



Parc Ynni Calon y Gwynt

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Chapter 2 Approach to EIA





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2 APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1 THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- 2.1.1. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process for identifying the likely significant environmental effects (positive and negative) of a project to inform the decision-making process when considering an application for development consent.
- 2.1.2. The preparation of an ES is one of the key stages in the EIA process, as it brings together information about any significant environmental effects which decision makers use to inform their decision about whether a proposed development should be allowed to proceed.
- 2.1.3. This ES has been prepared to allow consultees an opportunity to comment on its contents, and for the Applicant to consider and respond to any comments received in accordance with the *Developments of National Significance: Procedural Guidance*¹, as well as complying with the requirements of the Developments of National Significance (Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016 (as amended). Prior to submission of the DNS application, the ES will be updated if required to address comments received during statutory consultation. Any amendments to the ES prior to submission will be identified within the application documents (either in the submitted ES or in the Pre-application Consultation Report).
- 2.1.4. The EIA process culminates in the provision of an ES written in accordance with the EIA Regulations². The ES will accompany the DNS application seeking the formal grant of planning permission for the Proposed Development. The ES will help to inform the determination of the application. In particular, the ES will provide an assessment of the likely significant effects associated with the Proposed Development.

OVERVIEW OF EIA

- 2.1.5. This chapter sets out the EIA process, the relevant regulations, guidance, terminology, methodology, scoping process, and the requirement for the consideration of alternatives (also see **Chapter 3: Scheme Need, Alternatives and Iterative Design Process**). The chapter then explains in more detail the particular scope of this EIA.
- 2.1.6. EIA is a systematic procedure that must be followed for certain categories of project, which aims to identify a project's likely significant environmental effects, identify (where necessary) environmental (mitigation) measures to reduce or offset the level of adverse effects and finally to assess residual effects with these measures incorporated or applied. This process helps to ensure that the predicted likely significant effects and the scope for any mitigation of these effects are properly understood by the public, and by the determining authority (in this instance, PEDW and ultimately the Welsh Ministers) before it decides on whether consent should be granted.

¹ Welsh Government (2025) Developments of national significance (DNS): procedural guidance. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/developments-national-significance-dns-procedural-guidance-html> (Accessed: April 2026).

² UK Government (2017). The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017. (online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/567/introduction> (Accessed April 2026).

- 2.1.7. A robust EIA is defined by a number of characteristics:
- it is systematic, comprising a sequence of tasks defined both by regulation and by good practice;
 - it is analytical, requiring the application of specialist skills from the environmental sciences;
 - it is impartial, its objective being to inform decision-making rather than to promote the project;
 - it is consultative, with provision being made for obtaining information and feedback from interested parties including local authorities, members of the public and statutory and non-statutory agencies; and
 - it is iterative, allowing opportunities for environmental concerns to be addressed during the planning and design of a project.
- 2.1.8. The EIA process identifies the potential for effects to arise and identifies environmental measures (mitigation) to be incorporated into the design of the Proposed Development, or the method of construction and operation that may reduce or eliminate negative effects or enhance positive effects. Typically, numerous design iterations take place in response to environmental constraints identified during the EIA process (in effect, incorporating environmental mitigation measures to avoid, reduce or compensate for identified adverse effects - 'embedded mitigation'). Further details of such measures identified for the Proposed Development are presented in **Chapter 3**, and the corresponding environmental topic chapters.

NEED FOR EIA

- 2.1.9. Under Regulation 4A of The Developments of National Significance (Specified Criteria and Prescribed Secondary Consents) (Wales) Regulations 2016 (as amended)^{3,4}, and paragraph 1.10 of the Developments of National Significance: Procedural Guidance¹ planning permission is required from the Welsh Ministers for the construction of an onshore wind generating station where it is expected to have an installed generating capacity of 10MW or above.^{5,6}
- 2.1.10. The EIA Regulations apply to DNS applications and the Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2, paragraph 3(i) ('Installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms)'). As noted in **Chapter 1: Introduction** of this ES, Schedule 2 development constitutes EIA development if the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. Wind farms of the scale proposed generally give rise to some significant environmental effects. However, it should be noted that a significant effect is not necessarily an unacceptable one when weighed against the benefits in the overall balance of acceptability of a scheme. This balance is set out in the **Planning Statement** which supports the DNS application.

³ UK Government (2016). The Developments of National Significance (Specified Criteria and Prescribed Secondary Consents) (Wales) Regulations 2016. (online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2016/53/contents/made> (Accessed April 2026).

⁴ UK Government (2016). The Developments of National Significance (Specified Criteria and Prescribed Secondary Consents) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. (online) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2016/358/contents/made> (Accessed April 2026).

⁵ Paragraph 1.11 of the Developments of National Significance: Procedural Guidance also states that overhead electric lines of up to 132kV which are associated with a devolved generation station are to be captured by the DNS system.

⁶ The requirement to seek planning permission from Welsh Ministers for Developments of National Significance is provided under Section 62(D) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/8/section/62D> (Accessed April 2026).

EIA REGULATIONS

- 2.1.11. Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations² specifies that the ES should describe those factors likely to be significantly affected by the Proposed Development: population, human health, biodiversity (for example flora and fauna), land (for example land take), soil (e.g. organic matter, erosion, compaction, sealing), water (for example hydro morphological changes, quantity and quality), air, climate (for example greenhouse gas emissions, impacts relevant to adaptation), material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological aspects, and landscape.
- 2.1.12. Establishing which aspects of the environment and associated issues are relevant for a particular project can be captured in the EIA scoping process. The proposed scope of the assessment is provided to the determining authority by the applicant, and the determining authority provides its opinion on the scope, taking account of feedback it obtains from key consultees. The scoping exercise undertaken for the Proposed Development is described in **Section 2.3** and a copy of the Scoping Report and Scoping Direction are set out in **Appendix 1A** and **Appendix 1B** respectively.

