

Appendix B.1 Policy and Guidance Extracts



National Policy

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 7.1.1 Future Wales is a national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040, providing a framework for planning the change and development needed in Wales to address key national priorities. Future Wales is a spatial plan, focussed on solutions to national issues and challenges at a national scale. The Spatial Strategy Diagram identifies Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys as one of three National Growth Areas where there will be *“growth in employment and housing opportunities and investment in infrastructure”*.
- 7.1.2 Future Wales presents the Welsh Government’s strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, and achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience.
- 7.1.3 Future Wales was adopted on 24th February 2021 and recognises that Wales can become a world leader in renewable energy technologies. The Welsh Government recognises Wales’ potential for solar generation and supports both large and community scaled projects and commits to ensuring the planning system in Wales provides a strong lead for renewable energy development.
- 7.1.4 Policy 17 sets out that the Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of renewable and low carbon energy development from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future energy needs. Furthermore, it states that decision makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales’ international commitments and the target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030.
- 7.1.5 Policy 18 provides the criteria for assessing large scale proposals for renewable and low carbon energy and is required to be read together with Policy 17. The criteria set out in Policy 18 require that proposed development:
- does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape, with particular reference to the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - has no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings;
 - has no unacceptable adverse impacts on national statutory designated sites for nature conservation, protected habitats and species;
 - includes biodiversity enhancement measures to provide a net benefit for biodiversity;
 - has no unacceptable adverse impacts on statutorily protected built heritage assets; and
 - has no unacceptable adverse impacts by way of shadow flicker, noise, reflected light, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance.
- 7.1.6 Policy 18 also states that the *“cumulative impacts of existing and consented renewable energy schemes should also be considered”*.
- 7.1.7 The supporting text to both policies states that Policy 17 demonstrates the Welsh Government’s support in principle for all renewable energy projects and technologies.

Planning Policy Wales



7.1.8 Edition 12 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) was published in February 2024. PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government and is supported by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Welsh Government Circulars and policy clarification letters.

7.1.9 Theme 5 of PPW addresses Productive and Enterprising Places. Sub-section 5.9 addresses renewable and low-carbon energy.

7.1.10 Paragraph 5.9.1 states:

“Local authorities should facilitate all forms of renewable and low carbon energy development”.

7.1.11 Paragraphs 5.9.14-15 state:

“There should be a presumption in favour of development in identified areas, including an acceptance of landscape change...”

Outside identified areas, planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy developments should be determined based on the merits of the individual proposal.”

7.1.12 Paragraph 5.9.20 states:

“Planning authorities should also identify and require suitable ways to avoid, mitigate or compensate adverse impacts of renewable and low carbon energy development. The construction, operation, decommissioning, remediation and aftercare of proposals should take into account... the impact on the natural and historic environment...; [and] cumulative impact”.

7.1.13 Paragraph 5.9.21 states:

“Prior to an application being submitted, developers for renewable and low carbon energy developments should, wherever possible, consider how to avoid, or otherwise minimise, adverse impacts through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures.”

7.1.14 Theme 6 of PPW addresses Distinctive and Natural Placemaking and Well-being, and includes protecting and enhancing landscapes, habitats, biodiversity, geodiversity and the historic environment in their own right, as well as other components of the natural world. PPW recognises the fundamental role played by Green Infrastructure in shaping places and our sense of well-being. Sub-section 6.3 addresses landscape.

7.1.15 Paragraph 6.3.3 states:

“All the landscapes of Wales are valued for their intrinsic contribution to a sense of place, and local authorities should protect and enhance their special characteristics, whilst paying due regard to the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits they provide, and to their role in creating valued places.”

7.1.16 Paragraph 6.3.5 states:

Planning authorities have a statutory duty to have regard to National Parks and AONB purposes. This duty applies in relation to all activities affecting National Parks and AONBs, whether those activities lie within, or in the setting of, the designated areas.



Local Policy and Guidance

Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan 2006-2021

7.1.17 The Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan was adopted in 2013, and contains local planning policies designed to take forward the Local Development Plan objectives, spatial strategy and vision for the county. The plan expired in December 2021, though adoption of the replacement plan has been delayed and as such it is to be expected that weight would still be given to the latest plan. The policies that are considered relevant to the Site and the Proposed Development are set out below.

