

Pennant Walters Ltd

MYNYDD LLANHILLETH

Design and Access Statement



Pennant Walters Ltd

MYNYDD LLANHILLETH

Design and Access Statement

TYPE OF DOCUMENT (VERSION) CONFIDENTIAL

PROJECT NO. UK-62281427

DATE: AUGUST 2024

WSP

Kings Orchard 1 Queen Street Bristol BS2 0HQ Phone: +44 117 930 6200

WSP.com

QUALITY CONTROL

Remarks	First draft	Final
Date	26.08.24	03.09.24
Prepared by	Edward Purnell	Edward Purnell
Signature		
Checked by	David Kenyon	David Kenyon
Signature		
Authorised by	David Kenyon	David Kenyon
Signature		
Project number	UK-62281427	UK-62281427
Report number	1	1
File reference	DAS.Rpt.001	DAS.Rpt.002
Remarks	First draft	Final

CONTENTS

115

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	BACKGROUND	1
1.2	PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT	1
1.3	APPRAOCH TO THE DESIGN	2
1.4	ONSHORE WIND AND NATIONAL POLICYIN	2
2	SUMMARY OF THE PROSPOED DEVELOPMENT	4
2.1	THE LOCATION OF THE PROSPOED MYMYDD LLANHILLETH WIND FARM	4
2.2	THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	4
2.3	DEVELOPMENTS OF NATINAL SIGNIFICANCE	5
3	OBJECTIVES	7
3.1	THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	7
4	SITE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS	8
4.1	SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT	8
4.2	THE DEVELPOMENT PLAN	8
	FUTURE WALES	8
4.3	LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS	9
	TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES	9
	BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES	10
5	DESIGN EVOLUTION	13
5.1	INTRODUCTION	13
5.2	SITE SELECTION	13

5.3	DESIGN	15
	DESIGN ITERATIONS	15
	MICRO-SITING	17
5.4	PUBLIC INVOLVMENT AND CONSULTATION	17
	INTRODUCTION	17
	SCOPING REPORT	18
	SCOPING DIRECTION	18
	CONSULTATION	18
6	THE PROPOSAL	20
6.1	INTRODUCTION	20
6.2	CHARACTER	21
	WIND FARM DESIGN	21
	Turbines	21
	Foundations	21
	Substation	21
	SITE CONTEXT	22
	CULTURAL HERITAGE SETTING	22
6.3	ACCESS	23
	SITE ACCESS	23
	CONSTRUCTION	23
	Site Access	23
	Onsite access	23
	OPERATION	24
	ACCESS FOR ALL	24
6.4	MOVEMENT	24
6.5	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	25
	RENEWABLE ENERGY	25
	AGRICULTUTRAL LAND	25
	LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT	25
	BIODIVERSITY	26

	WATER ENVIRONMENT	26
6.6	COMMUNITY SAFETY	26
6.7	RESPONDIG TO THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT	26
7	CONCLUSION	28
	SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESIGN	28

TABLES

Table 4-1 - Torfaen County Borough Council Local Development Plan policies	9
Table 4-2 - Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Local Development Plan policies	10
Table 5-1 – Summary of main factors considered in site selection	13

FIGURES

Figure 2-1 - Location Plan	4
Figure 2-2 - Site Layout	5
Figure 6-1 - Objectives of Good Design	20

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been produced for the purpose of describing the approach taken by the Applicant (Pennant Walters) to the design of the Proposed Development which is a wind farm for up to seven turbines located on Mynydd Llanhilleth on a site located mainly within Torfaen County Borough Council, with the western part lying within the authority of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

The report identifies relevant planning policy relating both to design and to access at the national and local level. It explains the considerations given by the Applicant when selecting the site and also how the design has evolved in response to environmental and technical surveys, guided by appropriate planning policy.

The Proposed Development is then assessed against the standards for Good Design which are contained in Planning Policy Wales and which are consistent with the Welsh Government's guidance for Design and Access Statements (DAS).

Contact name Edward Purnell

Contact details 07773 476 599 | edward.purnell@wsp.com

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared by WSP UK Ltd (WSP) on behalf of Pennant Walters Ltd (the Applicant). The DAS forms part of a suite of documents supporting a planning application for the development of up to seven wind turbines located at Mynydd Llanhilleth, to east of Brynithel and Llanhilleth and west of Talywain, Pontypool (from here on referred to as the Proposed Development). The site is within the mainly within the authority of Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC), with the western part lying within the authority of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BCGBC) (referred to as the Proposed Development from here on). The application has been submitted to Welsh Government, via Planning and Environmental Decisions Wales (PEDW), to be considered as a Development of National Significance (DNS).
- 1.1.2. This DAS should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Planning Statement , which sets out the planning policy context for how the application's design and access issues have been taken into account, and the Environmental Statement (ES), which sets out an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.3. This DAS has been prepared in line with the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 which sets out the requirements regarding the contents of a DAS and reflects the objectives of good design set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Welsh Government, 2024) and Technical Advice Note 12: Design (TAN 12) (Welsh Government, 2016) . The DAS is informed by the guidance in Design and Access Statements in Wales (Welsh Government, 2017).

1.2 PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 1.2.1. The DAS explains the design rationale for the wind farm, providing an explanation of the design principles and concepts that have informed the Proposed Development (as described in ES Chapter 3: Scheme Need, Alternatives and Iterative Design Process and ES Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Development of the ES), and how access issues have been taken into consideration. The DAS is structured as follows:
 - Section 1: Introduction provides background information on DDASs, the approach to design, and renewable energy policy background;
 - Section 2: Summary of the Proposal provides a summary of the site location, Proposed Development, and the DNS regime;
 - Section 3: Vision sets out the vision for the Proposed Development;
 - Section 4: Site and Context Analysis sets out the site's context and the relevant planning policy;
 - Section 5: Design Development summarises the factors that were considered in the design process; and

Section 6: The Proposal – shows how the Proposed Development responds to PPW's requirements for good design and highlights how the design process has produced an appropriate scheme in relation to the planning policy context

1.3 APPROCH TO THE DESIGN

- 1.3.1. The design process involved in formulating the layout of the Proposed Development has been led by a combination of engineering requirements and environmental considerations in order to produce an appropriate layout in terms of function and energy yield, whilst trying to avoid or reduce environmental effects.
- 1.3.2. The Proposed Development has been developed with environmental considerations at the forefront of both site selection and design. This is demonstrated through the site selection process which ensures that technical, environmental and economic criteria are considered. Other factors that have guided the site design have included planning policy and existing infrastructure.
- 1.3.3. A detailed understanding of the existing environment (including land use, infrastructure, ecology, hydrology, ornithology, noise and archaeology) helped to ensure a holistic approach to the design of the wind farm. The design has also been informed by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which has considered the likely significant effects on a range of environmental receptors. The findings of the EIA are contained in the Environmental Statement (ES). Where relevant this DAS refers to the findings of the ES.

