Now adopted and published by the Scottish ministers, NPF4, amongst other things, aims to manage land-use and development in the long-term public interest.

[32] Scottish Government (2021) *Scotland 2045 – fourth National Planning Framework – draft: consultation* [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotland-2045-fourth-national-planning-framework-draft/ (Accessed 12/04/2022)

6.2.4 The adopted NPF4 has been published and divided into 2 parts:

- Part 1 sets out an overarching spatial strategy for Scotland in the future and sets out proposed national developments that support the spatial strategy.

- Part 2 sets out policies for the development and use of land which are to be applied in the preparations of local development plans, local place plans; masterplans and briefs; and for determining the range pf planning consents.

6.2.5 Part 1 of the NPF4 states that "We have already taken significant steps towards decarbonising energy and land use, but choices need to be made about how we can make sustainable use of our natural assets".

6.2.6 Part 1 deals with National Developments. Of the 18 identified, number 3 deals with strategic renewable electricity generation and transmission infrastructure. This national development supports renewable electricity generation, repowering, and expansion of the electricity grid. It recognises that a large increase in electricity generation from renewable resources is *"fundamental"* to achieving a net zero economy in Scotland.

6.2.7 Part 2 of the NPF4 sets out the National Planning Policies required to achieve a net zero, nature positive Scotland. It outlines how the planning system must be re-balanced to ensure that climate change and nature recovery are the primary guiding principles for all plans and decisions.

6.2.8 Policy 1 (Tackling the Climate and Nature Crises) states that when considering all development proposals *"**significant weight** will be given to the **global climate and nature crises**"*.

6.2.9 The intention of Policy 2 (Climate Mitigation and Adaption) is to encourage, promote and facilitate development projects that minimise emissions and adapt to current and future impacts of climate change. Renewable energy developments will be at the forefront when aiming to achieve the aims of this policy.

6.2.10 Policy 11 (Energy) illustrates how support will be given to Development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies. This includes the development of wind farms - including extending and expanding windfarms - and battery storage developments.

6.2.11 Policy 11 recognises that Scotland's energy sector has a significant role to play in reducing carbon emissions and contributing to a green, fair and a resilient economic recovery. The draft policy also notes that Local Development Plans ('LDPs') should seek to realise their area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable, low carbon and zero emission sources by identifying a range of opportunities for energy development.

The text of Policy 11 states that development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported, including *'wind farms including repowering, extending, expanding and extending the life of existing wind farms'*. The policy will only support such developments where they *'maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities.'*

6.2.12 Now that the NPF4 is fully adopted and published, NPF3 and SPP has been superseded and are no longer relevant in the decision making process.

Planning Advice Notes (PAN) and Circulars

6.2.13 Planning Advice Notes (PANs) and Specific Advice Sheets set out detailed advice from the Scottish Government in relation to a number of planning issues. Relevant PANs and specific Advice Sheets relevant to the Proposed Development are summarised in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1: Relevant PANs and Specific Advice Notes

Title	Summary of Document
PAN 1/2013 Environmental Impact Assessment[33]	Provides information on the role local authorities and consultees play as part of the EIA process, and how the EIA can inform development management.
PAN 51 Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation (Revised 2006)[34]	Details the role of the planning system in relation to the environmental protection regimes.
PAN 60 (2000) Planning for Natural Heritage[35]	Advises developers on the importance of discussing their proposals with the planning authority and NatureScot (formerly known as Scottish Natural Heritage) and use of the EIA process to identify the environmental effects of development proposals and seek to prevent, reduce and offset any adverse effects in ecology and biodiversity.
PAN 61 (2001) Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems[36]	Good practice drainage guidance.

[33] Scottish Government (2013) PAN 1/2013: Environmental Impact Assessment [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-advice-note-1-2013-environmental-impact-assessment/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[34] Scottish Government (2006) PAN 51: Planning, Environmental Protection and Regulation [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-advice-note-pan-51-revised-2006-planning-environmental-protection/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[35] Scottish Government (2000) Planning for Natural Heritage: PAN 60 [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-60-natural-heritage (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[36] Scottish Government (2001) PAN 61: Planning and Sustainable Urban Drainage [Online] Available at: https://www2.gov.scot/Publications/2001/07/pan61 (Accessed 10/06/2022)

Title	Summary of Document
PAN 68 (2003) Design Statements[37]	This PAN covers the importance of design statements, and provides flexible guidance on their preparation, structure, and content. The PAN also outlines the principles underpinning the production of design statements, as expected by the Scottish Government.
PAN 73 (2005) Rural Diversification[38]	This PAN promotes sustainable diversification and economic development of rural communities.
Transport Assessment and Implementation: A Guide (2005)[39]	This document provides a best practice guide to help identify and deal with likely transport impacts.
PAN 75 (2005) Planning for Transport[40]	The objective of PAN 75 is to integrate development plans and transport strategies to optimise opportunities for sustainable development and create successful transport outcomes.
PAN 3/2010 Community Engagement[41]	This document provides advice on how to engage with local communities through the planning process.
PAN 1/2011 Planning and Noise[42]	This PAN provides advice on the role of the planning system in helping to prevent and/ or mitigate any potential adverse effects of noise. It promotes the principles of good acoustic design and promotes a sensitive approach to the location of new development.
PAN 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology[43]	The PAN is intended to inform local authorities and other organisations of how to process any archaeological scope of works within the planning process.

[37] Scottish Government (2003) PAN 68: Design Statement [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/planningadvice-note-68-design-statements/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[38] Scottish Government (2005) PAN 73: Rural Diversification [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/ruraldiversification-planning-advice/(Accessed 10/06/2022)
[39] The Scottish Government (2005). Transport Assessment and Implementation: A Guide [Online]. Available at: http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/media/1920/Transport-Assessment-and-Implementation-AGuide/pdf/transport_assessment.pdf?m=1459521044997 (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[40] Scottish Government (2005) PAN 75: Planning for Transport [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-advice-note-pan-75-planning-transport/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[41] Scottish Government (2010) PAN 3/2010: Community Engagement [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-advice-note-3-2010-community-engagement/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[42] Scottish Government (2011) PAN 1/2011: Planning and Noise [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/planning-advice-note-1-2011-planning-noise/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[43] Scottish Government (2011) PAN 2/2011: Planning and Archaeology [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/pan-2-2011-planning-archaeology/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)

Title	Summary of Document
Online Renewables Planning Advice - On Shore Wind Turbines (updated 2014)[44]	This Specific Advice Sheet provides an overview of the use of the carbon calculator in estimating the carbon savings resulting from wind farm developments. NB: Please note that this Specific Advice Sheet pre-dates NPF4, so the areas covered therein in relation to 'spatial framework', 'spatial planning' and 'areas of search' are no longer relevant.
Online Planning Advice on Flood Risk (2015)[45]	Provides advice on the role of the planning system and the assessment and management of flood risk.
Onshore wind planning: frequently asked questions (2016)[46]	Provides answers to a range of questions in relation to the planning considerations for onshore wind turbine development.

Letter from Chief Planner to all Heads of Planning in relation to energy targets and SPP (11 November 2015)

6.2.14 The letter reminds local planning authorities that the Scottish Government supports on-shore renewable energy development, including wind, particularly where community and shared ownership are possible. This policy support will continue even in a situation where renewable energy targets are reached.

6.3 Assessment of National Planning Policy

6.3.1 The Proposed Development would directly contribute to achieving the CO_2 emissions reduction targets, whilst diversifying the energy mix and adding to the renewable energy share. It is sited and designed to maximise the generation capacity and make the best use of the wind resource at the Site, through using modern, efficient turbines, whilst minimising the effects on the environment.