EIA GUIDANCE

- 2.1.13. A range of reference material and guidance has been drawn upon in developing the EIA methodology adopted for the Proposed Development. Principal sources of reference material and guidance over and above the EIA Regulations² are noted in each environmental topic chapter.

2.2 EIA TERMINOLOGY

IMPACTS AND EFFECTS

- 2.2.1. For the purposes of this ES, the term ‘impacts’ is used to describe the changes that arise as a result of the Proposed Development and the term ‘effects’ is used to describe the consequences of those changes, for example:
- Impacts could occur from physical activities that would take place if the Proposed Development were to proceed (e.g. vehicle movements during construction); and
 - Effects could occur as a result of environmental changes that are predicted as a result of these activities (e.g. an increase in noise levels could have an effect on a receptor, as a result of increased vehicle movements). In some cases, one change causes another change, which in turn results in an environmental effect.
- 2.2.2. The predicted environmental effects are the consequences of the environmental changes for specific environmental receptors. For example, with respect to bats, the loss of roosting sites or foraging areas could affect the bats’ population size; with regard to people, an increase in noise levels could affect people’s amenity.
- 2.2.3. This ES is concerned with assessing the significance of the environmental effects of the Proposed Development, rather than the activities or changes that cause them. However, this requires these activities to be understood, and the resultant changes identified and quantified, often based on predictive assessment work.

SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL SCOPE

- 2.2.4. Spatial scope is the area over which changes to the environment are predicted to occur as a consequence of the Proposed Development. In practice, an EIA should focus on those areas where these effects are likely to be significant.
- 2.2.5. In this ES, the spatial scope varies between environmental topics and is therefore described in each of the topic chapters. For example, the effects of a development with respect to landscape and visual amenity would generally be expected to cover a much greater area than biodiversity related effects which are often more localised.

- 2.2.6. The temporal scope covers the time period over which changes to the environment and the resultant effects are predicted to occur and are typically defined as either being temporary or permanent and related to the construction, operational, and/or decommissioning phases of development.

2.3 EIA SCOPING

- 2.3.1. Regulation 17(4)(c) of the EIA Regulations² requires that, where a Scoping Opinion has been adopted, an ES must '*...be based on the most recent scoping opinion or direction issued (so far as the proposed development remains materially the same as the proposed development which was the subject of that opinion or direction)*'. This effectively allows the determining authority to control the scope of the assessment. As such, it is important to set out as much information as possible about the development and the proposed work scope when preparing a Scoping Report with the objective of achieving a Scoping Direction that ideally does not require amendment.
- 2.3.2. Scoping involves identifying the following:
- the people and environmental resources (collectively known as 'receptors') that could be significantly affected by the Proposed Development; and
 - the work required to take forward the assessment of these potentially significant effects.
- 2.3.3. Scoping starts at the outset of the EIA process, with the initial identification of potentially significant effects as a result of the Proposed Development being set out in a Scoping Report (**Appendix 1A**). The preparation of the Scoping Report is informed by information about the legislative and policy context to the scheme. It is also informed by the simple rule that, to be significant, an effect must be of sufficient importance that it should influence the process of decision-making about whether or not consent should be granted for the Proposed Development or an element of it. In this ES, this is referred to as the 'significance threshold'.
- 2.3.4. At the scoping stage, the conclusion that is made using the significance threshold is based upon professional judgement, with reference to the project description at that stage, and available information about:
- the magnitude and other characteristics of the potential changes that are expected to be caused by the Proposed Development;
 - the sensitivity of receptors to these changes;
 - the effects of these changes on relevant receptors; and
 - the value of receptors
- 2.3.5. As a precautionary approach if the information that is available at the scoping stage does not enable a robust conclusion to be reached that a potential effect is not likely to be significant, the effect is taken forward for further assessment

SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 2.3.6. The environmental topic chapters (**5-15**) of this ES detail the scope of the assessment for each topic.
- 2.3.7. The Scoping Report for the Proposed Development (**Appendix 1A**) was submitted to PEDW on 21st February 2025. The Scoping Report sets out that the following environmental topics were proposed to be scoped into the EIA:
- Landscape and Visual;
 - Ecology;
 - Ornithology;
 - Cultural Heritage;

- Hydrology;
- Geology and Soils;
- Traffic and Transport;
- Noise;
- Shadow Flicker;
- Other Issues (Aviation and Telecommunications); and
- Cumulative effects.

2.3.8. The Scoping Direction from PEDW was subsequently received on the 14th May 2025 and is included as **Appendix 1B**. Details on how the scoping responses are addressed in the EIA are summarised in each individual topic chapter. As set out in the Scoping Report, a glint and glare assessment was proposed to be scoped into the assessment of the ES, however following further consideration by the Applicant and due to the presence of technical and environmental constraints on Site, the inclusion of solar PV as part of the Proposed Development has been dropped. Therefore, a glint and glare assessment is considered no longer required, and has not been included as part of this ES.

2.3.9. The topics set out below were scoped out of the EIA as standalone chapters:

- Socio-economics
- Population and human Health;
- Major Accidents and Disasters (including Fire Risk from BESS);
- Climate Change;
- Sustainable Resource Use and Waste Management; and
- Consideration of Alternatives

2.3.10. Each of these topics have been assessed as part of the scope of other relevant environmental topics. Further details are set out below.

POPULATION AND HUMAN HEALTH

2.3.11. As set out in the Scoping Report, and set out in **Table 1-2 of Chapter 1**, population and human health effects are considered within relevant technical chapters including:

- **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual;**
- **Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport;**
- **Chapter 11: Noise;**
- **Chapter 13: Shadow Flicker;** and
- **Chapter 14: Other Issues.**

SOCIO-ECONOMICS

2.3.12. As set out in the Scoping Report, and set out in **Table 1-2 of Chapter 1**, social effects are considered within relevant technical chapters including:

- **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual;**
- **Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport;**

2.3.13. The economic assessment of the Proposed Development takes place in the **Planning Statement** which supports this DNS application.