7.1.18 Policy RD 1 Sustainable Development and Good Standard Design states:

“Development proposals will be supported within development boundaries provided that all the following criteria are met:

- i) Respects the site and surroundings in terms of the siting, layout, scale, form, character, design, materials, aspect, micro-climate and intensity of use of land/buildings and spaces around and between buildings;*
- iii) Protects and where possible enhances the local natural and historic environment;*
- iv) Does not unacceptably affect prominent public views into, out of, or across any settlement or area of open countryside;*
- v) Incorporates existing landscape or other features, takes account of site contours and changes in levels and prominent skylines;*
- vi) Does not unacceptably affect the amenity of local residents, other land and property users or characteristics of the locality by virtue of increased activity, disturbance, noise, dust, fumes, litter, drainage, light pollution etc., and provides satisfactory amenity standards itself;*
- vii) Provides safe and convenient access for disabled people, pedestrians, cyclists, vehicles and emergency vehicles together with adequate parking, services and manoeuvring space. Proposals should also consider impacts on the wider Rights of Way network surrounding the site; [and]*
- xiii) Incorporates suitable landscaping measures, including where appropriate hard and soft landscaping treatment, the creation and/or protection of green and blue corridors, mature landscaping, and arrangements for subsequent maintenance. Landscaping should create a visually pleasant, sustainable and biodiversity rich environment that protects and enhances existing landscape features and also creates new features and areas of open space that reflect local character and sense of place.”*

7.1.19 Policy VOE 2 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Outstanding Beauty states:

“In determining development proposals within or affecting the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Area of Outstanding Beauty (AOB), development that would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the landscape and the reasons for designation will not be permitted.”

7.1.20 Policy VOE 10 Renewable Energy Technologies states:

“Development proposals which promote the provision of renewable energy technologies may be supported providing they are located so as to minimise visual, noise and amenity impacts and demonstrate no unacceptable impact upon the interests of nature conservation, wildlife, natural and cultural heritage, landscape, public health and residential amenity. In areas that are visually sensitive, including



the AONB, Conservation Areas, World Heritage Site and Buffer Zone and in close proximity to historic buildings, visually intrusive technologies will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is no negative impact on the designation or there is an overriding public need for the development.”

Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB Supplementary Planning Guidance Note

7.1.21 The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB Supplementary Planning Guidance Note was published in 2018 and forms part of the adopted planning guidance supplementing the Local Development Plan. It is primarily targeted at individuals proposing new development and for decision makers involved in the management of the National Landscape, to raise the standard of new development and landscape design. It provides some general design principles which should be followed as part of new development proposals.

7.1.22 Section 4 addresses the Special Qualities of the National Landscape. The table within this section lists National Landscape management policies relevant to planning, including:

“Safeguard the panoramic views, tranquillity and environmental quality of the AONB for the generations of today and the future...;

Restore, reconnect and expand key habitats and species at a landscape scale in order to increase resilience to environmental change...; [and]

Ensure that new development adopts the highest standards of design and is sympathetic to the character and appearance of the AONB.”

7.1.23 Paragraph 7.5, Renewable Energy and Climate Change, states:

“Larger renewable energy proposals outside the AONB can be highly visible and impact on its setting. On and off-shore wind farms are redefining the outlook, sense of space and visual focus of views from the AONB. This can affect perceptions of tranquillity, space and freedom. There may be some pressure in the future for smaller turbines and solar panels. The influence of climate change will not be immediately obvious, but increases in temperature will lead to habitat loss and change. More intense rainfall will cause further footpath and soil erosion in up-land areas.”

7.1.24 Section 8 addresses Key Design Considerations. Paragraph 8.01 states:

7.1.25 New development should firstly seek to avoid any adverse impacts on the AONB before investigating mitigation measures.