6.3.2 NPF4 identifies that communities will benefit from well-planned renewable energy development. The Proposed Development is located to limit the effects on the environment and amenity and protect important species and sites. It is considered that the Proposed Development will bring a direct benefit to the community by providing a Community Investment and Ownership Scheme, as outlined in Section 9 of this Statement and Chapter 15 of the accompanying EIA Report.

[44] Scottish Government (2014) Onshore Wind Turbines: Planning Advice [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-turbines-planning-advice/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[45] Scottish Government (2015) Flood Risk: Planning Advice [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/flood-riskplanning-advice/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)
[46] The Scottish Government (2016) Onshore wind planning: frequently asked questions [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/onshore-wind-planning-faq/ (Accessed 10/06/2022)

6.3.3 The Proposed Development is aligned with the provisions of NPF4, as it is considered that it makes a use of the natural wind resources to produce low carbon energy and diversify the energy mix. It is assessed to accord with the principle of sustainable development as it is designed and sited to minimise the effects on the environment, whilst bringing benefits to the local community and contributing to economic development.

6.3.4 The Proposed Development is fully in line with the presumption of sustainable development as set out in NPF4. It accords with this framework, having regard to environmental, social and economic considerations – the Proposed Development will provide low carbon, clean and reliable electricity, while having very limited effects on the environment. It will also have a positive effect on carbon savings and a significant positive effect when considered cumulatively with UK-wide renewable energy deployment.

6.3.5 The Proposed Development will create a number of employment opportunities within the construction sector and within the renewable energy industry supply chain.

6.3.6 The Proposed Development is in line with the principles set out in NPF4, as it will make a direct contribution to the renewable energy generation targets, it will expand the renewable energy capacity and will diversify the energy mix. As such it draws significant support from the framework.

6.3.7 Overall, NPF4 offers a high level of support to wind farm developments which are designed to make the best use of land and wind resources, whilst taking into account environmental and amenity matters, such as the Proposed Development. Furthermore, the Proposed Development has been assessed against the relevant local and national policy, and relevant legislation, and has been found acceptable in policy terms. As such, the Proposed Development is considered to fully comply with the principles of the newly adopted NPF4,

6.3.8 There is an overall thread of emerging national policy of in-principle support for extensions at the location of existing turbine infrastructure, to maintain the characteristics of the wider, undeveloped area. The presence of the existing Torrance Wind Farm and the intention to extend this infrastructure, through the Proposed Development, is in accordance with emerging national policy.

6.3.9 The context of national planning guidance is relevant to the consideration of this Proposed Development. The spatial framework and locational guidance for wind farm developments determines that the Proposed Development should be considered favourably when assessed against the national planning policy context.

6.4 Strategic Planning Policy

Strategic Development Plans

6.4.1 The Proposed Development lies within the Strategic Development Planning Authority ('SDPA'), for the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Strategic Development Planning Authority ('Clydeplan'), covering the Local Authority areas for:

- East Dunbartonshire;
- East Renfrewshire;
- Glasgow City;
- Inverclyde;
- North Lanarkshire;
- Renfrewshire;
- South Lanarkshire; and
- West Dunbartonshire.

Clydeplan[47]

6.4.2 The second Strategic Development Plan produced by SDPA ('the Clydeplan SDP2') was approved by Scottish Ministers on the 24th July 2017.

6.4.3 The Clydeplan SPD2 reiterates the Scottish Government's commitment to a low carbon economy through the reduction of carbon emissions, and the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

6.4.4 The Clydeplan SDP2 Policy 10 expresses support for onshore wind and accordingly directs the Local Authorities within their catchment to finalise detailed spatial framework maps for onshore wind and set out considerations that will apply to onshore wind proposals. As such, it is deemed that compliance with the Local Development Plan would, by virtue, extend to compliance with the Clydeplan SDP2.

6.4.5 Following the enactment of the Planning Act 2019, the duty to prepare a Strategic Development Plan was replaced by a duty to prepare a Regional Spatial Strategy, which will come into force following the approval of the National Planning Framework 4.

[47]Strategic Development Planning Authority (2017) *Clydeplan SDP2* [Online] Available at: https://www.clydeplan-sdpa.gov.uk/strategic-development-plan/current-plan/current-strategic-development-plan-july-2017 (Accessed 13/06/2022).

6.5 Local Planning Policy

The North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (2022)

6.5.1 The North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (NLLDP)[48] was adopted on 5 July 2022, superseding the North Lanarkshire Local Plan (2012)[49].

6.5.2 The overall strategic aim of NLLDP is to increase sustainable growth, promote regeneration and ensure North Lanarkshire becomes an even more 'successful place'. It sets out the Policies and Proposals to guide and meet North Lanarkshire's development needs over the next 5-10 years.

6.5.3 The NLLDP Vision highlights the importance of

- Enabling a continued transition to a low-carbon economy to mitigate climate change; and
- Improved environmental performance and building resilience against the effects of climate change.

6.5.4 The policies considered to be of particular relevance to the Proposed Development are outlined below. Some of these policies have been summarised, or where directly quoted are shown in *italics*. For full policy wording please refer to NLLDP:

Policy PROM ID2– Utilities Improvement

6.5.5 Policy PROM ID2 states that renewable energy developments will be supported in principle, subject to the assessment criteria listed in the Policy Table.

6.5.6 "All Planning Applications will be assessed for their suitability for being located in the Land Use Character Areas in which they are proposed in terms of specific protection and environmental qualities".

6.5.7 For onshore wind energy, the policy states that The Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Turbine Development in Glasgow and the Clyde Valley – North Lanarkshire and the resultant spatial strategy represented by Inset Maps 2, 4 and 5 in the Local Development Plan Map Book should be used to establish wind farm developments' locations and justify their suitability.

[48] North Lanarkshire Council (2021) *The North Lanarkshire Local Development Plan* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-03/NLLDP%20Non-Graphic%20Policy%20Document_0.pdf (Accessed 21/10/2022)

[49] North Lanarkshire Council (2012) North Lanarkshire Local Plan [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/NLC%20Local%20Plan%202012.pdf (Accessed 13/06/2022)

6.5.8 In addition, "It should be noted that the indicative area of 2km drawn around the urban area represents an area within which special consideration is required with respect to visual impact on communities. The actual extent of the area for consideration will depend on local topography, landscape character and the layout and built form".

Policy PROT A– Natural Environment and Green Network Assets

6.5.9 Policy PROT A states that in determining applications the Council will protect natural and resilient sustainable places by safeguarding natural heritage assets.

6.5.10 Regarding Category A1 areas (Internationally Designated), the Policy states:

"Development proposals likely to have a significant effect on a European site will be subject to an Appropriate Assessment. Where an Appropriate Assessment is unable to conclude that a development will not adversely affect the integrity of the site, development will only be permitted where there are no alternative solutions; there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest; and if compensatory measures are provided to ensure the overall coherence of the European site network is protected."

6.5.11 Regarding Category A2 areas (Nationally Designated), the Policy states:

"Development that affects a Site of Special Scientific Interest will only be permitted where an appraisal has demonstrated: the objectives of the designated area and the overall integrity of the area would not be compromised; or any significant adverse effects on the qualities for which the area has been designated are clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national importance.

When assessing suitability for woodland creation, applicants should refer to the Clydeplan Forestry and Woodland Strategy. Applicants should adhere to the Scottish Government's Control of Woodland Removal Policy with regards to any development proposal on land parcels containing woodland either in full or in part."