1.4 ONSHORE WIND AND NATIONAL POLICY

- 1.4.1. The need to address climate change is embedded in law. The Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended) requires the UK to achieve a 100% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, otherwise known as net zero, in 2050. Welsh Ministers are bound to deliver net zero in 2050 under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which also requires Welsh Ministers to produce a plan to show how Wales will meet the reductions in GHG required for each five-year period to 2050.
- 1.4.2. In September 2017 the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs announced to the Welsh Assembly that it was setting a target of generating 70% of Wales' electricity consumption from renewable energy by 2030 and a target for one Gigawatt of renewable electricity capacity in Wales to be locally owned by 2030. This target is embedded in PPW and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (which is discussed in more depth in the following section). In January 2023 the Welsh Government (Welsh Government, 2023a) announced an updated target to meet 100% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035 and to achieve 1.5GW of renewable energy capacity within local ownership by 2035. This has now been adopted (Welsh Government, 2023b).
- 1.4.3. The Welsh Government's Energy Generation in Wales 2021 report published in 2022 assessed the percentage of energy consumption provided by renewables to be at 55% (against the target of 70%).
- 1.4.4. The Welsh Government recognises the importance of wind power in meeting the renewable targets for 2030 and to ensure that the necessary carbon reductions are achieved on the path to net zero in 2050.
- 1.4.5. As the effects of climate change continue to emerge, the UK Government has produced even further documentation calling for the creation of more renewable energy within the UK. This can be seen through the production of documents such as the Powering Up Britain March 2023 Energy

Security Secretary Statements and Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) which are seeking to encourage renewable energy development within the UK.

- 1.4.6. The Carbon Budget Delivery Plan (March 2023) identified that the UK would not be able to meet the requirements of the Sixth Carbon Budget, barely missing its target by 3% (reaching 97% of the required carbon savings by 2037) (page 15). Therefore, in order for the UK to meet such targets, more renewable energy development is needed and stresses how important such developments are for the UK.
- 1.4.7. 1.4.7 Renewable energy also provides much needed energy security to the UK, which has become more of a pressing issue due to climate change, international politics and resource supply as identified within the British Energy Security Strategy (2022).

2 SUMMARY OF THE PROSPOED DEVELOPMENT

2.1 THE LOCATION OF THE PROSPOED MYNYDD LLANHILLETH WIND FARM

- 2.1.1. The Site is approximately 300m east of Llanhilleth. The village of Brynithel is located approximately 500m to the south west of the Site at its closest point at Blaencuffin Road.
- 2.1.2. The Proposed Development would be located on the summit and upper slopes of Mynydd Llanhilleth and comprises a former quarry and associated area of coniferous woodland across its southern extents and intensively managed species-poor grassland, located within the high ground between the Afon Valley to the east and the Ebbw Fach Valley to the west.
- 2.1.3. The site location is shown in **Figure 2-1** Site Location below.



Figure 2-1 - Location Plan

2.2 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

2.2.1. The Proposed Development is a wind farm consisting of a maximum of seven wind turbines, each with a three-bladed rotor and a maximum height to blade tip of up to 180m. It will comprise:

- substation and control building;
- temporary construction compound, including temporary site offices;

Mynydd Llanhilleth Project No.: UK-62281427 Pennant Walters Ltd



- crane pads at each turbine location;
- turbine foundations, laydown and storage areas
- underground power cables linking the turbines and the on-site substation;
- internal access tracks;
- upgraded access from the B4246;
- a grid connection consisting of underground cables which will intersect with the existing National Grid (NG) overhead line network via an H-pole to the east of the Site near 200m south of Rhiw Franc Farm to the west of Pontnewynydd; and
- other construction enabling works.
- 2.2.2. A full description is provided in **ES Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Development**.
- 2.2.3. The layout of the site is contained in **Figure 2-2**. In order to aid comparison between this resubmission and the previously submitted but withdrawn application, turbine numbering remains the same (i.e. Turbine 1-4 and 6-8).



Figure 2-2 - Site Layout

2.3 DEVELOPMENTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

2.3.1. Due to the potential generating capacity being over 10MW the Proposed Development constitutes a DNS. The DNS category was established under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 to ensure timely decision making on applications of national significance for Wales. As a DNS the application for development is submitted to the Welsh Government for determination by PEDW rather than being

Mynydd Llanhilleth Project No.: UK-62281427 Pennant Walters Ltd

submitted to the local planning authority. Following submission, a Planning Inspector will be appointed who will consider the application and supporting evidence before recommending to Welsh Ministers whether or not planning permission should be granted for the application.

3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 THE OBJECTIVES FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1.1. Underpinning the design of the Proposed Development is the intention to provide a wind farm that will provide a source of renewable energy to support the energy needs of Wales without having significant effects on the environment. This means that the Proposed Development has been located and designed to:
 - ensure carbon emissions are reduced;
 - provide the most appropriate locations for wind turbines to ensure that the maximum amount of wind energy can be utilised from the site;
 - ensure that visual impacts on the surrounding area are minimised;
 - ensure that the public access to the site is maintained, in a safe manner; and
 - ensure the residential and the environmental amenity of features in and around the site are protected.
- 3.1.2. The design process reflects the vision for the Proposed Development.