7.1.26 Sub-section 8.4 addresses Setting. Paragraph 8.41 states:

“Any new development should be assessed against its immediate environment and within its wider landscape setting. This is especially true in a protected landscape where long distance views are important and need to be protected. Higher ground opens wider vistas over the surrounding countryside allowing the eye to scan greater distances. Very often the visibility of development from greater distances is overlooked and although scale is diminished by distance, from certain viewpoints, development can look out of place and prominent...Care should therefore be taken to steer development away from the skyline, open elevated ground or sites overlooked from higher ground. The visible impact of new development will be minimised if sited in more enclosed landscapes, hidden by existing landforms and a screen of hedgerows, trees and woodland...Whilst elements of the landscape may be locally changed to accommodate development, the prevailing character of the landscape should remain intact. Visual prominence is when development forms a new focal point in the landscape which detracts from the general scene, visual focus and sense of place.”



7.1.27 Paragraph 8.42 states:

“New development outside the AONB but close to the boundary can impact on the setting of the AONB and its natural beauty. Consideration should therefore also be given...to development outside the AONB which can have an impact on the designated area. The extent of the impact is likely to depend on scale and proximity to the boundary. In some instances, the accumulation of development can, over time, begin to have an adverse impact on setting...Although a proposal by itself might not be significant, in combination with similar proposals in the vicinity, it has passed the threshold of acceptability.”

7.1.28 Paragraph 8.43 states:

“Long distance landscape views are important and new development should avoid intruding on the focus and appreciation of these views.”

7.1.29 Sub-section 8.5 addresses Landscaping. Paragraph 8.51 states:

“Where possible such features which make up the existing landscape fabric should be retained or enhanced. Trees and plants soften the outline of buildings, add to biodiversity and a modest landscaping scheme can quickly assimilate new development into the countryside. The way a site is enclosed should also be part and parcel of the initial design process and should not be an afterthought. Existing stone walls and hedges should be retained and restored where possible and protected from building activity. However, landscaping will not by itself, make a poor development acceptable.”

7.1.30 Paragraph 8.52 states:

“The type of shrubs, trees and permanent materials used for landscaping should reflect what is in the immediate vicinity. Where possible, it is best to choose indigenous species of local provenance and avoid more exotic or alien plants.”

Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Guide

7.1.31 The Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Guide was published in 2016 and forms part of the adopted planning guidance supplementing the Local Development Plan. Its main objective is to assist the consideration of Policies VOE 9 and VOE 10 of the Denbighshire Local Development Plan, which outline the primary objectives for assessing renewable energy developments under 50MW.

7.1.32 Paragraph 6.3.5 states:

“Sensitive landscapes include National Parks, AONBs, Historic Landscapes, Parks & Gardens, World Heritage Sites and non-designated areas which are particularly distinctive for their character, scenic quality, rarity, intactness, sense of place, wildness/tranquillity (identified by LANDMAP and/or site assessment). The visual settings of National Parks, AONBs, Historic Landscapes, Parks & Gardens, World Heritage Sites, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Schedule Ancient Monuments are also important to conserve and are sensitive areas.”

7.1.33 Section 8 addresses Land Use Planning Considerations in Relation to Solar Energy Schemes, and sub-section 8.2 addresses Landscape and Visual Impact. Paragraph 8.2.1 states:

“Because solar arrays often need direct sun locations to operate, they have the potential to be visible from numerous points and can sometimes be seen from great distances. Indeed, the landscape impact of an array is likely to be one of the most significant issues applicants will need to deal with. Indeed a solar array can introduce many new industrial elements into the landscape and create an increased urban and industrial influence on the countryside.”



7.1.34 Paragraph 8.2.3 states:

“Development of the array will also need to be considered in terms of its design, the layout and future maintenance. Whilst it is important to ensure that the array is not shaded, it is important that existing hedge lines and trees are not removed, and if they must be, these losses will need to be mitigated.”

7.1.35 Paragraph 8.2.5 states:

“It will be important to consider views to the site, including widely recognised iconic views and acknowledged important views to, from, or between heritage assets.”

7.1.36 Paragraph 8.2.7 states:

“Due to arrays needing to be near a grid connection point, when siting a scheme it is important to consider not only the impact this development will have but also the potential cumulative effects with similar proposals and other forms of development. Transformer housing, security fencing, cameras are all associated works which will require consideration in terms of their landscape impact.”