MAJOR ACCIDENTS AND DISASTERS

- 2.3.14. The scope for this EIA to consider the vulnerability of the Proposed Development to major accidents and disasters was considered in Table 13-1 of the Scoping Report (**Appendix 1A**). Major accidents or disasters have been scoped in where they represent a risk to, or because of, the Proposed Development, either from the proposed location or from the project itself, and where there is reasonable likelihood of the accident or disaster occurring, or where the effect of the accident or disaster would lead to mitigation which is beyond the usual scope of construction or operational activities. Where an accident or disaster has been scoped in, the ES chapter(s) identified consider the matter in more detail, and therefore no specific chapter on major accidents and disasters is included. Following further data collection, design and assessment work since the Scoping Report, the following topic areas are scoped into the assessment in the relevant chapters as set out below:
- **Chapter 9: Hydrology- Floods** - There is potential for damage to turbines or infrastructure from flooding or increase in flood risk elsewhere;
 - **Chapter 12: Traffic and Transport** - Transport accidents - Abnormal loads and increase in traffic from construction works could lead to an increased risk of accidents. The highway network may be unsuitable for such traffic, further increasing accident risk;
 - **Chapter 4 - Industrial accidents** - There is potential for accidents to occur during construction and maintenance activities; for example, manual labour, working at height and use of specialist plant all bring risk of industrial accidents;
 - **Chapter 9: Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Geology and Soils** - A Peat Landslide Hazard Risk Assessment has been completed and is appended to this ES as **Appendix 10C**; and
- 2.3.15. As set out in the Scoping Direction, an assessment of potential fire risk from the BESS associated with the Proposed Development has been undertaken, and further detail is presented in the Outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan (**Appendix 4A** of this ES). In summary, the BESS will make use of modern liquid cooled battery systems to mitigate fire risks. These have been tested and evaluated against the UL 9540A method which assesses fire safety risk when battery cell ‘thermal runaway’⁷ takes place.
- 2.3.16. The internal condition of individual battery cells will be monitored and managed by a battery management system which detects and mitigates for signs of potential overheating. In the event of any early warning signs being detected, individual cell stacks can be easily deactivated and replaced as part of regular maintenance. Fire and gas detection and suppression systems will also be implemented and monitor for early warning signs and then try to quell any fires within battery housing. The modular design nature of most BESS facilities also reduces the risk of fire spreading between battery housings by incorporating adequate internal spacing. It is expected that full details of the BESS installation and its management in these and all other respects would be agreed under one or more suitably worded planning conditions.
- 2.3.17. Following the implementation of best practice measures outlined in **Appendix 4A**, it is considered that fire risks from the proposed BESS facility are low. However, the final design details of any BESS, including fire monitoring and suppression systems, will be implemented following planning permission approval and secured via a suitably worded planning condition.

⁷ Thermal runaway is a situation where the current flowing through the cell or battery on charge or overcharge causes the cell temperature to rise.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- 2.3.18. The vulnerability of the Proposed Development to climate change and extreme climate events is considered as part of the scope of other relevant environmental topics, namely **Chapter 5: Ecology**; **Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual**; **Chapter 9: Hydrology**; and **Chapter 10: Geology and Soils**. Where relevant, the Proposed Development has been designed so that it is not vulnerable to the effects of Climate Change. A carbon balance assessment of the Proposed Development has been undertaken and is available at **Appendix 2A** of this ES.

SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE USE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

- 2.3.19. As proposed in Section 13.12 of the Scoping Report, and agreed in the Scoping Direction, this ES does not present a stand-alone assessment of sustainable resource use and waste management.
- 2.3.20. The tracks, turbine foundations, hardstanding and other site infrastructure have been designed to minimise the amount of soil disturbance. Where soils would be excavated, they would be stored on the Site in accordance with the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which would be produced prior to construction and then used in the restoration of the development site post construction to minimise the loss of soil resource. An Outline CEMP has been prepared and is provided alongside this ES⁸. The Outline CEMP forms part of the DNS application, and the final CEMP will be approved pursuant to a planning condition.
- 2.3.21. The potential effects on soil resources are considered in **Chapter 10: Geology and Soils**.
- 2.3.22. The potential environmental effects on water resources would be the use of water during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases and the potential increase in flood risk and the disturbance of surface and groundwater as a result of construction activities. Any effects are considered in **Chapter 9: Hydrology** of this ES. During the construction phase, water resource would be managed in accordance with procedures set out in the approved CEMP, an Outline CEMP is included as part of the DNS application, and the final CEMP will be approved pursuant to a planning condition.
- 2.3.23. The potential effects of the Proposed Development on biodiversity resources are considered in **Chapter 5: Ecology** and **Chapter 6: Ornithology** of this ES, within which appropriate environmental measures are set out in order to minimise the potential damage to habitats and species during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the development. Environmental measures will also be detailed in an Outline Habitat Management Plan, which will be submitted with the DNS application.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

- 2.3.24. The EIA Regulations² require an ES to include ‘A description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of project design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the applicant or appellant which are relevant to the proposed development and its specific characteristics and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.’
- 2.3.25. **Chapter 3: Scheme Need, Alternatives and Iterative Design Process** describes the identification process and design criteria for the site of the Proposed Development. In EIA terms, the requirement is to report on reasonable alternatives that have been considered. The examination of alternatives in this ES is therefore restricted as appropriate to alternative designs that were considered for the Site. An assessment of a ‘do nothing’ scenario constitutes a continuation of the baseline conditions of the Site accounting for climate change. This has been addressed under the ‘future baseline’ sections of each technical chapter, where relevant. Given the critical need for renewable energy development as set out in **Chapter 3**, a ‘do nothing’ scenario has therefore not been formally considered as a reasonable alternative.