4 SITE AND CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

4.1 SITE LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 4.1.1. The site encompasses an area of approximately 267.59 hectares (ha) and is located on the summit and upper slopes of Mynydd Llanhilleth and comprises a former quarry and associated area of coniferous woodland across its southern extents and intensively managed species-poor grassland, located within the high ground between the Afon Valley to the east and the Ebbw Fach Valley to the west.
- 4.1.2. There is no built development within the Site. An overhead electricity transmission line supported by double pole pylons is located approximately 2km to the east of the site.
- 4.1.3. There is a Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network within and across the Site which includes a bridleway and several footpaths. Further details are set out in **ES Chapter 16: Socio economics**. In addition, a substantial part of the Site is within Mynydd Llanhilleth Common which is designated as common land.
- 4.1.4. There are several Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), designated within both the TCBC and BGCBC Local Development Plans (LDPs), which are partly present within the Site. Additionally, three SLAs are located within or adjacent to the Site and Proposed Development, including access routes, including Blaenau Gwent: SLA A Mynydd Carn y Cefn and Cefn yr Arail, SLA D- Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James, and SLA E St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides) and TCBC's SLA F Eastern Uplands and SLA H Western Uplands. The site is 3.75km to the south of Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS) and approximately 25km from the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP).

4.2 THE DEVELPOMENT PLAN

FUTURE WALES

- 4.2.1. Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Future Wales from here on) was adopted in February 2021. Future Wales sets out national policy and is the highest tier of the development plan against which DNS applications are assessed. Future Wales includes a range of high-level policies which are intended to shape local authority development plans and inform decision making on applications for DNS.
- 4.2.2. There are two specific policies on renewable and low carbon energy:
 - Policy 17 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure sets out the Welsh Government's support for the development of all renewable and low carbon technologies in principle. It states that in determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency. It has already modelled the likely impact on the landscape of wind turbines in Pre-assessed Areas and has found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way. The policy sets out the presumption in favour of large-scale wind within the Pre-assessed Areas but also outside, subject to performance against Policy 18. The site is not located in Pre-assessed Area (PAA) for wind; and

Policy 18 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance states sets out a range of criteria that developments must meet including consideration of landscape effects with specific regard to national Parks and AONB and ensuring no unacceptable adverse: visual impacts on nearby communities; impacts on heritage assets; impacts by virtue of shadow flicker; and impacts on the transport network. The supporting text of Policy states that *"Irrespective of location or scale, the design and micro-siting of proposals must seek to minimise the landscape and visual impact, particularly those in close proximity to homes and tourism receptors."*

4.3 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Proposed Development is located within the administrative area of TCBC and BGCBC.

TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

4.3.1. TBCB planning authority adopted its LDP in December 2013. The document was intended to apply up to 2021 although it remains the current plan as the Torfaen Replacement Local Plan 2018-2033 has now been withdrawn. Table 4-1 summarises what are considered to be the relevant LDP policies.

Policy title	Summary
S3 Climate Change	The policy seeks to mitigate the causes of further climate change and adapt to the current and future effects of climate changes. It includes (at criteria d) utilising renewable and low or zero carbon energy technologies to generate heat and electricity requirements.
S4 Place Making / Good Design	Sets out a range of criteria for good design in new development including having full regard to the context of the local natural and built environment.
S7 Conservation of the Natural and Historic Environment	Seeks to ensure that development proposals ensure the conservation and enhancement of the Natural, Built & Historic Environment of Torfaen, in particular a) Biodiversity resources; b) Geodiversity resources; c) Water environment. d) Landscape setting; e) Character of the built environment; and f) Historic assets.
BW1 General Policy – Development Proposals	Sets out general criteria development proposals need to comply with. In relation to developments that affect the Natural Environment the criteria include avoiding unacceptable adverse effects in respect of land contamination, instability or subsidence, air, heat, noise or light pollution; landfill gas; water pollution; or flooding, from or to the proposal, and does not result in significant effects on designated biodiversity sites, the landscape, and the water environment. The policy also seeks to ensure that the development does not compromise highway safety.
SAA5 The British SAA, Talywain, Pontypool	The policy confirms that land is allocated at the British Strategic Action Area, Talywain for a major land reclamation scheme. The land reclamation scheme will prepare the land required for future redevelopment as part of a long term regeneration scheme and make safe the surrounding land.
M1 Minerals Safeguarding	Seeks to protect mineral resources and prevent permanent sterilisation.

Table 4-1 - Torfaen County Borough Council Local Development Plan policies

M3 Tir Pentwys Preferred Area for Aggregates	Land at Tir Pentwys (near Pontypool) is allocated as a Preferred Area for Aggregates as shown on the Proposals Map, within which proposals for the extraction of 7.2 million tonnes of aggregates may be permitted.
M4 Mineral Sites Buffer Zones	This policy explains that any development that would prejudice the extraction of the mineral or operation of a permitted mineral site will be refused.
C2 Special Landscape Areas	This policy development explains that development proposals that could impact on these designations will be expected to conform to high standards of design and environmental protection which is appropriate to the LANDMAP character of the area.
BG1 Locally Designated Sites for Biodiversity and Geodiversity	This policy seeks to avoid adverse impacts on local nature conservation designated sites (including the features of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves, or Regionally Important Geological Sites).
HE1 Buildings and Structures of Local Importance	Seeks to ensure that development proposals affecting buildings and structures of local importance which make a valuable contribution to the character and interest of the local area will not be permitted where the distinctive appearance, architectural integrity or their settings would be significantly adversely affected, unless the benefits of the proposal would outweigh such adverse effects.
Policy HE2 Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site	This policy requires that development proposals within and adjacent to the site will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it is sympathetic to the character, does not adversely affect important views into the WHA, contributes to its preservation and does not adversely affect the overall integrity and its landscape or historic setting.

BLAENAU GWENT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

4.3.2. The relevant local policy for the site is set out in the BGCBC LDP which was adopted in November 2012. The document was intended to apply up to 2021 although it remains the current plan until the LDP 2018 to 2023 comes into effect which is still in early production. Table 4-2 highlight the relevant LDP policies.

Table 4-2 - Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Local Developme	nt Plan policies
--	------------------

Policy title	Summary
SP7 Climate Change	The policy sets out overall approach to address climate change and reduce energy demand and includes (at criteria (1a)) encouraging renewable/low/zero carbon electricity and heat generation.
SP9 Active and Health Communities	This policy promotes the delivery of active and healthy communities including protecting and enhancing accessibility to natural greenspaces.