7.1.37 Sub-section 8.3 addresses Land Management. Paragraph 8.3.1 states:

“In setting out the design for a solar array consideration should be given to the post construction and post development land management. Details of management/maintenance programme for the lifetime of the development will also be a factor in determination. The Council is keen to ensure that the post construction site is maintained to avoid the spread of non-native plant species and native weeds. In addition, post construction, when access is more infrequent and by smaller plant, the reinstatement of small field entrances and gateways would both help reduce views of the development and maintain traditional roadside rural characteristics.”

7.1.38 Sub-section 8.5 addresses Ecology. Paragraph 8.5.1 states:

“Along with landscape sensitivity, the ecological sensitivity of the development site will be a key factor in determining acceptability. In finding a site, intensively managed agricultural land is likely to be of least ecological value and possibly more suitable in ecological terms for solar PV.”

7.1.39 Paragraph 8.5.4 states:

“Opportunities for ecological enhancement are promoted and may include planting of native wildflowers, beneath, between or around field margins to increase habitat connectivity. Low density grazing by smaller livestock may not risk damage to the solar arrays. Supporting and enhancing biodiversity on schemes is promoted.”

Trees & Landscaping Supplementary Planning Guidance Note

7.1.40 The Trees & Landscaping Supplementary Planning Guidance Note was published in 2016 and forms part of the adopted planning guidance supplementing the Local Development Plan. It aims to amplify the development plan policies and other issues in a clear and concise format with the aim of improving the design and quality of new development, and to assist officers in handling and members in determining planning applications.

7.1.41 Paragraph 3.1 states:

“Trees contribute considerably to the amenity of the landscape and streetscene, add maturity to new developments, make places more attractive, and help soften the built environment by enhancing pleasant views, by breaking up view lines and by screening unattractive buildings and undesirable views. They can mitigate landscape



impacts, notably in relation to developments in or within the setting of protected landscapes such as the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley AONB”.

7.1.42 Section 5 addresses Guidance. Paragraph 5.1 states:

“Development which would result in damage and/or inappropriate felling of significant trees (i.e. British Standard (BS) 5837: Category A & B trees) and hedgerows will not normally be permitted...Development proposed near to existing trees, woodlands or hedgerows must be in accordance with the design and protection principles set out in this Local Planning Guidance Note and BS 5837: 2012 "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations" (or any subsequent revisions).”

7.1.43 Section 6 addresses Design. Paragraph 6.1 states:

“The planting of new trees, including the choice of species, planting locations and future maintenance needs and the integration of good quality existing trees and hedgerows is an integral part of the design process. Plant stock should normally comprise native local species, which should ideally be locally grown to ensure continuity of the local gene pool and reduce plant failures. Development must be planned around significant trees and hedgerows and where appropriate, to increase tree cover with new planting, thereby enhancing local amenity. For example, trees and hedgerows of considerable age, visual amenity, and ecological or historical value are not easily replaced and should be retained and safeguarded. Where development results in the loss of trees and hedgerows, new planting of at least an equal number or canopy cover to those lost will usually be required to mitigate for the loss.”

7.1.44 Paragraph 6.2 states:

Where space permits, the use of large canopy trees will be required in order to provide structure to the development and surrounding landscape and streetscene. The use of mature planting to provide immediate screening and landscaping should be used whenever possible. On large development sites the use of advance structural planting should be considered to provide appropriate screening.

7.1.45 Sub-section 6.8 addresses Planting. Paragraph 6.9 states:

“Appropriate new tree and hedgerow planting, amongst other landscaping proposals, will be required on development sites to enhance amenity and to mitigate for any loss of canopy cover from tree felling.”

7.1.46 Paragraphs 6.10-11 state:

“The choice of trees to be planted should take into account the layout and design of the site, future use, soil and climatic conditions, local landscape character and contextual surroundings and sufficient space must be planned within the layout to allow trees to reach their mature size. Planted trees should be of a species that at maturity achieve a size and form compatible with the scale and structure of the development.”

7.1.47 Sub-section 7.6 addresses The Design Stage. Paragraph 7.7 states:

“Development design should take into account the constraints and opportunities posed by existing quality trees, woodland and hedgerows and provide adequate space for new planting.”

