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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of the Proposed Development

- 1.1.1. Pennant Walters Ltd. ('the Applicant') is seeking planning permission for the construction and operation of a wind farm of up to three turbines on land at Rhyswg Farm (the 'Site'). The Site and Draft DNS Application Boundary is shown on **Figure 1.1**.
- 1.1.2. Rhyswg Wind Farm ('the Proposed Development') consists of the following elements:
- Up to three wind turbines, with a maximum blade tip height of 180m;
 - Substation and transformer housing;
 - Temporary construction compound;
 - Temporary Site offices;
 - Crane pads and cabling; and
 - Access track construction.
- 1.1.3. The Proposed Development is located within a Pre-Assessed Area (PAA) for Wind Energy as defined in the National Development Framework (NDF) – Future Wales: The National Plan 2040¹ (PAA 10) although the very southern portion of the Site lies outside the PAA.
- 1.1.4. The Draft DNS Application Boundary shown on **Figure 1.1** outlines the access route that will join the adopted highway to the north of Panside. The Proposed Development will require the construction of an offline access track between the public highway at Panside and an unclassified road. It is noted that the Draft DNS Application Boundary in this area overlaps with the DNS application boundary of Trecelyn Wind Farm (Reference: DNS CAS-02114-J9X4S6)². Once the proposed access track rejoins the unclassified road, access to the Site would be taken from the proposed Mynydd Maen Wind Farm development and its network of access tracks (Reference: DNS/3276725). **Figure 1.3** shows the boundaries of each development.
- 1.1.5. It is also noted that Mynydd Maen Wind Farm is yet to obtain consent and is currently at the examination stage of the DNS application process. The location and proximity of the projects create a scenario where proposals are being progressed through planning at similar times. Therefore, the approach to the EIA assumes that the access tracks associated with Mynydd Maen would be constructed prior to the commencement of construction of the Proposed Development, meaning that construction impacts associated with the access tracks would have already been realised prior to Site mobilisation, and secured under separate planning approvals and conditions.
- 1.1.6. The assessments within this Draft ES are based on the Proposed Development as described above and shown on **Figure 1.2 – Site Layout (hereafter the 'EIA Assessment Area')**. Further details are provided in **Chapter 2: Approach to the EIA** and **Chapter 4: Development Description**.

¹ Welsh Government (2025) National Development Framework – Future Wales: the national plan 2024. Available at: <https://www.gov.wales/future-wales-national-plan-2040> (Accessed: September 2025).

² Trecelyn Wind Farm is a separate scheme being progressed as a Development of National Significance by the Applicant.

1.2 The Applicant and the Project Team

- 1.2.1. The Applicant, Pennant Walters Ltd, is a Walters Group company with a focus on renewable energy having obtained consent for and/or developed a wide variety of schemes including onshore wind, solar, small-scale hydro and battery storage in Wales.
- 1.2.2. This Draft Environmental Statement (ES) has been prepared on behalf of the Applicant by WSP UK Ltd (hereafter referred to as ‘WSP’) (with input on biodiversity and ornithological topics provided by Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP)).
- 1.2.3. WSP is registered with the Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) EIA Quality Mark scheme. The scheme allows organisations that lead the co-ordination of EIAs in the UK to make a commitment to excellence in its EIA activities and have this commitment independently reviewed.
- 1.2.4. Regulation 17(4)(a) of The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 (as amended)³ (‘the EIA Regulations’) requires that an ES must “be prepared by persons who in the opinion of the relevant planning authority or the Welsh Ministers, as appropriate, have sufficient expertise to ensure the completeness and quality of the statement”.
- 1.2.5. The relevant experience and qualifications of the competent experts who have prepared this ES, as required by Regulation 4(b) of the EIA Regulations, are provided in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1 Environmental topics to be addressed in the Draft ES and details of the expertise of staff who have undertaken each assessment

Topic	Staff	Relevant expertise/qualifications
Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual Impact	Kate Ward	Chartered Member Landscape Institute (CMLI) BA (Hons) Landscape Architecture Postgraduate Diploma Landscape Architecture
	Mark Swithenbank	Chartered Member Landscape Institute (CMLI) MLA (Master of Landscape Architecture) MSc – Natural Resources management
Chapter 7 Historic Environment	David Astbury	Associate Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (ClfA) BA (Hons) Archaeology and History Mlit Archaeology PhD Archaeology
Chapter 8 Biodiversity	Kate Henson	Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM) BSc (Hons) Animal Biology PhD Ecology

³ UK Government (2017). Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 [online]. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2017/567/contents> [Accessed April 2025].

