5 POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Introduction....1
5.2 Methods....2
5.3 Energy Planning Policy and Pumped Storage....2
5.4 National Guidance and Planning Policy....4
5.5 National Policy Statements....4
5.6 Policy Guidance in Wales....6
5.7 Local Planning Policy and Guidance....10
5.8 Cumulative Impact of Historic Planning Applications....15
5.9 References....16

5 POLICY CONTEXT

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A review of relevant national, regional and local planning policies and wider energy policies has been undertaken as part of the application and is considered in detail in the Planning Statement (Document Ref: 8.01) that accompanies the application. This includes a review of existing planning applications that may be pertinent to the Development, particularly in the context of assessing cumulative impacts.

5.1.2 Electricity storage is an integral part of building a secure, low carbon energy system in the UK and pumped storage is one technology that makes this possible. The UK aims to achieve a greater proportion of energy from low carbon sources. This responds to two strategic policy objectives: to secure supplies and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (Climate Change Act, 2008). The objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is in line with international conventions and EU Directives which recognise concern over the impacts of a changing climate and which accept the evidence for the role of human activity in climate change.

5.1.3 The technical challenge to reducing emissions is that low carbon generators, like wind and nuclear, cannot be turned on and off in response to the short-term peaks in demand that are a daily feature of the UK's demand for electricity. Instead, traditional fossil fuel generators, known as "peaking plants", are used to meet such peaks in demand. Electricity storage allows the electricity generated by low carbon supplies at night to be used to meet peaks during the day.

5.1.4 Strbac (2012) states that by 2050 increased deployment of UK energy storage could be worth £10bn per year to the UK energy system as a whole, equivalent to £400 per household. Electricity storage is beneficial to the UK consumer in the following ways:

- Maximise renewable electricity production by reducing curtailment, particularly of wind and nuclear sources;
- Displace fossil based peaking plant, reducing emissions and expenditure on this type of reserve;
- Reduce grid reinforcement expenditure by enhancing local grid resilience;
- Increase UK security of supply.

5.2 Methods

5.2.1 The planning policy context to the Development, and its performance against that context, has been addressed in detail in the standalone Planning Statement which accompanies the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO). This document sets out the relevant policy framework at national, regional and local levels and assesses the Development's compliance with that framework. This Environmental Statement (ES) sets out the key headlines of that policy analysis.

5.2.2 This Chapter summarises the national (of both Central Government and the Welsh Government (WG)) and local planning policy and guidance (including adopted and emerging development plan policies) that are relevant to the Development. This summary provides the policy context to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). For example, it identifies planning policies which help to determine the sensitivity of the environment and receptors. The planning policies specifically related to technical matters are examined within the relevant technical chapters.

5.2.3 The policies and plans which were consulted as part of the assessment are outlined below. These policies and plans reflect the current direction of government objectives for accommodating renewable energy.

5.3 Energy Policy Context and Pumped Storage

5.3.1 The UK is currently reliant upon the use of fossil fuels to provide energy. It is recognised that the UK needs to reduce its reliance upon fossil fuels and invest in more sustainable, renewable energy. By 2050 it is expected that

fossil fuels will be scarcer, and costs of extraction and therefore supply will be higher (DECC, 2011).

5.3.2 Pumped Storage is an efficient electricity storage technology that works at the scale of the National Grid. This type of storage helps the National Grid to balance the supply and demand for electricity from second to second. As the UK introduces more low carbon sources of electricity generation, such as onshore and offshore wind, more storage will be needed because it is difficult to turn wind energy on and off in response to changes in electricity demand. Pumped Storage is referred to in a number of national and local regulations and policies as an aid to a low carbon future.

5.3.3 The UK's National Renewable Energy Action Plan (DECC, 2009) recognises electricity storage as one of the technologies that will help to make the grid "smarter" at matching supply and demand when more intermittent renewable sources are connected to the grid.

5.3.4 In DECC's review of Smarter Grids (DECC, 2009), electricity storage is highlighted as a way to "*reduce the need for high-cost and high-carbon peaking plants*" to balance supply and demand.

5.3.5 UK Renewable Energy Strategy (DECC, 2009) notes that more renewables could increase the challenges of physically balancing the system. National Grid has analysed a "Gone Green" Scenario for the UK's electricity supplies to 2025 and projects that there will be an increase in demand for electricity supplies that can be used to balance the grid (Short Term Operating Reserve Requirement or STORR). In total STORR demand is expected to grow from around 4 to 7.5 Giga Watt (GW) in 2025.