⁸ WSP (2026). Parc Ynni Calon y Gwynt - Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

2.4 CONSULTATION

- 2.4.1. Consultation is an essential element of the EIA process. The Applicant has undertaken consultation and engaged with a range of statutory and non-statutory consultees, local communities, organisations and individuals to refine the Proposed Development, the EIA and assist in the development of any required mitigation. Specific information on any feedback received is presented in the individual environmental topic chapters (**Chapters 5-15**) which include a 'Consultation and stakeholder engagement' section.
- 2.4.2. A website was set up at the start of the project to provide information about the proposals and feedback mechanisms to enable local communities and stakeholders to comment on the emerging proposals: <https://parcynni-calonygwynt.cymru/en>.
- 2.4.3. Early engagement with the local planning authority, local community and interested parties took place from February and March 2025. Public exhibitions were held at Clatter Community Centre on the 4th March 2025 and at Cefn Coch Inn on the 5th March 2025. The exhibition material was hosted on the project website with all the information that was available to those who attended in person.
- 2.4.4. A Public Exhibition Summary Document that summarises the key issues and enables community members to engage easily in the process was produced and was available on the project website from the start of the early engagement process: <https://parcynni-calonygwynt.cymru/en/public-consultation>.
- 2.4.5. A Consultation Report will form part of the DNS application and will summarise how pre-application consultation was undertaken and set out how feedback received was considered.

2.5 OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

- 2.5.1. All the topic assessments presented in this ES have been undertaken on the basis of a common understanding of the nature of the Proposed Development as it currently stands, as described in **Chapter 4: Description of the Proposed Development**.
- 2.5.2. For each technical chapter (**Chapter 5 - 15**), the assessment of likely significant effects has been undertaken by competent experts with relevant specialist skills (see **Table 1-1**), drawing on their experience of working on other development projects, good practice in EIA and on relevant published information in line with Regulation 17(4)(e)². For some topics, use has been made of modelling or other methodologies, as appropriate.
- 2.5.3. With a few exceptions, each topic chapter follows a common format, as outlined below:
- Introduction;
 - Relevant legislation, planning policy and technical guidance;
 - Consultation and engagement;
 - Data gathering methodology;
 - Overall baseline (where appropriate), with the detailed baseline being set out within 'Assessment of effects';
 - Embedded measures;
 - Scope of the assessment;
 - Assessment methodology;
 - Assessment of effects;
 - Assessment of cumulative (inter-project) effects;

- Significance conclusions;
- Additional measures (if required);
- Residual effects assessment (if required); and
- Further work to be undertaken (if required).

GENERAL EIA METHODOLOGY

- 2.5.4. Following the confirmation of the scope of the EIA, individual environmental topics are subject to survey, investigation and assessment, and individual topic chapters are prepared for the ES. The assessment methodologies are based on recognised good practice and guidelines specific to each topic area, details of which are provided in the appropriate chapter.
- 2.5.5. In general terms, the technical studies undertaken for each topic area and chapter include:
- collection and collation of existing baseline information about the receiving environment and original surveys to fill any gaps in knowledge or to update any historic information, together with identification of any relevant trends in, or evolution of, the baseline;
 - consultation with experts and relevant consultees to define the scope of the assessment and study area and subsequent consultation in response to emerging study findings;
 - consideration of the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the baseline, followed by identification of design changes to seek to avoid or reduce any predicted adverse effects;
 - engagement with other technical topic specialists and engineers / designers in a design iteration process seeking to optimise the scheme for the differing environmental effects and to identify any appropriate environmental (mitigation) measures;
 - assessment of the final scheme design and evaluation of significant effects, together with an evaluation of any residual significant effects that remain after mitigation measures have been implemented; and
 - compilation of the ES chapters (see **Chapter 1** for details of the environmental topic chapters).
- 2.5.6. Many of the impacts as a result of the Proposed Development are relevant to more than one environmental topic area and the resulting effects in one topic area may affect receptors considered under another topic (for example change to water quality may affect aquatic biodiversity receptors). Careful attention has therefore been paid to interrelationships to avoid overlap or duplication between topic chapters. For example, the assessment of effects on cultural heritage features will be aided by the assessment in the landscape and visual chapter. Similarly, secondary effects on ecological resources arising from hydrological change will be considered in the ecology chapter with a cross-reference to the relevant direct effect in the hydrology chapter.
- 2.5.7. In some cases, technical data and analysis is presented in a technical appendix (these are included in **Volume 3** of this ES). It is also necessary to recognise that information on some topics, such as the nesting location of certain bird species, is highly sensitive and may create a risk of persecution if published. In those cases, all relevant information to inform the assessment process has been provided to relevant statutory consultees only. The Applicant will consider requests for this information from other parties, but may, at its or relevant statutory consultees' discretion, withhold such information.