6.5.12 Regarding Category A3 areas (Locally Designated), the Policy states:

"Planning permission will only be granted for proposals potentially affecting Local Sites if it can be demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction that there will be no adverse impact or that any impacts can be mitigated in environmental terms relevant to the impact"

6.5.13 Regarding Category A5 areas (Protected Species), the Policy States:

"Development that significantly affects a species protected by law will only be permitted where an appraisal has demonstrated that the protected species would not be compromised; or any significant adverse effects on the protected species are mitigated through planning conditions or use of planning agreements to: facilitate protection of individual species members, reduce disturbance to a minimum and provide appropriate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of the species locally. Not all locations important for species are identified."

Policy PROT B– Historic Environment Assets

6.5.14 Policy PROT B states that in determining applications the Council will protect natural and resilient sustainable places by safeguarding historic environment assets. Development must not cause harm to the character and appearance of a site and its setting protected for its historic environment value, in order to gain planning permission or nay other relevant consent.

6.5.15 Regarding Category B1 areas (Internationally Designated), the Policy states:

"There will be a presumption against development which would have an adverse impact on the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site as defined on the Protection Map. There will be a presumption against development within the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Antonine Wall) World Heritage Site Buffer Zones which would have an adverse impact on the site and its setting, unless: mitigating action to the satisfaction of the Council in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland can be taken to redress the adverse impact; and there is no conflict with other Local Development Plan Policies."

6.5.16 Regarding Category B2 areas (Nationally Designated), the Policy states:

"Development shall not impact adversely upon important views to, from and within [Gardens and Designed Landscapes], or upon the site or setting of component features which contribute to their value.

Development shall preserve archaeological remains in situ and within an appropriate setting. Adverse impact on the integrity of [a Scheduled Monument] or its setting shall not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Development should avoid causing harm to the character or setting of [Historic Battlefields].

The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development shall be appropriate to the character and appearance of [Category A Listed Buildings] and its setting. There is a presumption against demolition or other works that adversely affect the special interest of a listed building or its setting."

6.5.17 Regarding Category B3 areas (Regionally/Locally Designated), the Policy states:

"The layout, design, materials, scale, siting and use of any development shall be appropriate to the character and appearance of [Category B and C Listed Buildings] and its setting. There is a presumption against demolition or other works that adversely affect the special interest of a listed building or its setting.

For Sites of Archaeological Interest, the aim should be to preserve in situ wherever feasible. The Council will weigh the significance of the archaeological resources and of any impacts upon them and their setting against other merits. An archaeological evaluation report may be required."

Policy PP 5– Purpose of Place

6.5.18 Policy PP5 seeks to support the countryside, prevent sporadic and isolated development, and protect and enhance local landscapes by only accommodating limited development (including agricultural diversification and extending existing businesses and settlements).

6.5.19 The policy states that "Assessment of appropriateness of any proposal for development, or change of use, within the Countryside, should include, but not be limited to:

- *support by a business plan, or statement justifying that the development is compatible with the Countryside;*
- *a statement that the proposal is not best suited to being located in a Centre, or General Urban Area, taking the Town Centres First Sequential Approach, where appropriate;*
- *a statement on the scale and nature of existing development in the Countryside;*
- *evidence that the development is an expansion of an existing business and/or settlement in the Countryside;*
- *evidence that the development is an expansion/replacement of an existing building or cluster of buildings in the Countryside;*
- *evidence that there is a specific locational requirement for the proposal;*
- *evidence that the proposal will result in significant economic benefit; and*
- *its impact on travel patterns and accessibility by sustainable modes of transport".*

Policy EDQ 1– Site Appraisal

6.5.20 Policy EDQ 1 requires all development proposals to be appraised in terms of the site and its surroundings to ensure it will integrate successfully into the local area and avoid harm to neighbouring amenity. In order to be concise, not all of the matters to be addressed in appraisals through Policy EDQ 1 are listed below, only those deemed to have relevance to the Development are listed. For the full list of matters, please refer to EDQ 1 in the NLLDP document.

6.5.21 "The matters to be addressed in the appraisal include but are not limited to

- massing, height, style, finishing materials of any building or buildings on the site and surrounding Land Use Character Area
- orientation and topography of the site and surrounding Land Use Character Area
- mixture of uses in the Land Use Character Area
- *public utilities, e.g. underground services (including the fibre network), drainage systems, overhead power lines*
- *ground stability and contamination on the site and surrounding Land Use Character Area*

- *existence and quality of connections and access including site and building entrances, roads, paths and visuals on the site and surrounding Land Use Character Area*
- *impacts associated with the holistic water environment and flood risk*
- *biodiversity of plants and animals on the site and surrounding Land Use Character Area*
- *heritage, or amenity value of buildings or structures above or below ground on the site and surrounding Land Use Character Area*
- *the nature and types of features to be safeguarded or enhanced on the site and surrounding Land Use Character Area*
- *in addition to the criteria set out here, proposals for renewable energy development must have regard to the considerations set out in Scottish Planning Policy paragraph 169."*

Policy EDQ 2– Specific Features for Consideration

6.5.22 Policy EDQ 2 states that for development in areas subject to hazards and other specific features, the Council will require Planning Applications to *"be accompanied by an assessment of how constraints affect sites dependant on the characteristics of the site, its surroundings and the form of development".*

6.5.23 The Policy outlines the following three categories which will be subject to such assessments:

- **Category EDQ 2A:** Hazardous Zones (HSE Hazard Consultation Zones, Flood Risk Areas, Contaminated Land Areas and Areas of Ground Instability);
- **Category EDQ 2B:** Utilities Infrastructure (Pipelines and Cables); and
- **Category EDQ 2C:** Management Areas (Air Quality Management Areas and Noise Management Areas).

Policy EDQ 3– Quality of Development

6.5.24 Policy EDQ 3 states that:

"Development will only be permitted where high standards of site planning and sustainable design are achieved. Planning Applications will need to demonstrate that the proposed development takes account of the site appraisal carried out as a requirement of Policies EDQ1 and, if appropriate, EDQ2".

6.5.25 The policy also lists various ways in which proposals must achieve high quality development. A full list of the requirements for achieving high quality development can be found in Policy EDQ 3 of the NLLDP however those most relevant are listed below. High quality development can be achieved by:

- "Moving towards a low-carbon economy, addressing resource efficiency, mitigation of and adaptation to the effects of Climate Change energy and waste issues in order to create a sustainable development with a low ecological footprint"
- "Mitigating any likely air quality, noise, or pollution impacts particularly in or adjacent to Air Quality or Noise Management Areas.".
- Ensuring that water body status is protected and, where possible, enhanced. … Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems should be adopted within site design and appropriate details, including during the construction phase, require to be submitted with any relevant planning application. Buffer strips may be required in respect of the water environment between a development and each watercourse."

- Ensuring "Adequate provision has been made for the development and maintenance of landscaped open space areas and amenity space and play provision, and for linking to and enhancing open spaces and green networks".

