# Planning Policy

## Local

Section 45(1) of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 requires that all applications must have regard to the local plan, so far as material to the application, and all other material considerations. Section 6(4) states that in making any determination where regard is to be had to the local development plan ("LDP"), the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted LDP for the proposed site is the Northern Aea Plan ("NAP") 2016. The site is identified within the NAP as within the rural area outside any designations. The NAP is silent in respect to renewable energy and low carbon development.

## Regional

The Regional Development Strategy ("RDS") for Northern Ireland 2035 sets out a number of relevant objectives to help deliver a sustainable and secure energy supply and acknowledges there will need to be a significant increase in all types of renewable electricity installations, including a wide range of renewable resources for electricity generation (onshore and offshore) to meet the Region's needs. The key regional planning policy relevant to the proposal is set out within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, Edition 2 ("SPPS") which sets out the guiding principle for planning authorities in determining planning applications for renewable energy and low carbon energy developments.

Paragraph 3.8 states:

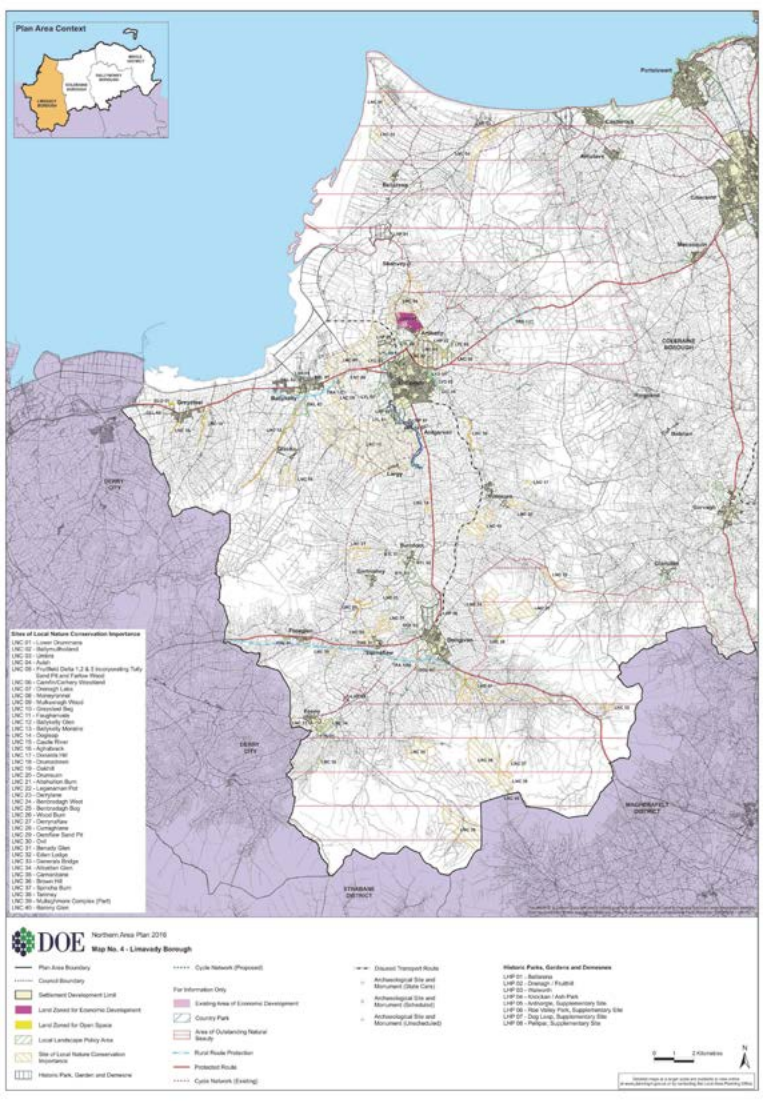
*"sustainable development should be permitted having regard to the development plan and all other material considerations, unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance."*

With regards to the renewable energy and low carbon energy, paragraph 6.219 states that the aim of the SPPS is:*"to maximise sustainable renewable and low carbon energy from a wide range of technologies, at various scales, in appropriate locations within the built and natural environment, without compromising other environmental assets of acknowledged importance."*

Further, paragraph 6.221 requires the planning authority to: *"give appropriate weight to climate considerations (including the target to generate 80% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2030) and to supporting efforts to protect and enhance biodiversity. Planning authorities must help facilitate delivery of the necessary increase in appropriate renewable and low carbon energy developments (electricity and heat) so that the contribution of this sector to the transition to a net zero energy is optimised. This requires careful balancing of the local impacts with the wider environmental, economic, and social benefits."*

The principal policy by which the proposed development will be assessed is set out in paragraph 6.223:

*"All renewable and low carbon energy development, any associated buildings, and supporting infrastructure will be permitted where the proposal will not result in an unacceptable adverse impact (alone or in combination with other developments) on the following planning considerations:*




- *public safety, such as roads, rail, and aviation safety (including communications interference);*
- *human health;*
- *residential amenity and impacts on other such sensitive receptors (communities and individuals, including future occupants of committed developments);*
- *visual amenity and landscape character, including cumulative impact (see also paragraph 6.225 in respect of proposals impacting designated landscapes);*
- *biodiversity and geodiversity, nature conservation, archaeological or built heritage interests;*
- *local natural resources, such as air quality, water quality or quantity;*
- *the capacity of and effects on the transportation network; and,*
- *impacts on tourism, recreation, and public access to the countryside."*

An Environmental Statement ("ES") and a Planning, Design and Access Statement ("PDAS") will be submitted with the full planning application and set out in detail how the proposed development complies with the prevailing policy and all other supplementary guidance.

The SPPS states at para 6.230 that*"significant weight will be given to the benefits of re-powering, expanding and extending the life of existing solar and wind farms unless the impacts identified (including cumulative impacts) are unacceptable and cannot otherwise be made acceptable".*

Notably the lands to the east of the application site and within the lands under applicant control are subject to full planning permission for Cam Burn Wind Farm (C/2011/0459/F for 6no. turbines ["the original scheme"] and as amended by LA01/2022/1209/F comprising 4no. wind turbines ["the amendment scheme"]). The proposed development will be an extension of Cam Burn Wind Farm once the amendment scheme is constructed and operational. Paragraph 6.231 states that the co-location of renewable and low-carbon technologies and supporting infrastructure should be facilitated where appropriate. The proposed development includes a Battery Energy Storage System ("BESS") and green hydrogen production area which will be duly assessed within the ES and PDAS to ensure any potential adverse impacts are understood and mitigated in accordance with paragraph 6.235 of the SPPS.

ABO ENERGY