5.3.6 Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition (WG, 2012) indicates that the WG expect the country's energy system to become increasingly decarbonised, meet environmental standards for pollutants and waste, provide energy security and resilience, and deliver an affordable and credible framework for long-term investment. The issue of intermittency will be compensated for by gas, nuclear and bioenergy in the short-term and by energy storage technologies and a next generation 'smart-grid in the medium-long term.

'Emerging storage technologies' clearly form part of the future vision for Wales' energy system.

5.3.7 The Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales specifically mentions the re-use of previously developed land, a low carbon economy and maximum use of renewable resources. Technical Advice Note 8 on renewable energy states that Pumped Storage can be used to store electricity from intermittent renewable sources such as wind (Annex C 10.3).

5.4 National Guidance and Planning Policy

5.4.1 The following documents provide the principal context to the Development:

- Overarching National Policy Statement (NPS) for Energy (NPS EN-1);
- NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3);
- NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5);
- Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (7th Edition, July 2014);
- Technical Advice Notes (TANs);
- Minerals Technical Advice Notes (MTANs);
- People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan Update (July 2008);
- Mon a Menai Strategy Programme (2010);
- Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (2009);
- Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Supplementary Planning Guidance: Development Brief Caernarfon Dependency Catchment Area;
- Emerging Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan; and
- Glyn Rhonwy Development Plan and Implementation Strategy.

5.5 National Policy Statements

5.5.1 The Planning Act 2008 requires that any DCO application is decided in accordance with any relevant national planning policy statement, with certain limited exceptions. For this proposal, the relevant statement is the Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1), published by The Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in July 2011. NPS EN-1 provides the principal planning policy context of relevance to the Development, but

consideration is also given to the provisions of NPSs EN-3 and EN-5 where applicable in the context of the Development.

5.5.2 NPS EN-1 sets out the UK Government's policy for delivery of major new energy infrastructure in England and Wales. The policies within NPS EN-1 reflect the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan (DECC, 2008) which sets out a detailed low carbon transition plan to 2020.

5.5.3 NPS EN-1 establishes a significant need for new major energy infrastructure over the next 10-15 years delivered through a diverse mix of energy generating technologies. NPS EN-1 states (Section 3.1) that

"It is for industry to propose new energy infrastructure projects within the strategic framework set by Government. The Government does not consider it appropriate for planning policy to set targets for or limits on different technologies.

The IPC should therefore assess all applications for development consent for the types of infrastructure covered by the energy NPSs on the basis that the Government has demonstrated that there is a need for those types of infrastructure…"

5.5.4 NPS EN-1 refers specifically to electrical energy storage in Section 3.3. It envisages that high renewable pathways will require more storage into the future. NPS EN-1 clearly states that the government believe technologies such as electricity storage will play an important role in a low carbon electricity system.

5.5.5 In taking its decision on the DCO application, the Secretary of State is required to have regard to *'any national policy statement which has effect in relation to development of the description to which the application relates'* (Planning Act 2008, s104(2))(a)). The Secretary of State must also, in accordance with s104(3) decide the application in accordance with any relevant national policy statement, unless certain limited exceptions apply. As such, the NPSs, principally NPS EN-1 but also (where applicable) NPS EN-3 and NPS EN-5, provide the primary basis for decisions by the Secretary of State. However, it is highly likely that in relation to NSIPs the

Secretary of State will regard Welsh policy as being both important and relevant to his decision (s104(2)(d)).

5.5.6 SPH has requested that DECC consider the publication of a new NPS that considers storage in more detail, and in response DECC has recently created the Future Networks team to look into this and other network innovation.

5.6 Policy Guidance in Wales

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 7, July 2014)

5.6.1 The Welsh Government issued the seventh edition of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) in July 2014. The updated document incorporates amendments to Chapter 4 to reflect the revocation of Technical Advice Note 22: Sustainable Buildings.

5.6.2 PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the WG and translates the WG's commitment to sustainable development into the planning system. It is supplemented by a series of TANs, with procedural advice given in circulars and policy clarification letters – together, these comprise national planning policy. National planning policy and the Wales Spatial Plan are required to be taken into account in the preparation of development plans and may be material to decisions on individual planning applications. They will be taken into account by the Welsh Ministers and Planning Inspectors in the determination of called-in planning applications and appeals.