Supplementary Planning Guidance

6.5.26 In addition to the statutory development plans listed above, the following key Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents are also considered to be material planning considerations. The SPGs were originally designed to inform and support the NLLP (2012) however they remain in force following the adoption of NLLDP (2022), with the exception of references to NLLP (2012) policies. The SPGs are to be updated and/or replaces in due course to reflect new NLLDP Policies. The Council website states that *"this guidance aims to help you understand the key issues [for proposals]. …It also provides checklists for good practice and sets out how we will assess planning applications against the issues raised":*

SPG 1 – Landscaping

6.5.27 This SPG document (SPG1 – Landscaping[50]) was formed to support Policies DSP 4 and NBE 1 and 2 of NLLP and provides detailed guidance on the impact of development on the surrounding landscape and how to mitigate landscape effects. It outlines what a Landscape Scheme should include and when they are required for planning applications. SPG1 is structured as follows:

- **Landscaping:** Sets out the initial considerations for landscaping design of new developments in North Lanarkshire (e.g. what is the intent of the landscaping and how will the physical conditions of the site alter any landscaping decisions);
- **Hard Landscaping:** sets out guidance on how hard surfaces and materials can be appropriately integrated into proposals. This section covers in particular guidance on Surfacing, Walls and Fences, and Street Furniture.
- **Soft Landscaping:** sets out guidance on how soft landscaping can be used for buffering, softening at development edges, for providing screening, privacy, enclosure or shelter, and how they can provide character. This section goes into particular detail on Trees and Shrubs.
- **Grassed Areas:** outlines how grass areas form important elements in many developments and provides guidance on how to integrate grassland into developments and what to avoid.
- **Maintenance:** Details the maintenance requirements which must be adhered to and provides guidance on Good Maintenance Practice.

[50] North Lanarkshire Council (2009) *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/01%20Landscaping_0.pdf (Accessed 12/04/2022)

SPG 1A – Landscaping Species Supplement

6.5.28 This SPG document (SPG 1A: Landscaping Species Supplement[51]) is a species schedule which was formed as an addendum to SPG 1 Landscaping to further support Policies DSP 4 and NBE 1, 2 and 3 of NLLP. The SPG lists potentially appropriate species of Native Small Trees, Native Large Trees, Native Medium Trees, Non-Native Trees and Shrubs for in this region. The SPG also sets out how *"any landscape scheme should specify:*

- The density or spacing (no/ metric area);
- Species (English/ Latin or both);
- Size (whip, standard, height and/or spread); and
- Location (though use of referenced key) of any new planting".

SPG 7 - Assessing Development in the Rural Investment Area

6.5.29 This SPG document (SPG7: Assessing Development in the Rural Investment Area[52]) was formed to support Policy NBE 3B of NLLP and addresses key issues and obstacles for development in the Rural Investment Area (RIA). The SPG provides detailed advice regarding what may be considered acceptable development in the RIA in terms of and land use, materials and detailing, access & car parking, landscaping, biodiversity.

SPG 9 – Flooding and Drainage

6.5.30 This SPG document (SPG9: Flooding and Drainage[53]) was formed to support Policy DSP 4. The document "provide[s] information about flooding and flood risk reduction through sustainable flood risk management. Advise[s] of requirements for preparation and submission of Flood Risk Assessments and Drainage Assessments" and "Provide[s] guidance regarding the use and maintenance of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)".

6.5.31 SPG 9 outlines examples of design and types of sustainable drainage techniques for developers and also addresses the importance of the protection and enhancement of biodiversity when incorporating such measures.

[51] North Lanarkshire Council (2009) *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscaping Species Supplement* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/01A%20Landscaping%20supplement.pdf (Accessed 12/04/2022)
[52] North Lanarkshire Council (2010) *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Assessing Development in the Rural Investment Area* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/08%20Develop%20in%20the%20RIA.pdf (Accessed 12/04/2022).
[53] North Lanarkshire Council (2010) *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Flooding and Drainage* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/09%20Flooding%20and%20Drainage.pdf (Accessed 12/04/2022).

SPG 12 – Assessing Planning Applications for Wind Turbine Developments

6.5.32 SPG 12: Assessing Planning Applications for Wind Turbine Developments[54] supplements Policy EDI3 (A)2 from the NLLP, by providing more detailed advice and criteria for wind turbine developments.

6.5.33 The document "explains the requirements of planning applications for wind turbine developments" and "set[s] out how the Council will deal with such applications. It explains the factors that will be taken into account and seeks to provide clarity on what is not likely to be acceptable". Particular emphasis is placed in section C on areas of significant protection and potential constraints to wind development (e.g. Sites of Specific Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation and Scheduled Monuments).

6.5.34 The guidance also

- Aids in suitable site searching;
- Helps guide wind farm designs, particularly in terms of the number and height of turbines;
- Can help ensure that wind farm locations reflect the scale and character of the landscape within which they are proposed; and
- Can help ensure the appropriate supporting information is submitted with wind farm applications (e.g. Environmental Statement, Supporting Statement, A Transport Assessment, Community Engagement Statement).

SPG 15 – Good Design Toolkit

6.5.35 SPG 15: Good Design Toolkit[55] supports Policy DSP4 from the NLLP, by providing further guidance on the Council's requirements for all new development proposals to deliver high quality, well-designed places. The SPG summarises a range of tools which can be used to ensure the successful design of development and sets out how they can be implemented:

- Urban Design Framework;
- Community Engagement;
- Site Appraisal Checklist;
- Design Objectives;
- Design Briefs;
- Design Guides and Codes;
- Good Design Practice;
- Design and Access Statements;
- Concept Statements; and
- Masterplans.

[54] North Lanarkshire Council (2012) S*upplementary Planning Guidance: Assessing Planning Applications for Wind Turbine Developments* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/12%20Wind%20Turbine%20Development.pdf (Accessed 12/04/2022).
[55] North Lanarkshire Council (2010) *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Good Design Toolkit* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/15%20Good%20Design%20Toolkit.pdf (Accessed 12/04/2022).

SPG 20 - Biodiversity and Development

6.5.36 SPG 20: Biodiversity and Development[56] was formed to support Policy NBE 1 and 2 and DSP 4 of the NLLP. The SPG provides detailed information on the impact of development on biodiversity and guidance on the growing biodiversity requirements.

6.5.37 "It provides guidance on the issues to consider and practices to follow to protect and enhance biodiversity when:

- *preparing site development proposals,*
- *making a planning application and*
- *during site development so there is minimum net loss of biodiversity on site.*

6.5.38 The guidance seeks to help developers avoid breaching existing nature conservation legislation relating to the protection of habitats or species through site development."

6.5.39 The guidance breaks down the planning application process into 5 stages to clearly distinguish and outline the specific biodiversity requirements.

SPG 22 – Environmental Impact Assessment

6.5.40 SPG 22: Environmental Impact Assessment[57] was formed to support Policy NBE 1 and DSP 4 of the NLLP. The SPG provides detailed guidance for developers making applications which require an Environmental Impact Assessment. It also guides Development Management in assessing the environmental impacts of proposals.

The SPG is structured as follows:

- **A. Policy Context:** Sets out the policy context for EIA developments and how the process is important for protecting North Lanarkshire's environmental quality;
- **B. What is Environmental Impact Assessment:** sets out what the EIA process is and its main purpose;
- **C. When is Environmental Impact Assessment Required:** provides clarification on the type of projects which will always require EIA and those which only sometimes require EIA;
- **D. Screening:** explains Planning Authorities' statutory duty to consider development projects' need for EIA and how screening is undertaken;
- **E. Key Stages and Steps in the EIA Process:** outlines chronologically the key phases of the EIA process and the issues to be considered at each stage;
- **F. What is an Environmental Statement:** details what an environmental statement is what the statement should cover (e.g. how the environmental information was gathered and a description of the project);
- **G. Presentation of Environmental Statements:** provides advice on the structure and organisation of the Environmental Statement;

[56] North Lanarkshire Council (2011) S*upplementary Planning Guidance: Biodiversity and Development* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/20%20Biodiversity.pdf (Accessed 12/04/2022).
[57] North Lanarkshire Council (2011) *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Environmental Impact Assessment* [Online] Available at: https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-09/22%20Environmental%20Impact%20Assessment%20EIA.pdf (Accessed 12/04/2022).