2.6 IDENTIFICATION OF BASELINE CONDITIONS

- 2.6.1. In order to assess the effects of construction, operation and decommissioning, it is necessary to determine the periods in the project programme when these 'stages' or 'phases' would occur, and when a reasonable 'worst case' of these stages/phases can be defined for use in the assessment.
- 2.6.2. As the various elements of the Proposed Development are expected to be built over a period of approximately 24 months (operation currently estimated to start in 2031-2035 and then operated for 40 years), it cannot be assumed that the baseline conditions in the absence of the project would be the same as the current baseline throughout this period.
- 2.6.3. As required by Schedule 4 (3)² 'A description of the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment (baseline scenario) and an outline of the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the development as far as natural changes from the baseline scenario can be assessed with reasonable effort on the basis of the availability of environmental information and scientific knowledge', it is necessary to define the current baseline conditions and then to decide whether these conditions are likely to change by the 'assessment years' that are selected for the construction and operation of the Proposed Development. If this predicted future baseline is more likely to occur than the current baseline, it is used for the assessment. However, in many cases it will be concluded that the current baseline is just as likely, or even more likely, to occur in the assessment years than would be the case with any predicted future baseline conditions. In the case of this EIA, the current baseline is used for the assessment as, in the absence of the Proposed Development, it is anticipated that current land use and management would continue, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that the future baseline would be similar to the current baseline.
- 2.6.4. Each technical chapter explains the basis for defining the current and future baseline conditions, where this is appropriate, based on the following:
- information gathered about the existing environmental conditions;
 - changes that can be predicted based on reasonable assumptions and modelling calculations, e.g. the application of traffic growth factors based on relevant guidance;
 - information relating to other likely and predictable changes, e.g. climate change, which could affect current prevailing environmental conditions; and
 - information about other relevant developments, including the nature of the development proposals, their likely timing and their location relative to the Proposed Development.
- 2.6.5. The baseline is determined for the 'Study Area' for each environmental topic by a combination of desk-based research, including consultation with the relevant statutory and non-statutory authorities, together with field survey work (where required).
- 2.6.6. As a minimum, the Study Area could comprise the Site (**Figure 1.2**). However, for many developments, the Study Area is also likely to include land outside the Site boundary, especially where the effects of the Proposed Development are likely to extend beyond such geographical limits. Where the Proposed Development could affect off-site areas, the Study Area reflects the 'zone of influence' (Zol) where effects may occur.
- 2.6.7. Details of the relevant Zols are discussed in the baseline section of each environmental topic chapter.

2.7 OVERVIEW OF APPROACH TO SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

- 2.7.1. One of the requirements of an ES is to set out the conclusions that have been reached about the likely significant environmental effects that it is predicted would result from a proposed development. Reaching a conclusion about which effects, if any, are likely to be significant is the culmination of an iterative process that involves the following stages:
- identifying those effects that are likely to be significant (see **Section 2.3** on scoping);
 - assessing the effects of the Proposed Development against the baseline (current or future, as appropriate); and
 - concluding whether these resultant effects are likely to be significant.
- 2.7.2. **Chapters 5-15** describe the approaches that have been used in relation to the stages outlined in the bullet points above for each of the environmental topics that are considered in this ES.

IDENTIFICATION OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

- 2.7.3. To inform the identification of likely significant effects, technical specialists involved in the preparation of the ES were supplied with information about the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Proposed Development at an early stage of the assessment process.
- 2.7.4. As the proposals evolved, more detail became available about construction and operational activities. This enabled a progressively more refined understanding to be developed about the environmental changes that could be caused by the Proposed Development, including information about their spatial extent and other characteristics (e.g. their magnitude, frequency etc.).
- 2.7.5. The identification of receptors that need to be considered draws on available information about environmental changes, which in some cases can be translated into Zols outside of which the environmental changes are predicted to be sufficiently small that receptors are not likely to be significantly affected. In addition, for some environmental topics (e.g. Biodiversity and Historic Environment), a valuation is undertaken to define those receptors that are of sufficient importance or value that they could be significantly affected. Only those receptors that are of sufficient importance or value and that are located within the defined Zols, where effects could be significant, are taken forward for further assessment.
- 2.7.6. The technical assessments, undertaken in **Chapters 5-15** of this ES, describe how environmental impacts and resulting effects for different environmental topics are assessed, together with the topic specific approaches that have been used to identify the receptors that could be significantly affected by the Proposed Development, based on information collected to date, the final project design and responses from statutory consultation.

TYPES OF EFFECTS

- 2.7.7. Paragraph 5 of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations² states that '*The description of the likely significant effects on the factors specified in regulation 4(2) should cover the direct effects and any indirect, secondary, cumulative, transboundary, short-term, medium-term and long-term, permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects of the development.*' Where appropriate, this ES considers all these types of effects where they are relevant to different environmental topic chapters.

Direct effects

- 2.7.8. Direct effects are those that result directly from a Proposed Development. For example, where a machine disturbs an area of habitat, the associated physical activity would result in a change to that habitat.

Indirect and Secondary effects

- 2.7.9. Indirect and secondary effects are those that result from consequential change caused by the development. As such they would normally occur on a different receptor, later in time or at locations farther away than direct effects. An example would be where an area of habitat disturbed by machinery results in loss of vegetation and soil compaction which increases silted run-off into nearby watercourses affecting ecology.

Transboundary effects

- 2.7.10. Transboundary effects are those that would affect the environment in another state within the European Economic Area (EEA). No such effects are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Development.

Temporal effects

- 2.7.11. As discussed in **Section 2.2**, temporal effects are typically defined as being permanent or temporary as follows:
- **Permanent** - these are effects that will remain even when the Proposed Development is complete, although these effects may be caused by environmental changes that are permanent or temporary. For example, an excavator that is temporarily driven over an area of valuable habitat could cause damage with the result that the effect is permanent.
 - **Temporary** - these are effects that are related to environmental changes associated with a particular activity that will cease when that activity finishes. For example, an increase in noise levels during construction may affect nearby residential receptors, but any effects would cease on completion of this phase of a proposed development. Where effects are temporary, they may be defined as short-, medium- and long-term, the duration of which may depend on the receptor in question and would therefore be defined in technical chapters as appropriate.

Positive / Negative effects

- 2.7.12. Most predicted effects will be obviously positive or negative and will be described as either 'beneficial' or 'adverse'. However, in some cases (e.g., the assessment of landscape and visual amenity effects) it is appropriate to identify that the interpretation of a change is a matter of professional opinion, and such effects, whether 'beneficial' or 'adverse', will be described as 'subjective'.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

- 2.7.13. Effects from wind farm development are generally considered in relation to the following key stages of the Proposed Development and it is unlikely that there would be an interaction and therefore cumulative effect between the phases (i.e. construction phase must complete before operation phase would take place):
- **Construction** - Effects may arise from the construction activities themselves, or from the temporary occupation of land. Effects are often of limited duration although there is potential for permanent effects. Where construction activities create permanent change, the effects will continue into the operational period but will be considered from the point in which the effect occurs, and reported as a 'construction phase' effect.
 - **Operation** - Effects may be permanent, or they may be temporary, intermittent, or limited to the life of the Proposed Development until decommissioning (as in the case of wind power developments which gain planning permission for a defined and finite number of years).
 - **Decommissioning** - Effects may arise from the decommissioning activities themselves, or from the temporary occupation of land. The effects would generally be temporary and of limited duration. Potential permanent effects during decommissioning are considered less likely to occur and are associated with restoration activities.