SP10 Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment	Seeks to protect and, where possible, enhance natural environment and provides criteria through which this will be achieve within Blaenau Gwent related landscapes, green infrastructure, biodiversity and nature conservation.
SP11 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment	Seeks to protect, preserve and enhance the historic environment through safeguarding nationally designated sites and protecting locally designated buildings and conservation areas, enhancing sites of historic/archaeological value and promoting heritage tourism.
DM1 New Development	 Sets out a range of criteria for good design in new development: Sustainable design including energy efficiency, effective use of resources, minimisation of construction waste, and no net loss of biodiversity; Amenity including consideration of compatibility with other uses in the locality, adverse visual impacts, adverse impacts on the water environment, health, and land stability; and Accessibility including the provision of safe, effective and efficient access and parking, servicing and operational space.
DM2 Design and Placemaking	Sets out a range of criteria to including ensuring development proposals are appropriate to the local context in form, scale and mix; are of a good design which reinforces local character and distinctiveness and responds to the area's context.
DM4 Low and Zero Carbon Energy	The policy provides criteria against which low and zero carbon development, such as onshore wind will be considered. The criteria cover a range of issues including landscape impacts, archaeology, noise and amenity, electro-magnetic fields, and removal of infrastructure.
DM14 Biodiversity Protection and Enhancement	Projects within 10km of Usk Bat Sites SAC that would have impacts on connectivity or cause direct/indirect effects to be subject to HRA. Proposals close to or within SINCs or LNR or affect ecological corridors of Priority Habitats and Species will only be permitted subject to a) maintaining or enhancing the importance of the designation or b) the need for the development outweighs the importance of the site and the development cannot be reasonably located elsewhere.
DM16 Trees, Woodland and Hedgerow Protection	Requires that development proposals not give rise to unacceptable harm to trees, woodlands and hedgerows that have natural heritage value or contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality.
DM19 Mineral Safeguarding	Seeks to protect mineral resources and prevent permanent sterilisation.
ENV2 Special Landscape Areas	Lists the eight SLAs that have been identified within the area administered by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council using a regionally agreed methodology. Development within the defined SLAs will be expected to conform to the highest standards of design, siting, layout and materials appropriate to the character of the area.
ENV3 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation	The policy lists the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). There are 26 SINCs within 2km of the Site.

M1 Safeguarding of Minerals	Safeguards mineral resources to avoid sterilisation.
M2 Mineral Buffer Zones	The policy seeks to (a) avoid development that prejudices the extraction of mineral or operation of sites whilst (b) no new mineral extraction will be permitted except in exceptional circumstances.
M4 Preferred Areas	The policy identifies Preferred Areas and buffer zones with some commercial potential.

5 DESIGN EVOLUTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1. This section sets outs the process undertaken to evolve the Proposed Development from site selection through to the onsite design options chosen. A full description of the approach to the selection of the site and to deciding on the specific design is set out in **ES Chapter 3: Scheme Need, Alternatives and Iterative Design Process**.

5.2 SITE SELECTION

- 5.2.1. Pennant Walters as Applicant undertook a site selection process in 2019. The site selection was informed by national policy considerations and specific technical criteria relevant to the proposed use for wind turbines and landscape.
- 5.2.2. As set out in Section 4.2, Future Wales sets out a series of Pre-Assessed Areas (PAA) for Wind Energy within which the principle of developing large scale wind farms is supported. Although at the time of the site selection process the approach to PAA was emerging it was clear that the final version of Future Wales would include PAA. The Applicant undertook a high-level review of areas with a more detailed review of options that were within or close to PAAs.
- 5.2.3. The consideration of wind speed was a key consideration. Areas that did not have a mean annual average wind speed above 7 metres per second (considered by the Applicant to be the minimum required for a commercially viable scheme) in the ETSU NOABL database were excluded from further consideration. Those areas with wind speeds above 7m/s within the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP), and any other national landscape designations, were excluded from the search exercise consistent with Future Wales planning policy. Those areas within the former TAN 8 Area F that have already been developed for wind farms were also excluded. The eastern limb of PAA 10 resulted in three sites coming forward, Mynydd Carn-y-Cefn, Mynydd Llanhilleth and Trecelyn.
- 5.2.4. Discussions with the land agents of relevant land holders in this region indicated that land at Trecelyn was available to wind farm developers.
- 5.2.5. A summary of the main factors considered in the site selection and the performance of this site is set out in **Table 5-1**.

Assessment Category	Specific factor	Site performance
Wind resource	Average annual wind speed Wind direction	7m/s Predominantly southwest
Electronic Infrastructure	Proximity of transmission lines	33kv, 66kv and 132kv sufficiently close to the site
	Proximity of grid connection points	Adjoining the site

Table 5-1 – Summary of main factors considered in site selection

Land Value	Land ownership Ecological value Archaeological value Landscape value (and designations)	Willingness of landowner Low/moderate Low/moderate Partly within a PAA and outside any sensitive landscape designations.
Land Form	Size of site, useable area Steepness of terrain Smoothness of hill tops Alignment of high ground to prevailing wind	Over 200ha Predominantly flat ridge areas Plateau on steep sided banks Good Very Good
Land use/Land cover	Road network and access Radio-telecommunications masts Current land use Nearby land use Proximity of urban settlements	Classified highway immediately to the west No masts on site, telecoms links identified. Grazing mixed livestock Land surrounding the site is rural, agricultural. The LDP identifies the site and 70% of the County Borough as mineral safeguarding (sandstone) Porth to the north and Trebanog to the west.

5.2.6. Overall the Site was considered to be a suitable site due to a range of factors:

- excellent wind resource;
- whilst the majority of the site is outside a Future Wales PAA for Wind Energy it is also well outside a national park and AONB;
- large usable area;
- low vulnerability to major accidents and disasters arising from, for example, flooding or sea level rise, due to location;
- good potential access;
- available existing electric infrastructure nearby;
- not on national statutory designations;
- minimising effects on common land;
- likely low impact on ecology, archaeology, geology etc. given the baseline conditions, both from the Proposed Development and from potential major accidents and disasters (although these could only be confirmed subsequently once the necessary surveys had been undertaken).