- **H. Consultation and Publicity:** outlines which statutory consultees the planning authority must consult with on the Environmental Statement and explains the requirements for public accessibility;
- **I. What Happens Next:** details how the planning authority evaluates the Environmental Statement through reviewing the statement's information and analysis, considering the representations from statutory consultees and the public, and from considering any information provided by the Council's own specialists.

7 ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Principle of the Proposed Development

7.1.1 The principle of the Proposed Development is supported primarily through **North Lanarkshire's Local Development Plan 2022 (NLLDP).** The Proposed Development is a wind farm extension which carries the ability to significantly help meet carbon reduction and renewable energy targets not only locally, but on a national scale. The recently approved NPF4, shows strong favour for the continual deployment of large-scale renewable energy development and encourage LDPs to seek the development of renewable energy developments wherever possible across Scotland's Local Authorities.

7.1.2 This section of the statement will assess the Proposed Development's compliance with the relevant policies within the **NLLDP**.

7.1.3 The effects of the Proposed Development on environmental issues, including the character, appearance or general amenity of the area have been assessed throughout the various technical assessments which are summarised in the sections below and provided in full in the supporting appendices. The assessments undertaken have not identified any potential residual adverse effects on the environment or amenity and where potential concerns have been noted, appropriate mitigation is suggested within each assessment.

7.1.4 The Site is located on land with capacity to accept the Proposed Development, which was a key factor in the selection of the Site. Other factors resulting in selection of the Site included ease of access, topography, flood risk, separation from nearby heritage assets and other environmental designations and presence of existing screening, all of which are discussed in the following sections and in the various appendices accompanying the application. The layout has been subject to a number of iterations following consideration of a range of factors including comments raised during pre-application consultation and the environmental assessments that have been undertaken.

7.1.5 The principle of the Proposed Development is further supported by climate change and renewable energy policy and legislation at a national level, as is demonstrated within Sections 5 and 6 of this Statement.

7.1.6 In summary, the Site is considered to be a suitable location for the Proposed Development, with reference to the relevant requirements of **NLLDP Policy PROM D2, PROT A, PROT B, PROT C, PP5, EDQ 1, EDQ 2, EDQ 3**, as well as relevant Supplementary Guidance, issued by North Lanarkshire, and **NPF4.**

7.2 Landscape and Visual Impact

7.2.1 Policies **PROT A**, **PP5**, **EDQ 1, EDQ2** and **EDQ 3** of the **NLLDP** have been identified as relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development as it pertains to landscaping and visual impacts. In addition, the supplementary guidance given on Development in the Rural Investment Areas, Wind Turbine Development and Good Design have also been considered in the assessment of the Proposed Development. The policies cited above refer to landscaping, visual matters and wind farm development.

7.2.2 An LVIA has been prepared to accompany the Application. A 15km radius Study Area was adopted from the Proposed Development for the assessment of landscape and visual effects. These surveys were carried out during periods of good visibility.

7.2.3 Views from residential receptors, settlements, core paths, and minor roads within approximately 15 km of the turbines are the main visual receptors in the area and the design process specifically considered the likely visual effects from these receptors and properties, via a series of wireframes and site visits. The Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) indicates that the scale and visual footprint of the Proposed Development and surrounding projects is primarily contained within 15 km from the proposed turbines.

7.2.4 The LVIA includes a detailed residential visual amenity assessment (RVAA) of 21 properties within 2km of the Proposed Development.

7.2.5 The CLVIA also includes consideration of those wind energy developments already built, those consented but not yet built, those for which a detailed planning application has been submitted but not yet determined, and those for which an appeal has been lodged up to the 26th October 2022

7.2.6 It is to be noted that the Site incorporates trees, hedges and woodland along parts of its boundaries, which provides visual containment/screening, to the south of the site along the M8 corridor. In addition, some views are screened by already built developments and as a result of rising land.

7.2.7 The proposed development is considered to be well cited and the level of effects noted within the LVA is considered to be outweighed by the benefits a large-scale renewable energy scheme can bring, including enhancement and improvement of the biodiversity of the existing Landscape as well as helping meet wider local and national energy targets.

7.2.8 The Proposed Development would not exceed the cumulative capacity of the Plateau Moorland landscape, nor would it become the dominant characteristic of the landscape within the study area given the already established of operational wind farms in the local landscape. The Proposed Development would form a direct extension to the Existing Torrance Wind Farm I & II and would reflect the landscape character with operational wind farms.

7.2.9 Considering the proximity of the turbines to residential properties at 300 m to from 1.89 km, the horizontal extent of the array of turbines, and the blade tip height of the turbines above the properties, the significant visual effects would affect the living standards of Hill Farm and a number of properties within Harthill, Eastfield and Greenrigg settlements, when judged objectively and in the public interest.

7.2.10 The consolidation of wind farms within an existing 'wind farm landscape' in the Plateau Moorland, provides opportunity to reduce pressure elsewhere, and meet renewable energy targets.

7.2.11 The LVIA concludes that locally significant effects on landscape character and visual amenity are inevitable as a result of commercial wind energy development. Whilst the LVIA identifies some significant landscape and visual effects within 3.7 km radius of the Proposed Development, it is considered that overall, the landscape has the capacity to accommodate the effects identified.

7.2.12 The Proposed Development is therefore deemed compliant with the above policy criteria and supplementary guidance detailed in section 7.2.1 when considering landscaping and visual impact.

7.3 Ecology

7.3.1 Policies **PROM ID2, PROT A** and **EDQ1** of the **NLLDP** have been identified as relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development as it pertains to ecology. In addition, the supplementary guidance given on Biodiversity and Environmental Impact Assessments has also been considered in the assessment of the Proposed Development.

7.3.2 The cited policies above that developers must ensure that no significant adverse national and local conservation and biodiversity site designations, as well as statutorily protected species impacts occur to species or habitats, with particular regard being had for international.

7.3.3 Analysis and assessment of baseline ecological data have enabled the identification of appropriate mitigation and compensation measures to prevent, reduce, or offset potential adverse ecological effects, as well as enhancement measures to provide beneficial effects, where possible.

7.3.4 No significant ecological effects have been identified for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development, either alone or in combination with other developments. Embedded mitigation has been proposed to minimise potential effects during the construction phase and to reduce the likelihood of legal offences. Furthermore, opportunities for ecological enhancement are described within the oHMP, which would improve biodiversity in the locality.

7.3.1 Further information on ecology surveys and their conclusions are available in Chapter 10 of the EIA Report.

7.3.2 A finalised HMP would be provided and enforced via a suitably worded planning condition.

7.3.3 The Proposed Development is therefore deemed compliant with the above policy criteria and supplementary guidance detailed in section 7.3.1 when considering Ecology.

7.4 Ornithology

7.4.1 Policies **PROM ID2 EDQ 1**, **EDQ 2** and **EDQ 3** of the **NLLDP** have been identified as relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development as it pertains to ornithology. In addition, the supplementary guidance given on Biodiversity and Environmental Impact Assessments has also been considered in the assessment of the Proposed Development.

7.4.2 The supplementary guidance on Biodiversity and Development (SPG20) states that there should be "minimum net loss of biodiversity on site" and the guidance seeks to help developers avoid breaching existing nature conservation legislation relating to the protection of habitats or species through site development.