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION

Overview

- 2.7.14. The receptors that could be significantly affected are identified within each topic chapter. The approach that is adopted to determine whether the effects on these receptors are significant is to apply a combination of professional judgement and a topic-specific significance evaluation methodology that draws on the results of the assessment work that has been carried out.
- 2.7.15. In applying this approach to significance evaluation, it is necessary to ensure that there is consistency between each environmental topic in the level at which effects are considered to be significant. Therefore, it is inappropriate for the assessment of one topic to conclude that minor effects are significant, when, for another topic, only comparatively major effects are significant.
- 2.7.16. In order to achieve the desired level of consistency, each environmental topic lead has been guided in their decision-making about likely significance by the '*significance threshold*' that informed the preparation of the Scoping Report (see **Section 2.3** above) as well as the relevant topic-specific significance evaluation methodology.
- 2.7.17. The conclusion about significance is arrived at using professional judgement, with reference to the project description, and available information. This information includes the magnitude and other characteristics of the potential changes that are expected to be caused by the Proposed Development, the receptors' sensitivity to these changes and the effects of these changes on relevant receptors.
- 2.7.18. In some cases, use of the '*significance threshold*' alone will enable a conclusion to be reached that a potential effect is not likely to be significant (see the 'Scope of the assessment' section of the topic chapter (bullet point 8 in paragraph 2.5.3)) without the need for more detailed assessment. However, in other cases, effects identified in the 'Scope of the assessment' section are taken forward for further assessment in the subsequent section(s) of each topic chapter.
- 2.7.19. For some of these effects, relatively little assessment work may be required to reach a conclusion that an effect is not significant. But, in other cases, more extensive assessment work is required. Sometimes the application of the 'significance threshold' is sufficient to support this conclusion but, in other cases, the relevant topic-specific significance evaluation methodology is used to inform the evaluation of significance (to determine whether an effect is or is not significant).
- 2.7.20. Having applied the relevant topic-specific significance evaluation methodology, the topic specialists check the conclusions against the significance threshold. If this threshold results in a different conclusion to that reached using the significance evaluation methodology, a detailed justification is provided as to why this different conclusion is valid.
- 2.7.21. For some of the topics that are assessed in this ES, there is published guidance available about significance evaluation. Where such guidance exists, it has been used to inform the development of the significance evaluation methodologies that are used in the ES. For other topics, it has been necessary to develop methodologies without the benefit of guidance. This has involved technical specialists drawing on their previous experience of significance evaluation in EIA. Each technical topic chapter in the ES sets out the significance evaluation methodologies that has been used for the specific topic area.
- 2.7.22. While there may be variation depending on the technical topic being considered, significance evaluation involves combining information about the sensitivity, importance or value of a receptor, and the magnitude and other characteristics of the changes that affect the receptor. The approach to using this information for significance evaluation is outlined below.

Receptor Sensitivity, Importance, or Value

- 2.7.23. The sensitivity or value of a receptor is largely a product of the importance of an asset, as informed by legislation and policy, and as qualified by professional judgement. For example, receptors for landscape, biodiversity or the historic environment may be defined as being of international or national importance. Lower value resources may be defined as being sensitive or important at a county or district level. For each environmental topic, it is necessary to provide a detailed rationale that explains how the categories of sensitivity / importance / value have been used.
- 2.7.24. The use of a location or physical element that may be representative of receptors, e.g. people, would also play a part in its classification in terms of sensitivity, importance, or value. For example, when considering effects on the amenity of people, a location used for recreational purposes may be valued more than a place of work.

Magnitude of Change

- 2.7.25. The magnitude of change affecting a receptor as a result of the Proposed Development would be identified on a scale from very low to very high. As with receptor sensitivity and value, a rationale is provided in each topic chapter that explains how the categories of environmental change are defined. For certain topics, the magnitude of change would be related to guidance on what levels of change are acceptable (e.g. for air quality or noise) and be based on numerical parameters. For other changes, it will be a matter of professional judgement to determine the magnitude of change, using descriptive terms.

Determination of Significance

- 2.7.26. The significance of effects is determined with reference to information about the nature of the development, the receptors that could be significantly affected and their sensitivity, importance or value, together with the magnitudes of environmental change that are likely to occur.
- 2.7.27. Significance evaluation for many environmental topics can be guided by the use of matrices that combine sensitivity / value and the characteristics of environmental changes as shown in the example in **Table 2-1** which is a generic five by five matrix used to offer granularity (though individual topic chapters may use reduced versions (e.g. four by four, four by three etc.) as appropriate). In addition, professional judgement is applied because, for certain environmental topics, the lines between the sensitivities or magnitudes of change may not be clearly defined and the resulting assessment conclusions may need clarifying. For clarity, the specific significance evaluation matrices applicable to each environmental topic have been set out in the relevant 'Significance evaluation methodology' sub-section contained in each environmental topic chapter.
- 2.7.28. Definitions as to how the categories used in the matrix are derived for each topic are also set out in each environmental topic chapter, along with the relevant explanation and descriptions of receptor sensitivity, magnitude of change and levels of effect that are considered significant under the EIA Regulations.
- 2.7.29. Within the matrix that is used in most significance evaluation exercises, reference is made to:
- major effects, which will always be determined as being significant in EIA terms;
 - moderate effects are potentially significant and there may be circumstances where such effects are considered significant/not significant on the basis of professional judgement; and
 - minor or negligible effects, which will always be determined as not significant.