5.3 DESIGN

- 5.3.1. Following site selection the design has been informed by the technical and site-specific requirements. The design was optimised to maximise the capability for wind generation whilst reducing the environmental impact as far as possible. The design process was informed by a number of criteria:
 - Ground conditions ground conditions must be suitable for the installation of wind turbines, access tracks and cables;
 - site topography the site topography is computer modelled to establish the wind flow on and around the site to provide guidance on the best locations for the wind turbines;
 - distance between turbines to minimise turbulence interaction between wind turbines (wake effect), turbines should be separated by set distances both perpendicular to, and in line with, the prevailing wind direction. This design feature is a key factor in maximising the overall power generating capacity of a site;
 - proximity to occupied dwellings wind turbines have to be located sufficiently far away from houses to protect local amenity;
 - environmental constraints features and areas of local environmental sensitivity (ecology, archaeology, hydrology etc.) are identified and their implications considered;
 - landscape and visual design considerations are taken into account and the layout modified accordingly;
 - existing land use whilst the wind turbines and their associated infrastructure typically occupy no more than 2% of the site, the existing use of the land is considered in the layout of tracks and turbines. For example, existing track lines are used where practicable;
 - the presence and magnitude of woodland is also important, as these can reduce energy production from wind turbines;
 - proximity to obstructions such as tall trees or buildings;
 - available spare capacity of the electricity grid to take power from the wind farm; and
 - proximity to a road network suitable to allow the transport of construction plant, equipment and wind turbine components to the site.
- 5.3.2. In addition to the above considerations, planning guidance, discussions and/or consultation with statutory and non-statutory consultees and the landowners have influenced the evolution of the design.

DESIGN ITERATIONS

5.3.3. Wind farm design is an iterative process, and the layout of the Proposed Development has evolved in response to a number of environmental and technical constraints – including site character and appearance of the scheme – and discussions with the local community and statutory and non-statutory consultees during non-statutory consultation. Table 5-2 identifies the main iterations of the design and the rationale for such changes

Design Iteration	Rationale / Summary
Layout 1	Initial layout based on known information and good design practice.
January 2020	

	This layout served as a starting point for consideration of the Proposed Development.
Layout 2	This iteration was prepared following some initial constraints identification and mapping including national and international designations, existing infrastructure, woodland and waterbodies.
April 2021	
Layout 3	This design iteration included the minimisation of tracks within area denoted as Common Land, to reduce the overall impact on the designated area.
May 2021	
Layout 4	Following the review of engineering feasibility, this iteration included the relocation of a turbine due to technical constraints, as well as the addition of the finalised access tracks and crane pads to the layout
March 2022	
Layout 5	This iteration was for the inclusion of the permanent met mast location (which was the subject of a separate application) and the onsite substation.
May 2022	
Layout 6	This iteration updated the layout as follows:
Revised layout	 Relocation of the substation due to the requirements of the underground grid connection.
June 2022	 Including the grid connection indicative routing to the point of connection Amended access track between Turbine 4 and 8, due to constraints highlighted by the swept path analysis.
Layout 7	Following Layout 6, the red line boundary of the Site was modified to remove any areas not required for the infrastructure but to allow for micrositing
Red line boundary amended	distances of up to 50m for each turbine, whilst also including the access route and grid connection corridor within the redline.
June 2022	
Layout 8	Following an engineering review, the changes from the previous layout include:
Design chill for Final ES	 Addition of crane pads and storage areas Minor changes to access track layouts Movement of electrical substation

August 2022	The non-turbine infrastructure required on site was designed and arranged in such a way as to avoid the identified on-site constraints where possible. Whilst the majority of the infrastructure layout was designed following the turbine layout design, some minor iterations to turbine locations and track alignments were necessary to facilitate the optimum on-site infrastructure requirements. Access track routes in particular were designed to follow existing tracks where possible and to avoid potentially sensitive areas.
Layout 9 Design Review for Resubmission	Following consultation responses and additional discussions with statutory consultees the applicant removed Turbine 5 from the layout of the Proposed Development. A design and layout review indicated that the removal of Turbine 5 would minimise significant effects associated with the Proposed Development, which included:
April 2024	 Significant effects associated with Property D26 reduced from major/moderate and significant to moderate / minor and not significant with the removal of Turbine 5. Effects on LANDMAP Visual and Sensory Aspect Areas and the characteristic small scale field pattern will no longer occur following the removal of Turbine 5. Following the removal of Turbine T5, five trees with high bat roost potential, 13 trees with moderate potential and 13 trees with low potential have been scoped out of the Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposed wind turbines and therefore, no tree loss will be required to facilitate the construction of the wind turbines. The potential killing/injury of bats due to barotrauma when flying in close proximity to the turbines will similarly be reduced following the removal of Turbine 5. Additionally, the removal of Turbine 5 from the layout reduces effects associated with noise, cultural heritage, water environment and shadow flicker. It is the Applicant's view following responses from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, NRW and the Inspector, that the removal of Turbine 5 would reduce the number of significant effects associated with the Proposed Development. Thus, ensuring that it appropriately balances the benefits of increased renewable energy developments and any potential adverse effects upon the environment.

MICRO-SITING

5.3.4. The application seeks a micro-siting allowance for the turbines and associated infrastructure. The allowance which is being sought is up to 50m for turbines and 100m for internal wind farm tracks and other infrastructure such as substations and compounds. This would allow minor changes to turbine locations at the construction stage and this allowance has been accounted for in the EIA process.

5.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION

INTRODUCTION

5.4.1. EIA scoping is the process of identifying those aspects of the environment which need to be considered when assessing the effects of a particular development proposal. This recognises that

there may be some environmental elements where there will be no significant effects resulting from the development and hence where there is no need for further investigations to be taken.

5.4.2. Scoping is undertaken through consulting organisations and individuals with an interest in and knowledge of the site combined with the professional judgement of the EIA team. It takes account of published guidance, the effects of the kind of development proposed and the environmental resources which could be affected.