5.6.3 Chapter 7 of PPW defines the WG's objectives for the delivery of economic development through the planning system. Para 7.1.3 states:

The planning system should support economic and employment growth alongside social and environmental considerations within the context of sustainable development.

5.6.4 The guidance seeks to ensure that economic development is encouraged and advises Local Authorities to support the shift towards a low carbon economy. PPW states that Local Planning Authorities should:

look favourably on proposals for new on-site low carbon energy generation (para 7.4.1)*;*

take account of the likely economic benefits of the development [when determining planning applications] based on robust evidence (para 7.6.1).

5.6.5 Chapter 12 of PPW sets out the WG's policy for delivering infrastructure and services across Wales. One of the key aims of this national policy is to:

'Promote the generation and use of energy from renewable and low carbon energy sources at all scales and promote energy efficiency, especially as a means to secure zero or low carbon developments and to tackle the causes of climate change.'

5.6.6 This guidance also confirms the WG's commitment to achieving the UK target of 15% of energy from renewables by 2020 by specifically stating:

'The Assembly Government is committed to playing its part by delivering an energy programme which contributes to reducing carbon emissions as part of our approach to tackling climate change. The Welsh Assembly Government's Energy Policy Statement (2010) identifies the sustainable renewable energy potential for a variety of different technologies as well as establishing our commitment to energy efficiency. It explains our aim by 2050, at the latest, to be in a position where almost all of our local energy needs can be met by low carbon electricity production. Our approach is to reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency first and maximise renewable and low carbon energy generation at every scale across Wales.'

Technical Advice Notes (TANs)

5.6.7 PPW is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs). The following are likely to be relevant to the Development:

- TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (2009) - provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. The TAN provides advice for local planning authorities on:
    - The key principles of positive planning for nature conservation;
    - Nature conservation and Local Development Plans;
    - Nature conservation in development management procedures;

- Development affecting protected internationally and nationally designated sites and habitats; and
- Development affecting protected and priority habitats and species.

- TAN 8: Renewable Energy (2005) - relates to the land use planning considerations of renewable energy and provides advice on:
  - Onshore Renewable Energy Technologies;
  - Design and Energy;
  - Implications for Development Plans;
  - Development Control; and
  - Monitoring.
- TAN 11: Noise (1997) - provides advice on noise with regards to development control and sensitive receptors. It makes reference to BS 5228, parts 1-4, for further advice and guidance; in particular, Part 1: 1984, "Code of practice for basic information and procedures for noise control" which describes a method for predicting noise from construction sites as well as giving general advice.
- TAN 12: Design (2014) - provides advice on good design, as well as promoting low and zero carbon design solutions, a reduction in carbon emissions and renewable generation measures.
- TAN 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004) - provides technical guidance which supplements the policy set out in Planning Policy Wales in relation to development and flooding. It includes:
  - Development advice maps;
  - Nature of development or land use;
  - Justifying the location of built development;
  - Assessing flooding consequences;
  - Surface water run-off from new development;
  - Action through Development Plans; and

- Development Control.

- **TAN 18: Transport (2007)** - contains advice on transport assessments for developments that are likely to result in significant trip generation. It explains how transport impacts should be assessed and mitigated.
- **TAN 23: Economic Development** - provides advice on the national planning policy on economic development set out in Chapter 7 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW).

Wales Spatial Plan

5.6.8 The Wales Spatial Plan sets a vision for how each part of Wales should develop economically, socially and environmentally, up until 2024, and will guide Government expenditure. It has a key role to play in the transition to a low carbon Wales.

5.6.9 The 2008 revision of the Wales Spatial Plan; People, Places, Futures, states that:

An agreed priority for the area (North West Wales) is developing an outward looking and confident knowledge based economy, with particular emphasis on bio-sciences, geo-science, environmental goods and services and renewable energy;

In terms of opportunities for future employment growth, recent work undertaken in the area has identified opportunities to create knowledge-based jobs and develop renewable energy technologies and geo-sciences. This will continue to help diversify the economy and make it more sustainable, as well as achieving higher skilled, better paid jobs more generally. An opportunity exists to develop these niche sectors, providing exemplar developments and a genuine competitive edge; and

Closer partnership with key stakeholders has the potential to further enhance and promote the area's prehistoric archaeology monuments and the industrial heritage, especially capitalising on the heritage potential of the slate valleys in Gwynedd.