Table 2-1 - Significance Evaluation Matrix

		Magnitude of change				
		Very high	High	Medium	Low	Very low
Sensitivity/importance/value	Very high	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Moderate (Potentially significant)
	High	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Moderate (Potentially significant)	Minor (Not significant)
	Medium	Major (Significant)	Major (Significant)	Moderate (Potentially significant)	Minor (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)
	Low	Major (Significant)	Moderate (Potentially significant)	Minor (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)
	Very Low	Moderate (Potentially significant)	Minor (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)	Negligible (Not significant)

Note: Significant effects are those identified as 'Major'. 'Moderate' effects may be deemed to be significant, depending on the environmental topic and the application of professional judgment.

2.8 ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

2.8.1. The EIA process includes consideration as to whether any of the individual effects of the Proposed Development would combine to create a cumulative effect greater than the sum of the individual effects. There are two types of cumulative effects to be considered:

- cumulative effects: effects that arise as a result of the Proposed Development in combination with other large-scale developments or projects; and
- combined effects: effects that occur as a result of two or more environmental topic effects acting together (i.e. combined), to result in a new or changed effects on a single receptor. These are discussed further in **Chapter 15**.

CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

- 2.8.2. Whilst there is no standard approach to the cumulative effects assessment (CEA), PEDW advises applicants to utilise the methodology set out in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment⁹ which sets out a process for the identification and assessment of 'other development'. Hence, the EIA will follow the methodology as defined in this advice note. This is a four-stage approach shown in **Table 2-2**. Where relevant, topic-specific guidance will be used to inform the assessment of cumulative effects, for example **Chapter 5: Landscape and Visual**.

Table 2-2 - Summary of PINS Advice on CEA summary

Stage	Title	Description
Stage 1	Establish the Zol and identify the long list of 'other development'	Each environmental topic assessment included in the ES will have a Zol within which the potential for cumulative effects will be considered. These have been established through desk studies and modelling. A desk study of planning applications, development plans and frameworks and other available sources will be completed within this Zol to form a long list of 'other developments'. The Zol is measured from the red line boundary for the Proposed Development.
Stage 2	Identify a short list of 'other development' for CEA	Professional judgement from technical specialists will refine the long list of 'other developments' to identify those that could give rise to a significant effect cumulatively with the Proposed Development.
Stage 3	Information gathering	Information will be gathered on the 'other developments' in the shortlist to inform the assessment.
Stage 4	Assessment	Each of the environmental aspects will complete an assessment of the relevant 'other developments' in the shortlist within their Zol.

- 2.8.3. Identifying other developments that should be considered in the CEA involves first acknowledging that the availability of information necessary to conduct this will partly depend on the prevailing status of the relevant other developments. Developing this concept further, other developments can be grouped into tiers, which reflect the likely degree of certainty attached to each development, with Tier 1 being the most certain and Tier 3 the least certain, as illustrated in **Table 2-3**.

⁹ Planning Inspectorate (2024). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on Cumulative Effects Assessment. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-on-cumulative-effects-assessment> (Accessed April 2026).

Table 2-3 - Scoping of Other Developments to be Considered in the CEA

Hierarchy of other Developments	Certainty of other Developments	
Tier 1	Under construction*.	Decreasing level of detail likely to be available ↓
	Permitted application(s), whether under the <i>Town and Country Planning Act 1990</i> , DNS or other regimes, but not yet implemented.	
	Submitted application(s), whether under the <i>Town and Country Planning Act 1990</i> , DNS or other regimes, but not yet determined.	
Tier 2	Projects on the Welsh Government's register of DNS, and/or received by a relevant local planning authority, and where a scoping report or Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) material has been submitted	
Tier 3	Identified in the relevant Development Plan (and emerging Development Plans - with appropriate weight being given as they move closer to adoption) recognising that much information on any relevant proposals will be limited.	
	Identified in other plans and programmes (as appropriate) which set the framework for future development consents/approvals, where such development is reasonably likely to come forward.	

* Where other projects (i.e. new permanent development such as new housing estates etc) are expected to be completed before construction of the Proposed Development, and the effects of those projects are fully determined, effects arising from these are considered as part of the baseline and therefore as part of the assessment of both the construction and operational phases.

- 2.8.4. In the context of the Proposed Development, and in accordance with the EIA Regulations, sufficiently detailed information required to undertake a CEA is available only for Tier 1 and Tier 2 developments as described in **Table 2-3**.
- 2.8.5. In the course of completing this ES, and through communication with the Planning Department at Powys County Council, a number of other wind farm developments have been identified for consideration in the assessment of inter-project cumulative effects. The register of applications for DNS has also been interrogated, and the following local planning authorities have been contacted for details of other major development proposals within the Zols identified by the technical topics (up to a maximum of 27km from the Site for Landscape and Visual); this corresponds to Stage 1 in **Table 2-1**.
- Powys County Council;
 - Ceredigion County Council;
 - Gwynedd Council; and
 - Shropshire Council.

2.8.6. The 'long list' of other developments was reduced to a 'short list' by considering those with the potential to give rise to significant cumulative effects with the Proposed Development. This was on the basis that the developments omitted from the short list:

- do not comprise 'major' development as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended)¹⁰ (i.e. development of 10 or more dwellings, over 1ha in area, buildings of more than 1,000m², waste development, or development involving the winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working deposits);
- are understood to have already undergone construction or will be complete and operational before construction of the Proposed Development and therefore form part of the current baseline or will form part of the future baseline conditions and have been considered on that basis;
- are unlikely to have commenced prior to the completion of the Proposed Development and/or insufficient information is available to complete an assessment at this time. Therefore, any cumulative effects assessment would need to be completed by the developer/applicant for that particular proposal; or
- are of sufficient distance from the Proposed Development, or of a size and nature that significant cumulative effects are considered unlikely to occur.