7.4.3 An assessment has been carried out to determine the potential for significant effects of the Proposed Development on Important Ornithological Features (IOFs).

7.4.4 Consultations were also undertaken with key stakeholders and consultees throughout the EIA process. Details of these consultation meetings are discussed within Chapter 11, section 11.1 of the Environmental Statement.

7.4.5 The key issues for the assessment of potential ornithological effects relating to the Proposed Development are:

- Direct loss of breeding, foraging and/or roosting habitat through construction of the Proposed Development;
- Habitat modification due to change in land cover and consequent effects on bird populations and activity;
- Displacement of birds as a result of disturbance pressures associated with construction or decommissioning activity, turbine operation and maintenance, or visitor disturbance. This also includes barrier effects;
- Death or injury through collision with turbine blades or other types of infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development; and
- Cumulative effects on SPA and/or Natural Heritage Zone (NHZ) populations, resulting from construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development in conjunction with other developments that may also impact on the same populations.

7.4.6 No significant effects were predicted on any IOFs, and therefore no specific mitigation measures have been proposed.

7.4.7 It is also shown within Chapter 11 of the Environmental Statement, that by implementing the embedded measures discussed within this Chapter of the Environmental Statement, good practice will be followed during construction and the magnitude of effects of the Proposed Development on IOFs both alone and in combination with other schemes have been assessed as being of low to negligible magnitude, and thus non-significant in terms of the EIA Regulations.

7.4.8 The Proposed Development is therefore deemed compliant with the above policy criteria and supplementary guidance detailed in section 7.4.1 when considering Ornithology.

7.5 Hydrology

7.5.1 Policies **PROM ID2**, **PROT A**, **EDQ 1**, **EDQ 2** and **EDQ 3** of the **NLLDP** have been identified as relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development as it pertains to hydrology, flooding and drainage. In addition, the supplementary guidance given on Flooding and Drainage and Environmental Impact Assessments has also been considered in the assessment of the Proposed Development.

7.5.1 Chapter 14 of the Environmental Statement has assessed the likely significance of effects of the Proposed Development on hydrology and hydrogeology resources. The key issues for the assessment of potential hydrological effects relating to the Proposed Development include short-term (construction) and long-term (operation and decommissioning) effects. The short-term and long-term effect have been assessed in further detail within Section 14.3 of Chapter 14 of the Environmental Statement.

7.5.2 All turbine infrastructure associated with the Proposed Development is located within the sub catchment of How Burn which lies within the River Almond catchment. All turbine infrastructure is located out with areas identified as medium to high risk of flooding from all sources. A small area of the Proposed Development where a recreational footpath is proposed is located within the Barbauchlaw sub catchment within the River Avon catchment.

7.5.3 The Proposed Development has been assessed as having the potential to result in effects of negligible to minor significance. Given that only effects of moderate significance or greater are considered significant in terms of the EIA Regulations, the potential effects on hydrology and hydrogeology are not considered to be significant.

7.5.4 The Proposed Development is therefore deemed compliant with the above policy criteria and supplementary guidance detailed in section 7.5.1 when considering Hydrology.

7.6 Archaeology and Cultural Heritage

7.6.1 Relevant criteria of Policy **PROM ID2**, **PROT A, PROT B and EDQ 1,** as well as the Supplementary Guidance given on Wind turbine Development and Good Design are considered in the design and assessment of the Proposed Development in terms of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.

7.6.1 The requirements of the cited policies are to ensure that any development does not have a significant adverse impact, either individually or cumulatively, upon receptors of built heritage significance, or upon areas identified as regionally or locally important archaeological or historic sites.

7.6.2 The effects of the Proposed Development on archaeology and cultural heritage have been assessed in Chapter 9 of the EIA Report and the accompanying Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment. This Planning and Design Statement relies on the expert conclusions contained within these documents to determine the effects of the Proposed Development on important historic sites and features.

7.6.3 There are likely to be direct effects upon three undesignated assets through the excavation of turbine foundations and associated hardstanding, cable trenching, access tracks, recreational paths and forestry felling. Assets HA-1, a series of dry stone post-Medieval boundary walls, HA-2, a section of Post-Medieval railway line and remains associated with Netherton Colliery, located immediately north of the Proposed Development site are likely to be disturbed by construction activities.

7.6.4 These effects are not considered to be significant, however as archaeology is a finite and irreplaceable resource, mitigation is recommended to ensure avoidance or preservation by record. Mitigation through micro siting of infrastructure away from these assets, or through a programme of pre-construction recording, evaluation trenching or alternatively, watching brief during the construction phase would be sufficient to reduce construction impacts to negligible magnitude, resulting in a residual effect of negligible significance.

7.6.5 There is considered to be one significant indirect (settings) effect. Significant effects are limited to the Category B Listed Building LB14553, located 1.2 km north of the Proposed Development, in the centre of Blackridge, however the Proposed Development would introduce turbines which could for some alter the appreciation or experience of this asset. The assessment states that there are no other significant effects likely upon Cultural Heritage receptors in the surrounding historic environment.

7.6.6 The Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment indicates that the Core Study Area has low potential to contain assets pre-dating the Medieval period.

7.6.7 The EIA Report concludes that there would be no significant direct effects likely upon archaeological features as a result of the Proposed Development. As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore deemed compliant with the above policy criteria and supplementary guidance detailed in section 7.6.1 when considering Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.

7.7 Noise

7.7.1 Relevant criteria of Policy **PROM ID2**, **PP 5**, **EDQ 1**, **EDQ2** and **EDQ 3**, as well as the Supplementary Guidance given on Wind turbine Development and Good Design are considered in the design and assessment of the Proposed Development in terms of potential for noise and noise disturbance.

7.7.2 The requirements of the cited policies are to ensure that any development does not have a significant adverse impact upon noise receptors. Policy PP 5 specifically supports high quality developments which mitigate *"any likely air quality, noise, or pollution impacts particularly in or adjacent to Air Quality or Noise Management Areas."*

7.7.3 A noise assessment was undertaken to evaluate the effects of noise from the Proposed Development on nearby noise-sensitive receptors during construction, operation and decommissioning. The aim of the assessment was to predict the levels of noise potentially produced by the Proposed Development at the nearest noise sensitive receptors and assess these against relevant standards and guidelines.

7.7.4 Construction noise will be limited in duration and confined to working hours as specified by the Council and therefore can be adequately controlled through the application of good practice measures and secured by planning condition. This will ensure that any noise from during construction will be adequately controlled.

7.7.5 Predicted levels of construction noise are below the daytime lower threshold of 65 dB(A) at all receptors.

7.7.6 The effect of operational noise has been assessed in accordance with ETSU-R-97 and in line with current best practice (i.e. the GPG). It has been shown that the Proposed Development would comply with the requirements of ETSU-R-97 at all receptor locations. The cumulative effects of the Proposed Development in conjunction with nearby wind energy developments either operational, consented or the subject of a current planning application were taken into consideration in the above assessment, in accordance with ETSU-R-97 and the GPG.

7.7.7 Noise during decommissioning will be of a similar nature to that of construction and will be managed to ensure compliance with best practice, legislation, and guidelines current at the time.

7.7.8 Following the application of specific mitigation, no significant construction, operational or decommissioning noise effects are predicted to occur as a result of the Proposed Development.

7.7.9 The Proposed Development is therefore considered to be compliant with the relevant policy criteria and supplementary guidance detailed in section 7.71.