Topic	Staff	Relevant expertise/qualifications
Chapter 9 Ornithology	Rob Forbes	Full Member of CIEEM BSc (Hons) Ecology MSc Environmental Assessment and Management
Chapter 10 Water Environment	Dave Muirhead	BSc (Hons) Aquatic Bioscience, PhD - Aquatic Colloid AFM
	Mat Quinnell	BEng (Hons) Environmental Engineering, MCIWEM
Chapter 11 Ground Conditions	Lynne Gemmell	MEnvS Environmental Studies, IEMA Practitioner, Member, Institution of Environmental Sciences.
Chapter 12 Traffic and Transport	Adam Guy	Bsc (hons) Civil and Environmental Engineering
Chapter 13 Noise	Robin Brown	BSs (Hons) Audio Technology Member of the Institute of Acoustics (MIOA)
Chapter 14 Shadow Flicker	Steven Fitzpatrick	MEng, Product Design Engineering PgDip, Energy Systems and the Environment
Chapter 15 Socio-economics	Andrew Williamson	BA(Hons) Geography, MA Practicing Human Geography, MA Spatial Planning, PhD, MRTPI
Chapter 16 Aviation and Telecommunications	Steven Fitzpatrick	MEng, Product Design Engineering PgDip, Energy Systems and the Environment
Chapter 17 Cumulative Effects	Chris Prydderch	BSc (Hons) Environmental Science, MSc (Dist) Environmental Monitoring and Assessment IEMA Practitioner
	Louis Bishop	BSc Human Geography Msc Environmental Consultancy PIEMA RenvP

1.3 Purpose of the Environmental Statement

- 1.3.1. The Proposed Development requires EIA (i.e., it is 'EIA development') because it falls under paragraph 3(i) ("*Installations for the harnessing of wind power for energy production (wind farms)*") of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and exceeds its thresholds for both Site area and hub height. On this basis, an EIA has been undertaken for the Proposed Development.
- 1.3.2. As the installed generating capacity of the Proposed Development would exceed 10 megawatts (MW), it qualifies as a DNS according to the criteria set out in Regulation 4A of *The Developments*

of National Significance (Specified Criteria and Prescribed Secondary Consents) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2016⁴.

- 1.3.3. An EIA has been prepared to meet the requirements of the EIA Regulations and provides part of the information that will be used by the Welsh Ministers, and other key stakeholders, to inform the process of determining the application for consent of the Proposed Development.
- 1.3.4. In accordance with good practice, a Scoping Report (**Appendix 1A**) was prepared to identify the potential likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development. Those effects that were assessed as being likely to be significant or where likely significant effects could not be discounted at the scoping stage were proposed for further assessment in the ES. This reflects the requirement of the EIA Regulations for the ES to focus on those effects that are likely to be significant.
- 1.3.5. A request for a Scoping Direction was made to the Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) on 18 September 2024, under Regulation 33 of the EIA Regulations in respect of applications for planning permission to Welsh Ministers as a DNS project. A Scoping Direction was received on 04 December 2024 (**Appendix 1B**).
- 1.3.6. As the Proposed Development is a DNS, in accordance with paragraph 3.23 of *Developments of National Significance: Procedural Guidance* (The Planning Inspectorate, 2019⁵) this Draft 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. The Draft ES presents an assessment of effects based on current information available at the time of writing, with respect to project design and baseline environmental information.
- 1.3.7. Following consultation and a review of responses received, a final assessment of likely significant effects associated with the Proposed Development during its construction, operation and decommissioning will be presented within this final ES.
- 1.3.8. This Draft ES has been based on the Scoping Direction (**Appendix 1B**), as well as subsequent consultation and assessment work. It includes an assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development based on current proposals, leading to a conclusion about which effects were assessed as likely to be significant and identifying potential environmental mitigation measures⁶ in respect of likely significant adverse effects.
- 1.3.9. The overall approach that has been taken to defining significance, as well as further information about the approach to preparing the Draft ES, are outlined in **Chapter 2** of this document.
- 1.3.10. Regulation 4 and Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations require that the environmental topics listed in column 1 of **Table 1.2** need to be considered when preparing an ES. Column 2 then lists where these topics are included in this Draft ES, with reference to the relevant chapter numbers.