SCOPING REPORT

- 5.4.3. As the Proposed Development qualifies as a DNS, a formal Scoping Direction was sought from Planning Inspectorate Wales (PINS) in May 2021 in order that the Environmental Statement contains the information required for it to evaluate the environmental effects of the Proposed Development. To assist it in reaching its opinion, and to allow broader consultation on the scope with bodies which may be unfamiliar with the proposals, the following information was provided in a Scoping Report:
 - the development characteristics;
 - the anticipated temporal and technical scope;
 - an overview and evaluation of the main environmental issues, including:
 - landscape and visual amenity;
 - historic environment;
 - biodiversity;
 - ornithology;
 - water environment;
 - ground conditions;
 - traffic and transport;
 - noise; and
 - infrastructure and other issues including shadow flicker; socio-economics; major accidents and disasters.
 - an outline of the proposed methodologies for completing the identification of the baseline conditions and the assessment of predicted impacts and effects; and
 - a summary of the proposed scope of the EIA.

SCOPING DIRECTION

5.4.4. A Scoping Direction was received from the Planning Inspectorate dated 6 August 2021. The ES details the final scope of the assessment in relation to effects that it has assessed could be significant and therefore needed to be subject to more detailed assessment. Both the Scoping Report and the subsequent Scoping Direction have been used as a basis to assess, and inform the design of, the scheme.

CONSULTATION

- 5.4.5. The initial proposals for the now withdrawn application were subject to early public consultation which closed in August 2021 . The consultation sought views on the site constraints, emerging proposals, environmental impacts, transport issues and community benefit.
- 5.4.6. The proposed application documents including a Draft DAS were subject to a formal six-week preapplication consultation between 28 November and 19 January 2023. A Draft DAS along with the

other draft application documents, were the subject of statutory consultation between 5 December and 19 January 2023, feedback from which has been reviewed in relation to proposals for the Proposed Development.

6 THE PROPOSAL

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1. This section sets out further information about the Proposed Development and how it meets the objectives of Good Design contained in the PPW in line with the Welsh Government's DAS guidance (2017). The objectives of Good Design are included in **Figure 6-1**.



Figure 6-1 - Objectives of Good Design

Source: Welsh Government (2021) Planning Policy Wales - Edition 11

- 6.1.2. The five objectives examined in the following sections are:
 - Character sustaining or enhancing local character promoting legible design and a successful relationship between public and private spaces;
 - Access ensuring access for all;
 - Movement promoting sustainable means of transport;
 - Environment sustainability ensuing the efficient and protection of resources; and
 - **Community safety** ensuring safe and attractive spaces.

6.1.3. At the start of each section the Welsh Government's DAS guidance (2017) requirements are captured. Additionally, in the final section, consideration is given to how the Proposed Development responds to the policy context.

6.2 CHARACTER

DAS Guidance: How does the proposal sustain or enhance local character and promote legible development, a successful relationship between public and private space, quality, choice and variety and innovative design?

WIND FARM DESIGN

Turbines

- 6.2.1. The Proposed Development consists of up to seven turbines, each with a three-bladed rotor and a maximum height to blade tip of up to 180m. The turbines proposed are three bladed variable speed pitch regulated, with the rotor and nacelle mounted on a cylindrical tower. This is a typical modern, horizontal axis design comprising four main components: a rotor (consisting of a hub and three blades); a nacelle (containing the generator and also often a gearbox) to which the rotor is mounted; a tower; and a foundation. This reflects ongoing innovation in wind turbine design.
- 6.2.2. The specific choice of wind turbine is dependent on the final commercial and technical choice by the Applicant but would not exceed the physical parameters specified in the consent (and as assessed in the ES). The turbines would be supported by a transformer which is likely to be located immediately adjacent to the turbine tower (although they can be incorporated into the nacelle or base of the tower and this will be dependent on final turbine choice).
- 6.2.3. The design process has considered an appropriate colour for the wind turbines and determined that a neutral colour (colour specification, light grey RAL 7035) with a semi-matt finish, so as to minimise the visual intrusion, is the preferred colour to minimise contrast against the sky.
- 6.2.4. The wind farm has been designed to be operational for up to 30 years and will include site management to ensure that site facilities such as roads, boundaries, gates and signage are maintained. At the end of the operational life of the turbines, there are two possible options. Firstly, to decommission the wind farm and remove the turbines; or apply to install new equipment on the site (for which a further planning consent would be required).

Foundations

6.2.5. The full foundation requirements will be subject to finalisation dependent on detailed ground investigation. The design of foundations will minimise excavation requirements and visible projection above ground level and allow for the re-establishment of surface vegetation when construction is complete. Foundations will usually comprise a reinforced concrete base slab with dimensions of approximately 20m diameter x 4m depth.

Substation

6.2.6. The applicant has received an offer of a grid connection from National Grid (NG). The connection will be via an underground cable between the on-site substation and the existing NG overhead line

network to the east of the Site near Tal-Ochor Farm to the west of Pontnewynydd. The underground cable will be delivered by WPD, but will be consented as part of this DNS process.

- 6.2.7. The specific arrangement for the on-site substation depends on WPD's requirements. A transformer may be required to be located onsite. If required, a transformer would be provided within a substation compound which would comprise a stoned area of approximately 37.5m x 35m containing the transformer and associated equipment (isolators, circuit breakers). If a transformer is not required then all electrical equipment would be housed within the substation building.
- 6.2.8. The substation building (approximately 14m x 10m) would be a single storey building which will house metering, protection and control equipment, storage and welfare facilities. The substation building would be traditional blockwork construction and faced in stone with a slate roof. Any associated fencing would be finished in either moorland green/brown or dark grey in order to blend with either the existing landscape colours or traditional building colours for the area.

SITE CONTEXT

6.2.9. The assessment of the site's wider context formed a key part of the site selection process as illustrated by Section 4 of this DAS. Furthermore, the Proposed Development is supported by an ES, which has considered the likely significant environmental effects of the development on environmental and human receptors.