7.8 Traffic and Transport

7.8.1 Policies **PROM ID2** and **PP 5** of the **NLLDP** have been identified as relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development as it pertains to traffic and transport. In addition, the supplementary guidance given on Developments in Rural Area, Wind Turbine Development and Good Design have also been considered in the assessment of the Proposed Development.

7.8.2 Chapter **Error! Reference source not found.** of the EIA Report has assessed the impact of the Proposed Development on the Traffic & Transportation resource within the area surrounding the Site. This has included an assessment of the impact of increased traffic during construction of the Proposed Development on roads within the local area, focussing on those roads which form the Abnormal Load Route, General Construction Traffic Route and Potential Route from Quarry.

7.8.3 A detailed overview of the predicted increase in traffic during the construction phase was undertaken, this identified the peak month of construction as Month 4 and predicted that total traffic would increase by 101 vehicle movements per day during this month which includes 4 HGV movements. A further 119 HGV daily HGV movements will occur on four non-consecutive days when concrete is delivered.

7.8.4 Two 'moderate' and significant effects were identified, these were as a result of the predicted increase in HGVs on the B7066 and B718 during concrete delivery and during the cumulative scenario. Mitigation measures were proposed, which primarily consists of a CTMP. If these mitigation measures are implemented, then the residual effect is reduced to 'minor' and not significant in all cases.

7.8.5 The assessment considers that by applying the mitigation measures contained within, the magnitude of effects, both individually and cumulatively, would be low in magnitude and non-significant, in terms of EIA Regulations.

7.8.6 The Proposed Development is therefore deemed compliant with the above policy criteria and supplementary guidance detailed in section 7.8.1 when considering Traffic and Transport.

7.9 Forestry

7.9.1 Policies **PROM ID2**, **PROT A and PP 4** of the **NLLDP** have been identified as relevant for the assessment of the Proposed Development as it pertains to forestry and woodland. In addition, the supplementary guidance given on Biodiversity, Development in the Rural Investment Area and Environmental Impact Assessments has also been considered in the assessment of the Proposed Development.

7.9.2 Through design, the felling requirements have been minimised for the turbines within Netherton Woodland, through the keyhole design and access tracks utilising open ground within the woodland. Design of layout has avoided the NWSS areas of woodland.

7.9.3 In accordance with CoWRP, there is a requirement to provide compensatory planting. Following this guidance, the Applicant is committed to providing compensatory planting for 6.65 ha. Woodland creation would require approval by SF and will meet the requirements of UKFS.

7.9.4 All areas of woodland to be felled are of a tree size suitable for timber harvesting. The proposal is for a fell a keyhole design to minimise the area of permanent woodland loss. With adherence to UKFS and timely CP there is no adverse effect to forestry.

7.9.5 The Proposed Development is therefore considered to be compliant with the relevant criteria of Polices and Supplementary Guidance outlined in section 7.91 of this Planning Statement.

7.10 Socio-Economics

7.10.1 Policy **ID2, EDQ3** and **PP5** states that the SLLDP will support sustainable economic growth and regeneration. In addition, the supplementary guidance on Wind Turbine Developments and Good Design are relevant to this assessment. The effects of the Proposed Development on socio-economics have been assessed in Chapter 15 of the EIA Report.

7.10.2 Chapter 15 of the EIA report concludes that the renewables industry is an important economic asset to the UK and Scotland and supports a substantial and growing number of employment opportunities. Although not significant in terms of the EIA Regulations, the Proposed Development will further contribute to the positive economic effect of renewable energy, and associated skills base within the UK and Scotland. The contributions of the Proposed Development to the local community fund will be a valuable contribution to the community of the local area however, not significant in terms of EIA Regulations.

7.10.3 Socio-economic benefits are presented for further consideration in Section 9 of this Statement.

7.11 Geology

7.11.1 Relevant criteria of Policy **PROM ID2, EDQ 2,** and **EDQ 3** are relevant in the design and assessment of the Proposed Development when considering geology, soil and peat. The Supplementary guidance given on Wind Turbine Development is also considered relevant during this assessment.

7.11.2 The supplementary guidance given on Wind Turbine Development states that: "Wind farm development on soils which hold large stocks of carbon, for example peat, can potentially lead to carbon losses. Any potential wind farm developments must be designed to minimise soil disturbance when building and maintaining roads and tracks, turbine bases and other infrastructure to ensure that the carbon balance savings of the scheme are maximised".

7.11.3 Chapter 13 provides an appraisal on the effect of Torrance Wind Farm Extension II (the Proposed Development) on the geology, soils, and peat within the Study Area detailed within section 13.3.3. of Chapter 13.

7.11.4 Chapter 13 of the Environmental Statement concluded that no significant peat deposits are present on the Site. Therefore, the requirement for the completion of an Outline Peat Management Plan (OPMP) and Peat Slide Risk Assessment (PSRA) as part of this EIA Report has been scoped out of this assessment and as a result, no significant peat disturbance will take place during the construction of the Proposed Development.

7.11.5 There is potential however for contaminated land to be present at the Site, associated with former mining activities at the Site. As a result, ground investigations should be undertaken in conjunction with the coal mining site investigation to determine the presence of any potential contaminative sources and to allow for a suite of chemical testing to determine ground conditions and the presence of any contamination.

7.11.6 Following the implementation of mitigation measures as detailed in Table 13.7 of Chapter 13, the significance of impact would be reduced such that the residual effects associated with contaminated land will be not significant in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

7.11.7 As such, the Proposed Development complies with the relevant criteria and guidance detailed within section 7.11.1.

7.12 Other Issues

Shadow Flicker Assessment

7.12.1 Predictions of shadow flicker have been calculated for receptors located within a Study Area based on the calculated area over which shadows from the turbines may be cast, limited to a distance of 1,700 m (10 x the rotor diameter) from each turbine. It has been found that there are 1,588 receptors within the shadow flicker study area with the potential to experience shadow flicker.

7.12.2 Implementation of appropriate mitigation will ensure that shadow flicker levels remain below the recommended threshold at all neighbouring properties, such that shadow flicker effects due to the operation of the Proposed Development are not significant as per the EIA Regulations.

7.12.3 No shadow flicker effects will occur during construction or decommissioning, and as such shadow flicker due to construction or decommissioning of the Proposed Development is not significant as per the EIA Regulations.

7.12.4 The effect of shadow flicker has been assessed using appropriate guidance in respect of the operational period, and effects are considered to be not significant in terms of the EIA Regulations and as a result, complies with **Policy PROM ID2** and the Supplementary Guidance given on Wind turbine Development.

7.13 Summary of Compliance

7.13.1 The Principle of the Development fully accords with the objectives of the NLLDP for achieving sustainable development and economic growth whilst safeguarding the environment. The Proposed Development has adopted a design that minimises the effects on the environment and amenity, through various mitigation measures, whilst maintaining its economic viability.

7.13.2 A full EIA Report has been submitted which assesses the effects of the Proposed Development and accompanies this Application. The conclusions of the EIA Report determine that no significant conflict with any relevant NLLDP policies exists.

8 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

North Lanarkshire Council Climate Emergency

8.1.1 North Lanarkshire Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and has set a target of net-zero for North Lanarkshire as both a council and an area by 2030.The Council have produced the first of a series of climate-related reports to be published, the Climate Plan ACT2030[58], which encompasses the climate and biodiversity emergency, emissions across North Lanarkshire and NCC, carbon management and specific targets for reductions.