5.7 Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (2009)

5.7.1 At the local level, the statutory development plan comprises the adopted Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan (GUDP). It includes the policies and proposals in relation to land use, and includes an explanation and justification of the emphasis the Council has placed on economic, social, environmental and other relevant material considerations.

5.7.2 The strategic policies within Part 1 of the GUDP reflect the key objectives of the Council. The plan seeks to protect the natural, and built and historic, environments, promotes good design and the use of renewable energy sources, and directs development to previously development land in locations that will minimise the need to travel. These strategic objectives inform and underpin the UDP's detailed policies. A list of the strategic policies relevant to the consideration of the Development is included below for ease of reference.

- Policy 1 - Taking a Precautionary Approach;
- Policy 2 - The Natural Environment;
- Policy 3 - Built and Historic Environment;
- Policy 4 - Design Standards;
- Policy 5 - Developments which Create Risk;
- Policy 6 - Land Redevelopment and Reuse;
- Policy 7 – Minerals;
- Policy 9 – Energy;
- Policy 11 - Accessibility;
- Policy 16 – Employment.

5.7.3 Within the GUDP, the Development site is located in an area which has been classified as a registered historic landscape with the eastern part of the Development also falling within a landscape conservation area. The Development site lies outside the defined GUDP settlement limits with Q6

and the land to the west falling within a defined redevelopment site and a dependency catchment area (where development proposals that will strengthen or diversify local economies will be approved provided they do not significantly harm the environment, the area's cultural characteristics or the amenities of nearby residents).

5.7.4 Redevelopment sites within the GUDP are identified under Policy C5. This policy states that development proposals within these areas will be permitted provided that they conform to the development brief that has been prepared for each site and/ or any masterplan for the site approved by the Local Planning Authority. These sites are in key locations and provide opportunities for a variety of uses that include business or commercial uses.

5.7.5 Policy C6 provides the policy context of specific relevance to the Glyn Rhonwy Redevelopment Site. Proposals for this site will be permitted if they create quality employment or leisure opportunities for the benefit of Gwynedd's communities and meet the following criteria:

i. the development will contribute to the area's cultural and linguistic wealth;

ii. the development will safeguard the amenities and wellbeing of local residents;

iii. the development integrates effectively with the Local Centre of Llanberis and does not diminish its vitality, viability or attraction;

iv. the development, in terms of its design, scale, nature, layout and density does not adversely affect the outstanding visual and natural environment that it is set within;

v. a high standard of design is achieved;

vi. satisfactory arrangements are made to provide safe and effective vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access into the site;

vii. adequate vehicular parking spaces are provided within the site in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's approved guidelines;

viii. the site should be developed in an integrated manner.

5.7.6 Further guidance regarding the proposed land use is available in a development brief that has been prepared for each separate site, which form part of a Supplementary Planning Guidance series. This is discussed later in this chapter.

5.7.7 In terms of the generation of energy, GUDP Policy C27 seeks to support renewable and sustainable energy schemes (including *inter alia* hydroelectric and pumped water storage) subject to criteria relating to:

- the impact on AONBs and the Snowdonia National Park;
- the type, scale and design of the Development and its appropriateness for its location;
- the visual impact of associated ancillary equipment and any associated overhead connection lines and pipes;
- increases in the levels of noise, smells, dust or fumes;
- harm to hydrological systems (ground and surface water), to the detriment of biodiversity; and
- levels of traffic generated.

5.7.8 In addition to the above named policies, we outline below the technical and detailed UDP policies that are relevant to this DCO application.

- Policy A1 - Environmental or Other Impact Assessments
- Policy A3 - Precautionary Principle
- Policy B7 - Sites of Archaeological Importance
- Policy B10 - Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Conservation Areas
- Policy B12 - Protecting Historic Landscapes, Parks and Gardens
- Policy B14 - Protecting the Landscape Character of Snowdonia National Park
- Policy B16 - Protecting Nationally Important Conservation Sites
- Policy B20 - Species and their habitats that are Internationally and Nationally Important
- Policy B21 - Wildlife Corridors, Habitat Linkages and Stepping Stones