⁴ Welsh Government (2016). Town and Country Planning, Wales: 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/pdfs/wsi_20160358_mi.pdf [Accessed June 2023].

⁵ The Planning Inspectorate (2019). *Developments of National Significance: Procedural Guidance*. Version 2.2. [online]. Available at <https://gov.wales/developments-national-significance-dns-procedural-guide>. [Accessed June 2023].

⁶ Discussed further in Chapter 2

Table 1.2 Environmental Topics to be Addressed in the Draft ES and Chapter References

Topics ⁷ that need to be assessed under the EIA Regulations	Chapter titles where addressed in this Draft ES
Population	Landscape and Visual Impact (Chapter 6); Traffic and Transport (Chapter 12); Noise (Chapter 13); Aviation and Telecommunications (Chapter 16); and Socio-economics (Chapter 15).
Human health	Traffic and Transport (Chapter 12); Noise (Chapter 13); Aviation and Telecommunications (Chapter 14); Shadow Flicker (Chapter 14); and Socio-economics (Chapter 15).
Biodiversity	Biodiversity (Chapter 8); Ornithology (Chapter 9).
Land	Ground Conditions (Chapter 11).
Soil	Ground Conditions (Chapter 11).
Water	Water Environment (Chapter 10).
Air	Scoped out (See Appendix 1A and 1B).
Climate	Carbon Balance Assessment (Appendix 2B of the Final ES), Description of the Proposed Development (Chapter 4), Biodiversity (Chapter 8), Water Environment (Chapter 10), Ground Conditions (Chapter 11) and Socio-economics (Chapter 15).
Cultural heritage	Historic Environment (Chapter 7).
Landscape	Landscape and Visual Impact (Chapter 6).
The inter-relationship between the above factors	Considered within each Chapter as relevant, and Cumulative Effects (Chapter 17).
Vulnerability to major accidents or disasters	Approach to Environmental Impact Assessment (Chapter 2), Description of the Proposed Development (Chapter 4), Ground Conditions (Chapter 11)

1.4 Structure of this Environmental Statement

1.4.1. This Draft ES is sub-divided into the following volumes:

- **Volume 1** presents the Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of this ES;
- **Volume 2** contains the written report, including the following chapters:
 - ▶ Chapter 1 – introduction to the Proposed Development (this chapter);
 - ▶ Chapter 2 - details the approach that has been adopted in preparing the ES;
 - ▶ Chapter 3 - explains the need for the Rhyswg Wind Farm, outlines the main alternatives considered for meeting this need and describes the design process for the Proposed Development;
 - ▶ Chapter 4 - provides the description of the Proposed Development;
 - ▶ Chapter 5 – Provides an overview of the legislation and policies that are relevant to the ES;
 - ▶ Chapters 6 to 16 - these set out the technical assessments for the environmental topics considered in the ES; and
 - ▶ Chapter 17 – details the inter-project cumulative effects.
- **Volume 3** – contains the appendices referred to in this ES;

⁷ In this ES, the word ‘topic’ is used when referring to the environment that could be affected by the proposed development. Other words with the same general meaning are used in the EIA Regulations, notably ‘factor’ and ‘aspect’, but these are not used in the same context within this ES.



- **Volume 4** – contains the figures referred to in this ES.