Renewables, Recovery, and Reaching Net Zero

8.1.2 The National Infrastructure Commission ('the NIC'), whose remit is to advise the Government on major long-term infrastructure challenges, published Renewables, Recovery and Reaching Net Zero in August 2020[59]. The report states that delivering a *'highly renewable electrical system is the best way to deliver low cost, low carbon electricity'* and predicts that the demand for electricity in the UK will increase in the coming years. The NIC advises that in order to tackle the climate crisis and provide low-cost electricity for consumers, 65% of Britain's electricity should be provided by renewable sources by 2030. The report emphasizes the importance of ensuring that there is an energy generation mix of both wind and solar to effectively balance supply and demand throughout the day and across the year.

[58]North Lanarkshire Council (2021) Climate Plan Action on Climate Together 2030 [online] Available at: Climate Plan (northlanarkshire.gov.uk) (Accessed 21/10/2022)

[59] National Infrastructure Commission (2020) Renewables, Recover and Reaching Net Zero [Online] Available at: https://nic.org.uk/studies-reports/renewables-recovery-and-reaching-net-zero/ (Accessed 15/11/2022)

British Energy Security Strategy

8.1.3 The British Energy Security Strategy ('BSS') was published by the UK Government on 7 April 2022. The BSS focuses on energy supply and states that in the future nuclear will have an expanded role and that renewables have an important role: the foreword states:

> "Accelerating the transition away from oil and gas then depends critically on how quickly we can roll out new renewables.
>
> The growing proportion of our electricity coming from renewables reduces our exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets. Indeed, without the renewables we are putting on the grid today, and the green levies that support them, energy bills would be higher than they are now. But now we need to be bolder in removing the red tape that holds back new clean energy developments and exploit the potential of all renewable technologies."

8.1.4 With regard to wind, the BSS notes there is currently over 14 GW of onshore wind in the UK and the Government states that it is one of the cheapest forms of renewable power.

9 BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

9.1.1 This section summarises the key benefits that the Proposed Development will provide, whilst Chapter 15 of the Environmental Statement evaluates the effects of the Proposed Development on the socio-economic, recreation and land-use resources.

Electricity Generation

9.1.2 The Proposed Development will have a generation capacity of approximately 26.4 MW low carbon electricity every year.

Capital Expenditure

9.1.3 Based on the BiGGAR Economics Report by Renewable UK[60] the anticipated Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) is £1.32 m per MW. On the basis that the Proposed Development has an expected installed capacity of up to 26.4 MW, a total CAPEX of the order of £34.8 m, would be expected.

9.1.4 For the Proposed Development, annual Operational Expenditure (OPEX) is expected to be in the region of £1.6 million per annum (based on a capacity of 26.4 MW). Of this total spend, the report estimates 42% will be spent in the local area, which would include business rates and land agreements with the local landowner, as well as a proportion of the maintenance costs. 87% of the total operation and maintenance expenditure will likely be within the UK.

[60] RenewableUK (2015) Onshore Wind: Economic Impacts in 2014 [Online] Available at: https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.renewableuk.com/resource/resmgr/publications/reports/onshore_economic_benefits_re.pdf (Accessed 13/06/2022)

Employment Opportunities

9.1.5 It is anticipated that a temporary workforce peaking at 60 people will be employed during the 12-month construction period. Calculated by 'job years', one individual working for 12 months would result in 1 job years; therefore, 60 individuals working during the 12-month construction period represents 60 job years.

Community Benefit Fund

9.1.6 The Scottish Government has emphasised the importance of communities benefitting from renewable energy generation, including through community benefit funds and shared ownership as outlined the Scottish Energy Strategy[61].

9.1.7 The Proposed Development will contribute £5,000 per MW installed capacity. This will result in an annual value of up to £132,000 per year. With a 40-year operational period, this will provide up to £5.28 million in community benefit.

Shared Ownership

9.1.8 The Applicant is also committed to the concept of shared ownership for communities near our wind farms. The Applicant is keen to consult the community around a shared ownership opportunity with this wind farm. Further information can be found in the Scottish Government's Shared Ownership Good Practice Guidance document. It is recommended that local communities who are interested in the shared ownership opportunity should seek advice and guidance from Local Energy Scotland.

10 PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSIONS

10.1.1 The Applicant has submitted an Application for the construction and operation of a wind farm and associated infrastructure, with a generation capacity of up to 26.4 MW, at a site within the Local Authority boundary of North Lanarkshire Council, with an operating period of up to 40 years. The Application and this Statement have been prepared in accordance with all relevant legislation, policy and guidance.

10.1.2 This Statement provides a detailed assessment of the Proposed Development against the policies identified in Chapter 5: Energy and Planning Policy of the EIA Report. Although the documents are complementary, the planning chapter of the EIA Report simply identifies the relevant legislative and planning framework for the Proposed Development to inform other chapters of the EIA Report and the Planning Statement, whilst the Planning Statement contains an assessment of the acceptability of the Proposed Development in the context of the legislative and planning framework identified.

[61] Scottish Government (2017) The future of energy in Scotland: Scottish energy strategy [Online] Available at: https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-energy-strategy-future-energy-scotland-9781788515276/ (Accessed 13/06/2022)

10.1.3 The Proposed Development has been fully considered against all relevant National and Local Planning policies. Care has been taken in the design of the Proposed Development to avoid unacceptable environmental and amenity effects, whilst ensuring that the Proposed Development can make a significant contribution to the UK's requirement for renewable energy generation.

10.1.4 Following a detailed assessment of the principle of the Proposed Development and the likely effects that it will have on the environmental receptors; the Proposed Development has been found to be in compliance with the relevant national and local policy on low carbon and renewable energy development.

10.1.5 It is integral to planning decision-making that a balancing exercise has to occur in respect of considering the benefits of development against the impacts. In this case, there are clear benefits which arise from the renewable energy credentials of the Proposed Development which clearly outweigh the impacts, including:

- Contribution to international and national renewable energy targets;
- Reduction of carbon emissions; and
- Production of clean energy and energy security.

10.1.6 These considerations must be given significant weight in the planning balance, a point reinforced in Policy 2 of NPF4.

10.1.7 Scotland is also legally bound through the Climate Change Scotland Act 2009 (as amended) to reduce carbon emissions and through Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC to increase electricity consumption from renewable resources. The Proposed Development would contribute significantly towards meeting these requirements and would also be fully supported by energy policy as it would assist in replacing outdated energy infrastructure and the transition to a low carbon economy.

10.1.8 It is central to the consideration of planning applications for renewable energy to understand that Scotland and North Lanarkshire Council have declared a climate emergency. This cannot be understated and should drive towards a positive determination of this Application.

10.1.9 Notably, the environmental effects have been comprehensively considered in the accompanying EIA Report, and it is determined that with appropriate mitigation, these effects would mainly be not significant in EIA terms.

10.1.10 Whilst significant effects have been identified in respect of some matters, for example Landscape and Visual, Peat, and Shadow Flicker, taking into account other policy considerations such as renewable energy targets, socio-economic benefits, peatland restoration, and the context provided by national and local policies the Proposed Development is considered in overall terms compliant with these policies and considerations.

10.1.11 The Proposed Development is consistent with the presumption in favour of the aim of NPF4 to achieve a low carbon place.

10.1.12 In accordance with the Planning Act, the Proposed Development should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This Statement demonstrates that the Proposed Development complies with the relevant policies of the NLLDP, most notably including an in-principle support for the type of development under Policy PROM ID2 & Policy PROT A. It also demonstrates how the Proposed Development fits an agenda of addressing the climate emergency at all levels. It is therefore respectfully requested that this Application is granted consent.