CULTURAL HERITAGE SETTING

- 6.2.10. An assessment of the impact on the cultural heritage setting has been undertaken. There are no designated historic assets on the Site. Whilst there are non-designated historic assets on the Site the ES Chapter concludes that that Proposed Development would not result in any adverse effect on their heritage value and there would be no significance of effect. The presence for unknown archaeology is however recognised and the Applicant is committed recording any archaeology found where the limited intrusive groundworks are required with the exact approach to be secured through DNS condition.
- 6.2.11. ES Chapter 7: Historic Environment assesses the potential for the Proposed Development to affect the setting of historic assets such as Scheduled Monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site (BILWHS) which is located 3.75km to the south of the nearest turbine. The chapter acknowledges that whilst the Proposed Development would result in a single impact upon the BILWHS comprising a Moderate Adverse significance of effect to one of its values, namely its Aesthetic and Visual Value, the assessment concludes that owing to the distant nature of the development and the absence of any change to the setting of the WHS's core areas of heritage interest in the town of Blaenavon and valley bottom, the effect would not translate into a loss of any of the WHS's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) or its integrity and authenticity. The Blaenavon Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest (BLOHI) is also located beyond the site. The nearest Historic Landscape Character Areas (HLCA) that makes up the BLOHI is 2.75km to the north of the site. The chapter concludes that the proposed development would not result in any adverse effect on the BLOHI.

6.3 ACCESS

DAS Guidance: How do the proposals ensure ease of access for all into the development and to all elements within the site?

SITE ACCESS

6.3.1. ES **Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport** of the describes the transport network surrounding the site and the routes to be taken both by local construction vehicles and by deliveries of turbine components from the port of Swansea. Direct access into the site for construction and operation will be via the B4246 (Talywain), where it is proposed to improve the current access.

CONSTRUCTION

Site Access

- 6.3.2. The access for construction will be from a new junction created with the B4246. ES Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport assesses the likely effects on the traffic and transport network.
- 6.3.3. Based on the construction programme the approximate peak of 125 HGV movements per day twoway is predicted. This number represents between 2.0% and 0.4% of total vehicle movements along the three roads assessed, namely the B4246 (Talywain), A40043 (Pontnewynydd) and A472 (Pontypool) roads. The number of movements exceeds only a 30% increase in HGVs along the B4246 (Talywain), A40043 (Pontnewynydd) roads. As a result the A472 (Pontypool) road is therefore scoped out of further assessment.
- 6.3.4. The assessment for the B4246 (Talywain), A40043 (Pontnewynydd) roads considers the effects on severance, driver delay, pedestrian delay and amenity, fear and intimidation (of pedestrians and cyclists), accidents and safety and concludes that they would be not significant. Overall, the chapter concludes that effects on the transport network would not be significant.
- 6.3.5. A Draft Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has also been prepared (ES Appendix 12B). This sets out the management of daily delivery profiles and controls construction vehicle movements and routeing of HGVs to/from the site.

Onsite access

6.3.6. It is anticipated that approximately 5.8km of onsite track will be required for the Proposed Development overall. The tracks will be approximately (~)5m wide, ~0.6m deep (dependent of ground conditions), with a ~2m grass verge either side. The tracks will be constructed of suitable roadstone. Any existing track will be upgraded. Gradients for new tracks will be kept to less than 8 percent with radius curves to 50m where practicable. The track layout is designed to accommodate the requirements of delivery vehicles and to allow the construction workforce, plant and machinery to move safely. The track layout seeks to follow contours where possible and to avoid cross slopes and deep cut and fill into the existing terrain where possible. Tracks are routed to avoid sensitive ecological, archaeological and hydrological features.

OPERATION

6.3.7. During the operational phase the expectation is that the Proposed Development would require the maintenance of turbines at six monthly intervals and at other times when faults occur. More maintenance may be required early in the 30 year operation life and towards the end of the period.

ACCESS FOR ALL

- 6.3.8. The type of Proposed Development is such that it is not designed to enable access for members of the public regardless of levels of mobility. Therefore, specific provisions for disabled access have not been incorporated into the design. Although onsite tracks are capable of being used by the public and have been designed to provide safe and appropriate access, they are not designed for the purpose of enabling access for all.
- 6.3.9. There are some Public Rights of Way (PRoW) which cross the site. **Section** Error! Reference source not found. sets out considerations of the PRoW with respect to ensuring safe access during construction and operation.

6.4 MOVEMENT

DAS Guidance: How does the proposal promote sustainable means of travel?

- 6.4.1. The wind turbines, substation and other infrastructure on site will only be accessed by construction personnel and maintenance teams who will periodically attend the development site to, for example, maintain and service the turbines.
- 6.4.2. As stated in ES Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport given the site's location in relation to the public transport network, the opportunity for contractors to travel to the site by public transport is not viable. Additionally, the distance to the established cycle network and lack of footway connections to local amenities and establishments means that travel by alternative sustainable modes is unlikely to be chosen by contractors. Car-sharing is something that can be promoted to the construction workforce.
- 6.4.3. The public has access to the Site given that it includes a network of PRoWs and Common Land. This will be managed through appropriate measures, set out in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which includes a Public Rights of Way Management Plan, for the duration of the proposed construction works. After this point the impact on the PRoW would be minimal with the access being used sparingly for routine maintenance vehicles in the operational phase. In addition, as the proposed construction access crosses an existing PRoW, safe access in the construction phase will also be specified in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). Construction works will be sign posted, and users of the PRoW network notified of activity.
- 6.4.4. As noted above the Proposed Development would result in the loss of 2.99ha of Common Land. The Applicant would provide 4ha to compensate with this area of land remaining as Common Land once the wind farm has decommissioned. In view of the mitigation proposed, the effect of the Proposed Development during its construction and operation is considered to be not significant. The means of managing the construction interface with the commoners will be set out in the CEMP whilst, for operation, the compensatory land would be delivered via the Commons Act 2006.

6.5 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

DAS Guidance: How does the proposal achieve efficient use and protection of natural resources, enhance biodiversity, and demonstrate designing for change?