2.8.7. Major developments which have been taken forward in relation to cumulative effects that have been assessed in the ES are summarised in **Table 2-4** and are discussed within the individual topic chapters as appropriate (**Chapters 5-15**), based on currently available information. This corresponds to Stages 3 and 4 in **Table 2-2**. The 'short list' of other developments would be frozen two months prior to submission to allow for the assessment to be completed.

Table 2-4 - Cumulative Effects Assessment: Developments Scoped In

Development Name (reference if applicable)	Brief Description	Planning Status	Indicative Timescales
P/2010/0762/ 20/1610/REM (TCPA) - Carno III Wind Farm	The wind farm would comprise of up to 13 wind turbines up to 149.9 m to the blade tip and generate up to 39 MW of renewable electricity. The wind turbines will be situated adjacent to the existing wind farms of Carno I and Carno 2.	Planning consent granted in 2022. Estimated to start construction by Q1 2026	Anticipated to last for 15 months for construction, 25 years operation. Due to start construction in 2026.
Esgair Cwmowen Wind Farm (TCPA) (application called in for determined by Welsh Ministers)	The wind farm would comprise of up to 18 turbines and a maximum rated capacity of 37.95MW with a height to blade tip of up to 125 m and associated low to medium voltage transformers and related switchgear, grid connection, and associated infrastructure.	Revised Planning Application submitted on 2023 and still in progress.	16 months construction, 25 years operation, 6 months decommissioning, documents do not specify dates.
Green GEN Vyrnwy Frankton	An overhead line from a collector substation in Powys through the Vyrnwy Valley to a	This project is at the pre-	80 years operation, documents do not specify dates

¹⁰ UK Government (2016). Town and Country Planning, Wales (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2016 (online). Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2016/59/made> (Accessed April 2026).

Development Name (reference if applicable)	Brief Description	Planning Status	Indicative Timescales
	connection point on the national electricity network near Lower Frankton in Shropshire.	application stage. The application is expected to be submitted Q4 2026.	
Land At Plas Maldwyn Caersws Powys SY17 5HG (residential development)	Residential development comprising 22 dwellings (terrace house type) and all associated works	Pre-application consultation stage	No information available
Llanbrynmair Wind Farm 1 (DNS)*	The wind farm would comprise of up to 30 turbines with a tip height of up to 126.5m, resulting in an overall site generating capacity of 108MW, associated low to medium voltage transformers and related switchgear, grid connection, and associated infrastructure.	Application Approved 2021 - consent expires 2026	Construction anticipated to last 13 months.
Llanbrynmair Wind Farm 2 (DNS)	The wind farm would comprise of up to 15 turbines with a tip height of up to 230m, resulting in an overall site generating capacity of 108MW, associated low to medium voltage transformers and related switchgear, grid connection, and associated infrastructure.	Pre-application - scoping submitted in October 2024. Estimated submission unknown.	Construction anticipated to last 13 months.
Llyn Lort Energy Park	The Proposed Development will comprise the construction and operation of up to 24 (twenty four) wind turbines, overhead power line, anemometer mast, site access tracks, habitat management, and, where necessary, off-site highway improvements	Pre-application - scoping submitted Feb-2025. Estimated submission Q1 2026.	
Mynydd Lluest y Graig Energy Project	The proposed energy project would generate renewable electricity from, principally, wind power alongside other energy generation and storage options under consideration, such as ground-mounted solar, energy storage, and hydrogen generation and storage.	Pre-application - scoping submitted 2021.	30 months construction, documents do not specify dates

Development Name (reference if applicable)	Brief Description	Planning Status	Indicative Timescales
	The wind farm element will comprise up to 16 turbines with a blade tip height of 200 m, resulting in a total installed capacity of up to 120MW.		
SP Mid Wales (Electricity Connections Project (grid line))	SP Manweb proposes four 132kV connections in an area known as SSA B North near Sychton, a 132kV connection from a wind farm in SSA B South near Carno-Rhyd, and three 132kV connections in SSA C west of Llanbadarn	Project is at the pre-application stage. The project was suspended in 2015, and further information exchanges in 2019. Anticipated submission date unknown.	3 years construction, 40 years operation. Specified dates are out of date.
Rhiwlas Green Energy Network (Rhiwlas GEN)	Development of an underground cable between the Banc Du and Rhiwlas Energy Parks (approximately 3km) - Development of a single circuit OHL (supported on wooden poles) from the proposed Rhiwlas Energy Park to the collector substation at Bryngwyn (approximately 35km).	Pre-application – scoping submitted March 2024. Significant Infrastructure Project (SIP) application submission expected 2027.	Construction anticipated to last 12 months. 40 years operation. Anticipated to be in operation by 2029.

*Llanbrynmair Wind Farm received planning consent in 2021 for a 30 turbine project with generation of up to 90 MW, following a planning application submitted in 2009 (referred to as Llanbrynmair Wind Farm 1 in **Table 2-4**). This consent is valid until 2026. In October 2024, a formal request for a Scoping Direction was submitted to PEDW for a proposed wind farm comprising 15 horizontal axis wind turbines, and a Scoping Direction was published in March 2025 (referred to as Llanbrynmair Wind Farm 2 in **Table 2-4**). On this basis, even though it is consented, the certainty of delivering Llanbrynmair Wind Farm 1 is low, given that it is clear the developer intends to submit a DNS application for a revised scheme with a reduced scope. As this is currently at scoping stage, the certainty of development is reduced, in accordance with the criteria detailed in **Table 2-3**. The two versions of the same scheme have been considered to assess a worst-case scenario; however, the conclusions should be considered in the context of the certainty that can be afforded to either of the proposals, and that Llanbrynmair Wind Farm 2 is more likely to be progressed.



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