- Policy B28 - Unstable Land
- Policy B29 - Development on Land at Risk from Flooding
- Policy B30 - Contaminated Land or Buildings
- Policy B32 - Increasing Surface Water
- Policy C1 - Locating New Development
- Policy C3 - Re-using Previously Developed Sites
- Policy C5 - Redevelopment Sites
- Policy C6 - Glyn Rhonwy Redevelopment Site
- Policy C7 - Building in a Sustainable Manner
- Policy C27 - Renewable and Sustainable Energy Schemes
- Policy C29 - Safeguarding Water Resources
- Policy CH18 - Availability of Infrastructure
- Policy CH22 - Cycling Network, Paths and Rights of Way
- Policy CH25 - New Roads and Road Improvements
- Policy CH33 - Safety on Roads and Streets
- Policy CH34 - Rural Lanes

Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Supplementary Planning Guidance: Development Brief Caernarfon Dependency Catchment Area (2009)

5.7.9 Glyn Rhonwy is identified as a redevelopment site under GUDP policy C6. The SPG for the Caernarfon Dependency Catchment Area makes the following statement in relation to Glyn Rhonwy:

"A mixed-used development that creates quality employment or leisure opportunities for the benefit of Gwynedd's communities. An exciting, attractive and sustainable multi-purpose development, which safeguards the special visual and natural environment of the area and corresponds with the content of the adopted development plan for the site, should be ensured. This should contribute towards social and economic development within

Llanberis and its catchment area, as well as in other Gwynedd communities".

Glyn Rhonwy Development Plan and Implementation Strategy (2008)

5.7.10 Glyn Rhonwy was identified by Gwynedd Council as a Strategic Development Site that offered development potential to stimulate new economic opportunities within Gwynedd. This Glyn Rhonwy Development Plan was approved in 2008 and sets out an approach to the development of the site that will realise the Council's aspirations.

5.7.11 Particularly relevant is Strategic Objective 6, which is to:

"Exploit the Glyn Rhonwy site for its natural assets and location for sustainable energy regeneration."

5.7.12 Under this strategy the quarries have specific mention – it was advised that the redundant quarries within the Glyn Rhonwy site (excluding the former munitions store) offered potential for the establishment of sustainable micro power generation – a pumped storage system. Initial feasibility work was positive. Additionally, no other potential use for these quarries considered to be worthy of further investigation was identified. It is also stated that pumped storage would have negligible impact on other proposed uses of the Glyn Rhonwy site.

Emerging Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan

5.7.13 In terms of emerging planning policy, Gwynedd Council and the Isle of Anglesey County Council have decided to prepare a Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP). Once adopted, the JLDP will replace the GUDP.

5.7.14 The Deposit Plan was approved by the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Planning Policy Committee for public consultation on 18th December 2014. Consultation on the Deposit Plan (draft version) was undertaken in March 2015 and GC anticipate that the LDP will be submitted for independent examination in February 2016, with the approximate formal adoption date being January/February 2017, assuming the plan is found to be 'sound'.

5.8 Cumulative Impact of Historic Planning Applications

5.8.1 The planning history of the site relates directly to the approved scheme which was granted planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act in February 2014. This application is of direct relevance to the Development as it (a) establishes the 'in principle' acceptability of the development of the site for pumped storage; (b) provides a significant baseline position against which the scope of the EIA has been defined; and (c) provides an important context to the acceptability of the location, scale and type of development proposed. An overview of the approved scheme is provided in Chapter 4 Project Description.

5.8.2 A review of other planning applications and planning permissions within the vicinity of the Order Limits has been undertaken to determine which developments have the potential to result in cumulative impacts in combination with the Development. The full assessment of cumulative impact is provided in Chapter 17 of the ES. However, a brief summary of the main source of potential cumulative impact has been included below:

- Caernarfon to Bontnewydd Bypass – is a 9.8km single carriageway connecting Goat roundabout and the Plas Menai junction on the A487. The only anticipated shared receptors between the bypass and the Development are traffic/transport impacts and socio-economics. At the request of Gwynedd Council, a full assessment of the cumulative impacts of the bypass sis included in Chapter 17 of the ES.
- Wylfa Newydd – the development of a new nuclear power station, located adjacent to the existing nuclear power station at Wylfa A, on the Isle of Anglesey. The proposed Wylfa Newydd development is likely to include:
    - a power station, including two nuclear reactors with a minimum generating capacity of up to 2700 MW;
    - a Marine Off-Loading Facility (MOLF);
    - cooling water intake and outfall structure
    - electricity transmission infrastructure;

- other associated buildings, such as administration offices including park and ride facilities, temporary worker accommodation, and at least one logistics centre;
- interim waste and spent-fuel storage facilities;
- access roads; and
- measures and initiatives to manage any impacts during the construction and operation of a new power station.

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