RENEWABLE ENERGY

- 6.5.1. The Welsh Government has set a target for 100% of energy consumption in 2035 to be provided by renewable sources.
- 6.5.2. Dependant on the final turbine chosen for the scheme (a combination of turbines generating between 4MW and 6MW are available to be deployed although the amount of energy they can produce is dictated by the grid connection agreement which is for a maximum of 34MW). This would be sufficient to supply the domestic electricity needs of approximately 21,641 average households. With regards to resource efficiency, and supporting a reduced reliance on fossil fuels, this is considerable.
- 6.5.3. The Proposed Development will help to ensure environmental sustainability through the production of renewable energy thus supporting the move away from fossil fuels.
- 6.5.4. The site design has been influenced by the optimal scheme for wind power generation, taking into account consideration of achieving the best wind resource and reducing turbulence from turbines. The design responds to site conditions whilst balancing the effects arising from construction and operation. The design layout was found to be the most sustainable and appropriate for the type of development proposed.

AGRICULTUTRAL LAND

6.5.5. As set out in **ES Chapter 11: Ground Conditions**, the site is assessed as mainly Grade 5 Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) and some Grade 4. Therefore, no land that is considered to be the 'best and most versatile' (Grades 1 to 3a) will be lost through the development. The actual built development covers a relatively small percentage of the overall land take. Measures embedded in the design will ensure that soil removed during construction is reused on site where possible and low ground pressure machinery will be used where possible to minimise soil impaction.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

- 6.5.6. The landscape and visual assessment is set out in **ES Chapter 6: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment**. Whilst it is acknowledged there will be significant effects on one LCA that forms part of the BBNP, the chapter concludes that no significant effects on the special qualities of the BBNP as a result of the Proposed Development during construction or at operation.
- 6.5.7. The likely effects on locally designated SSLA have also been assessed in the LVIA. Of these, three crossed into the site and would incur both direct and indirect effects from the Proposed Development. Significant overall landscape effects were assessed for the following SLAs: Blaenau Gwent CBC SLA A; Mynydd Carn y Cefn and Cefn yr Arail; SLA D; Eastern Ridge and Mynydd James and SLA E; St Illtyd Plateau and Ebbw Eastern Sides; and Torfaen CBC SLA H Western Uplands and Torfaen SLA F Eastern Uplands.

BIODIVERSITY

6.5.8. ES **Chapter 8: Biodiversity** examines how the proposals will affect biodiversity. It concludes that no significant effects will occur. ES **Chapter 9: Ornithology** considers the effects on ornithology, including breeding and non-breeding birds. The chapter concludes no significant effects will occur. Environmental measures required to avoid or reduce biodiversity impacts will be incorporated into a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) which will be secured via a suitably worded planning condition.

WATER ENVIRONMENT

6.5.9. **ES Chapter 10: Water Environment** outlines a series of embedded measures including good working practices, drainage and materials management and management of water discharges which would support appropriate management of the aquatic environment, water resources and flood risk during the construction phase. Measures such as a detailed drainage design utilising SuDS principles and appropriate fuel storage would be implemented in the operational phase. No significant effects are concluded for the water environment.

6.6 COMMUNITY SAFETY

DAS Guidance: How has the proposal ensured attractive, safe public spaces and security through natural surveillance?

- 6.6.1. The Proposed Development will be delivered in a safe manner and ensure that the opportunities for crime are minimised through effective design measures, such as fencing around the substation compound being incorporated into the scheme. Additionally, the construction compound would be lit with security lighting and it is anticipated that a small security area would be established at the junction to the public highway.
- 6.6.2. There is a network of PRoWs which cross the site. In addition the Site is within Mynydd Llanhilleth Common which is designated as Common Land. There is potential for some disruption to the PRoWs, with some limited interventions required such as signage, diversion or possible closure and further information on the management measures which could be employed is provided within ES Chapter 16: Socio Economics. In summary however signage will be placed at appropriate locations to inform the public of the construction activities taking place. An overall CEMP will be prepared by the appointed site contractor that will provide a commitment to ensure that all workers understand that the site is open to access, and public safety should be considered at all times.

6.7 RESPONDING TO THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.7.1. The planning policy context is set out in Chapter 4. The proposal would see the development of a wind farm that is located partly within but largely outside a PAA for Wind Energy identified in Future Wales Policy 17 as a location suitable for large scale wind development (as a PAA for Wind Energy) but still benefiting from a positive policy framework in favour of onshore wind energy generation via Policy 18.
- 6.7.2. The reason why land has been chosen outside of a PAA is that the one closest to the Site, PAA 9 is considered to be constrained both by the availability of land with a suitable wind speed and by the fact that a significant area within it includes valleys containing centres of population. This resulted in

the need to identify high ground with good wind speed, away from local population centres, on Mynydd Llanhilleth.

- 6.7.3. The development has been designed so as to minimise the take up of land, the impact on the landscape and the effects on biodiversity assets. Additionally, through the ES the effects on a range of other environmental receptors have been assessed. The EIA process has helped to ensure that where possible the design of the windfarm has sought to avoid or reduce the environmental impacts. Detailed consideration has therefore been given to the criteria in Policy 18 of Future Wales through site selection and design refinement.
- 6.7.4. The **Planning Statement** provides a detailed assessment of the Proposed Development against the planning policy framework.

7 CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT DESIGN

- 7.1.1. The Proposed Development positively contributes to the achievement of the UK and Wales' goal to increase renewable energy generation to help combat the challenges posed by climate change. The design of the Proposed Development has been informed by consideration of technical, environmental and policy constraints. Additionally, the iterative design process has been informed by consultation with key stakeholders and the local community.
- 7.1.2. The design has been informed by the EIA process. The ES demonstrates that the effects on a range of environmental receptors have been assessed and a range of measures have been proposed to reduce, and avoid, impacts of the Proposed Development on the environment where possible.
- 7.1.3. Whilst the ES identified that some significant environmental effects are predicted to occur at a local level, national policy highlights that these are often inherent in the development of onshore wind energy and that the level of effect should be balanced against the socio-economic benefits and environmental benefits arising from the mitigation of climate change.
- 7.1.4. There will be some disruption to public access within the site during the construction phase, but this will be temporary and once operational the Proposed Development will not restrict access with appropriate mitigation measures. The ES states there will be no significant negative effects regarding access to the Site, or upon it, as a result of the construction activities proposed. Furthermore, non-significant effects will be further reduced via the adoption of management measures in the form of a LEMP and CTMP which will be secured by a condition.



Kings Orchard 1 Queen Street Bristol BS2 0HQ

wsp.com

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL