

MONA OFFSHORE WIND PROJECT

Environmental Statement

Volume 1, Chapter 2: Policy and legislative context

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Image of an offshore wind farm

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs)	SACs that were submitted to the European Commission before the end of the Transition Period following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU), but not yet formally designated. See also Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).
Capacity market	Introduced by the UK Government to manage security of electricity supply and safeguard against the possibility of future blackouts.
Climate change	A change in global or regional climate patterns, in particular a change apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and attributed largely to the increased levels of atmospheric carbon dioxide produced by the use of fossil fuels.
Climate emergency	A situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it.
Climate resilience	The capacity of social, economic and ecosystems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance.
International commitments	Commitments made publicly on the international level.
Contracts for Difference (CfDs)	Private contracts between a low carbon electricity generator and the UK Government owned Low Carbon Contracts Company (LCCC).
Development Consent Order (DCO)	An order made under the Planning Act 2008 granting development consent for one or more Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).
Emissions	An amount of a substance that is produced and sent out into the air that is harmful to the environment, especially carbon dioxide.
Environmental Statement	The document presenting the results of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
European Protected Species (EPS)	European Protected Species (such as bats, great crested newts, otters and dormice) receive full protection under The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2010.
Favourable conservation status	Describes the situation in which a habitat or species is thriving throughout its natural range and is expected to continue to thrive in the future.
Fossil fuel	A hydrocarbon-containing material formed naturally in the earth's crust from the remains of dead plants and animals.
Greenhouse Gas (GHG)	A gas that absorbs and emits radiant energy within the thermal infrared range, causing the greenhouse effect. Examples include carbon dioxide and methane.
Greenhouse effect	The trapping of the sun's warmth in a planet's lower atmosphere, due to the greater transparency of the atmosphere to visible radiation from the sun than to infrared radiation emitted from the planet's surface.
Local Authority	A body empowered by law to exercise various statutory functions for a particular area of the United Kingdom. This includes County Councils, District Councils, County Borough Councils and unitary authorities.
Local impact report	A report in writing giving details of the likely impact of the proposed development on the authority's area.
Marine licence	The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 requires a marine licence to be obtained for licensable marine activities. Section 149A of the Planning Act 2008 allows an applicant for a DCO to apply for 'deemed marine licences' as part of the DCO process. In addition, licensable activities within 12 nm of the Welsh coast require a separate marine licence from Natural Resource Wales (NRW).

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Term	Meaning
Marine spatial planning	A public process of analysing and allocating the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve ecological, economic and social objectives that have been specified through a political process.
Maximum design scenario	The scenario within the design envelope with the potential to result in the greatest impact on a particular topic receptor, and therefore the one that should be assessed for that topic receptor.
Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)	Large scale development including power generating stations which requires development consent under the Planning Act 2008. An offshore wind farm project with a capacity of more than 100MW in England, or 350MW in Wales, constitutes an NSIP.
Net zero	A target of completely negating the amount of greenhouse gases produced by human activity either worldwide or by a country or organisation, to be achieved by reducing emissions and implementing methods of absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
National Policy Statement	A document setting out national policy against which proposals for NSIPs will be assessed and decided upon.
Offshore Wind Acceleration Task Force	A group of key global industry players working to accelerate the growth of the fast-moving offshore wind sector by developing a common view to address barriers to growth and provide best practices.
Policy	A set of decisions by governments and other political actors to influence, change, or frame a problem or issue that has been recognized as in the political realm by policy makers and/or the wider public.
Potential Special Protection Areas (pSPAs)	A site identified as potentially qualifying for SPA classification and for which a decision to classify has yet to be taken pending consultation.
Protected species	A species of animal or plant which it is forbidden by law to harm or destroy.
Ramsar sites	Wetlands of international importance that have been designated under the criteria of the Ramsar Convention. In combination with SPAs and SACs, these sites contribute to the national site network.
Relevant Local Planning Authority	The Relevant Local Planning Authority is the local planning authority in respect of an area within which a project is situated, as set out in section 173 of the Planning Act 2008 (sometimes known as the district planning authority, albeit it may be a borough, district or unitary authority). Relevant Local Planning Authorities may have responsibility for discharging requirements and some functions pursuant to the Development Consent Order, once made.
Renewable energy	Energy from a source that is not depleted when used, such as wind or solar power.
Sites of Community Importance (SCIs)	Sites which, in the biogeographical region or regions to which they belong, contribute significantly to the maintenance or restoration at a favourable conservation status of a natural habitat type.
Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)	A site designation specified in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Each site is designated for one or more of the habitats and species listed in the Regulations. The legislation requires a management plan to be prepared and implemented for each SAC to ensure the favourable conservation status of the habitats or species for which it was designated. In combination with SPAs and Ramsar sites, these sites contribute to the national site network.

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Term	Meaning
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	A site designation specified in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, classified for rare and vulnerable birds, and for regularly occurring migratory species. SPAs contribute to the national site network.
The Planning Inspectorate	The executive agency of the Department for Communities and Local Government responsible for operating the planning process for NSIPs.
The Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero	The decision maker with regards to the application for development consent for the Mona Offshore Wind Project.
Water quality	The chemical, physical, and biological characteristics of water based on the standards of its usage.
Welsh inshore waters	Welsh waters within 12 nm of the Welsh coast.
Welsh offshore waters	Welsh waters seaward of 12 nm from the Welsh coast.

Acronyms

Acronym	Description
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
CCC	Committee on Climate Change
CfDs	Contracts for Difference
cSAC	Candidate Special Area of Conservation
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMR	Electricity Market Reform
EPS	European Protected Species
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
ISAA	Information to Support the Appropriate Assessment
MCZ	Marine Conservation Zone
MPA	Marine Protected Area
MPS	Marine Policy Statement
NIC	National Infrastructure Commission
NPS	National Policy Statement
NRP	Natural Resources Policy
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
pSPA	Potential Special Protected Area
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SCI	Site of Community Importance

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Acronym	Description
SPA	Special Protection Area
UNECE	The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Units

Unit	Description
°C	Degrees Celsius
nm	Nautical miles
%	Percentage

2 Policy and legislative context

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1.1 This chapter of the Environmental Statement provides a summary of the policy and legislative context for the Mona Offshore Wind Project, with reference to the following:
- Climate change and renewable energy legislation and policy
 - The consenting process, including details of the Planning Act 2008 and associated planning policy.
- 2.1.1.2 Policy and legislation specific to individual environmental topics and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) are set out within each topic chapter of this Environmental Statement.

2.2 Renewable energy legislation and policy

- 2.2.1.1 This section provides a summary of policy, legislation and strategy in relation to the climate crisis and the role of renewable projects. This legislative and policy framework demonstrates the clear need for an increase in clean renewable energy to:
- Secure our energy supply
 - Respond to the climate change crisis.

2.2.1 International climate change commitments

- 2.2.1.1 Climate change and renewable energy policy in the UK is underpinned by international commitments, which are summarised below.

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

- 2.2.1.2 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) came into force on 21 March 1994. Its objective was to achieve:

‘stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system’ (United Nations, 1992).

- 2.2.1.3 To date, the UNFCCC has been ratified by 197 signatories, including the UK.

Kyoto Protocol

- 2.2.1.4 The UK is a signatory to the Kyoto Protocol, an international agreement for the implementation of the UNFCCC. The Kyoto Protocol commits industrialised countries and economies to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets. The Protocol came into effect in 2005 and its commitments are transposed into UK law by the Climate Change Act 2008.
- 2.2.1.5 The Protocol initially placed a duty on the UK to ensure that the net UK carbon account for the year 2050 was 80% lower than the 1990 baseline. Due to increasing awareness of the need for more urgent action, this was revised to a ‘net zero target’ of greenhouse gas emissions for the year 2050 to be 100% lower than the 1990 levels by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.

The United Nations Adoption of the Paris Agreement COP21

- 2.2.1.6 In December 2015, 195 signatories, including the UK, adopted the first universal, legally binding global climate deal at the Paris Climate Conference (COP21). The Paris Agreement (United Nations, 2015) seeks to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions and to limit the global temperature increase in this century to 2°C, while pursuing the means to limit this further to 1.5°C. This was ratified by the UK Government in November 2016 and now forms part of UK Government Policy.

The Glasgow Pact COP26

- 2.2.1.7 At the COP26 summit in November 2021, nearly 200 parties voted to adopt the Glasgow Climate Pact (UNFCCC, 2021). This included commitments to phase down the use of coal and supports a common timeframe and methodology for national commitments on emissions reductions. Countries were tasked to return in 2022 with more ambitious 2030 emissions reductions targets.

2.2.2 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016

- 2.2.2.1 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts in place the legislation needed to plan and manage Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way. A key part of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 focuses on climate change with the aim to reduce emissions to 80% lower than the baseline by 2050 and sets a clear path for decarbonisation. This target was further reduced to 100% lower than the baseline by 2050 following The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Amendment of 2050 Emissions Target) Regulations 2021.
- 2.2.2.2 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 is supported by the Natural Resources Policy (NRP) which focuses on the sustainable management of Wales' natural resources to maximise their contribution to achieving goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (more detail on this is presented in section 2.3.9). The NRP sets out three National Priorities including 'increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency'.
- 2.2.2.3 Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 imposes a duty on public authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity in exercising their functions, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. This includes consideration of diversity between and within ecosystems; connection between and within ecosystems; scale of ecosystems; condition of ecosystems; and adaptability of ecosystems.
- 2.2.2.4 This includes an obligation for local authorities to produce a plan setting out how it proposes to comply with the requirements, and an obligation to publish a progress report every three years.

2.2.3 UK climate change and renewable energy commitments

- 2.2.3.1 The UK has several policies relating to climate change and renewable energy, a summary of which is provided below.
- 2.2.3.2 The Climate Change Act 2008 Under the Climate Change Act 2008, the UK committed to a net reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 80% by 2050 against the 1990 baseline in line with the commitments of the Kyoto Protocol.

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- 2.2.3.3 In June 2019, secondary legislation (the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019) was passed that extended that target to at least 100% against the 1990 baseline.
- 2.2.3.4 The Climate Change Act 2008 also established the Climate Change Committee (CCC), which advises the UK and devolved governments on emissions targets and reports to Parliament on progress made in reducing GHG emissions and preparing for and adapting to the impacts of climate change.
- 2.2.3.5 The CCC has produced six carbon budgets, covering 2008 to 2037. These carbon budgets represent a limitation on the total quantity of GHG emissions to be emitted over the five-year period. The sixth carbon budget is the most recent, covering 2033 to 2037 (Climate Change Committee, 2020).

Climate Policy Wales

- 2.2.3.6 The Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in April 2019 (Welsh Government, 2019). Following this, Wales has set interim carbon targets for 2030 and 2040, and a series of carbon budgets. The second carbon budget for 2021 to 2025 sets out the plan for Net Zero Wales (Welsh Government, 2021).
- 2.2.3.7 Further details of the approach to achieving net zero are set out in the Working Together to Reach Net Zero document (Welsh Government, 2022) and in Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales (Welsh Government, 2019a).
- 2.2.3.8 Both Conwy County Borough Council and Denbighshire County Council, within which the onshore infrastructure for the Mona Offshore Wind Project will be located, have declared a climate emergency. The Isle of Anglesey County Council and Gwynedd Council, located in the wider surrounding area, have also declared a climate emergency.

The Energy Act 2013

- 2.2.3.9 The Energy Act received Royal Assent on 18 December 2013. The Energy Act introduced a legislative framework for delivering secure, affordable and low carbon energy. It included provisions to incentivise investment in low carbon electricity generation, ensure security of supply, and help the UK meet its emission reduction and renewables targets. In particular, the Energy Act contained provisions for Electricity Market Reform (EMR).
- 2.2.3.10 EMR was designed to enable the UK to develop a clean, diverse and competitive mix of electricity generation that will ensure we meet our targets on decarbonisation and security of supply, while keeping bills as low as possible for consumers now and in the future (BEIS, 2022).
- 2.2.3.11 EMR comprised two main policy areas to deliver the above:
- Capacity market – to ensure security of electricity supply at least cost to the customer
 - Contracts for Difference (CfDs) – to provide long-term revenue stabilisation for new low carbon electricity generation in Great Britain.

The Clean Growth Strategy 2017

- 2.2.3.12 The Clean Growth Strategy (HM Government, 2017) emphasised growing national income while cutting greenhouse gas emissions. It states that the aim to achieve clean

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growth, while ensuring an affordable energy supply for businesses and consumers, is at the heart of the UK's Industrial Strategy.

National Infrastructure Assessment (2018 onwards)

2.2.3.13 The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) provides advice on the UK's national infrastructure and an assessment of our infrastructure needs to 2050 and beyond.

2.2.3.14 The first National Infrastructure Assessment was published in 2018 (NIC, 2018), which highlighted the need for the UK to have low cost and low carbon electricity. It proposed a highly renewable generation mix as a low-cost option for the energy system, with at least 50% renewable generation by 2030. It proposed the continued use of mechanisms such as CfDs to achieve this. And set out that offshore wind should be recognised as cost-competitive.

2.2.3.15 The case for at least 50% renewable generation by 2030 was reaffirmed by the NIC's Net Zero: Opportunities for the power sector paper (NIC, 2020). This paper confirmed that renewables costs have fallen faster than forecast. It states that:

'The government's ambition to deploy 40 GW of offshore wind will go a long way to delivering at least 50 per cent renewable generation by 2030. This positive progress needs to continue. Delivering the Commission's recommendations would allow government to take the needed concrete action in the near term, whilst not closing down options for the future.'

2.2.3.16 As part of the work towards the second National Infrastructure Assessment, a baseline report was published in 2021 (NIC, 2021). This identified the following area for improvement: *'greenhouse gas emissions from economic infrastructure must reduce further, fast'*. It also identified two strategic themes for the second Assessment, relevant to climate change and renewable energy:

- Reaching net zero: all sectors have more to do to reach net zero, including energy, where government has committed to decarbonise electricity generation by 2035
- Climate resilience and the environment: while economic infrastructure has generally proved resilient to shocks and stresses over recent years, climate change will only increase pressures across all sectors, and infrastructure sectors have significant impacts – both positive and negative – on the environment.

2.2.3.17 The second National Infrastructure Assessment (NIC, 2023) was published on 18 October 2023. It highlights the importance of the growth of renewable energy generation, stating that:

'Over the next 30 years the country will need a larger electricity system running mostly from renewable power sources like wind and solar.'

2.2.3.18 The National Infrastructure Assessment also goes on to identify that *'by 2035, domestically generated renewable electricity can meet the vast majority of energy demand... modelling suggests that around 60 GW of offshore wind will be needed.'*

The UK Offshore Wind Sector Deal 2019

2.2.3.19 The UK Government published the Offshore Wind Sector Deal in 2019, which sets the key commitments and actions from the UK Government to support offshore wind energy development (HM Government, 2020a). In 2020, the UK Government prepared a policy paper to reflect on the status of the offshore wind industry one year after the publication of the Offshore Wind Sector Deal (HM Government, 2020b). Since the launch of the Sector Deal in 2019, the UK Government and the offshore wind energy

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sector have made progress on delivering the commitments set out within the Sector Deal.

National Infrastructure Strategy 2020

2.2.3.20 The National Infrastructure Strategy was published in November 2020 and sets out the plan for the UK's infrastructure revolution, alongside the plans for levelling up. It responds to the recommendations made in the National Infrastructure Assessment. Commitments include:

- Significant investment in offshore wind and into modern ports and manufacturing infrastructure to expand the share of energy generation from renewables
- Supporting jobs and growth across the UK, in particular in post-industrial and coastal towns, the government's decarbonisation agenda will build the UK's capability in new green industries. Infrastructure investment in offshore wind capacity (40GW by 2030) and port infrastructure will create jobs in coastal communities.

The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution 2020

2.2.3.21 The UK's Ten Point Plan (HM Government, 2020c) intends to set the foundations for a Green Industrial Revolution, creating jobs through harnessing British science and technology to create and use clean energy. Point 1 of the Ten Point Plan is 'Advancing Offshore Wind'.

2.2.3.22 The Plan notes that offshore wind is a critical source of renewable energy for our growing economy and that by 2030 the Government plans to quadruple our offshore wind capacity, backing new innovations to make the most of this proven technology and investing to bring new jobs and growth to our ports and coastal regions. It confirms the NIC's aim of 40 GW of offshore wind by 2030 and sets out a proposed £160 million investments into modern ports and manufacturing infrastructure.

The HM Government Energy White Paper - Powering our Net Zero Future 2020

2.2.3.23 Following the Prime Minister's ten-point plan for a green revolution (HM Government, 2020c), and National Infrastructure Strategy (HM Treasury, 2020), the White Paper (HM Government, 2020d) marked a significant milestone in the UK's net-zero transition, setting a net-zero target by 2050 and outlining how this may be achieved. It relates to the generation, supply and use of energy with the drive towards net zero by 2050 at its core, along with energy-efficient buildings and lower household bills. It signalled a decisive move away from fossil fuel generation and highlights how planned Government investment has the potential to leverage billions of pounds more in private sector funding and support for over 250,000 jobs in the green economy by 2030.

2.2.3.24 In particular, the White Paper set out an aim to quadruple offshore wind capacity by 2030, 'backing new innovations to make the most of this proven technology and investing to bring new jobs and growth to our ports and coastal regions'. It included a target for 40 GW of offshore wind by 2030 (in line with the National Infrastructure Strategy).

UK Net Zero Strategy 2021

2.2.3.25 Building on the Ten Point Plan, the Energy White Paper, the requirements of the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 and the

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commitments made at COP26, the Government published its Net Zero Strategy in 2021 (HM Government, 2021). This sets out the long-term plan to end the UK's contribution to man-made climate change by 2050. The key policies in the net zero strategy include:

- By 2035 the UK will be powered entirely by clean electricity, subject to security of supply
- 40 GW of offshore wind by 2030.

2.2.3.26 The Strategy proposed that the UK lead the way in meeting the commitments made at COP26.

The Environment Act 2021

2.2.3.27 The Environment Act sets out targets, plans and policies for environmental protection. The Environment Act, which is not currently in force, sets out a new environmental governance framework following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU), ensuring that there isn't an environmental governance gap. Within the Environment Act, provisions related to environmental protection and the recovery of the natural world are presented, prioritising four key areas:

- Air quality
- Biodiversity
- Water
- Waste.

British Energy Security Strategy

2.2.3.28 On 7 April 2022, the UK Government published its British Energy Security Strategy (BEIS and Prime Minister's Office, 2022). The Strategy builds on the UK net zero target, placing a heavy reliance on a renewable and low carbon energy supply with a view to '*bring clean, affordable, secure power to the people for generations to come...*'.

2.2.3.29 The Strategy plans to accelerate delivery of offshore wind by strengthening the renewable National Policy Statements (NPSs) to reflect the importance of energy security and net zero. It proposes work with an Offshore Wind Acceleration Task Force to work on reducing the consenting and delivery times for offshore wind projects and fast-tracking priority projects. Specifically, the Strategy states an ambition to deliver up to 50 GW of offshore wind by 2030, an increase on previous targets of 40 GW.

2.2.3.30 Following on from the Strategy, in July 2022 the UK Government published the Pathway to 2030 Holistic Network Design documents, which set out the approach to connecting 50 GW of offshore wind to the UK electricity network (National Grid ESO, 2022).

The UK's exit from the EU

2.2.3.31 The UK ceased to be a member of the EU on 31 January 2020, and as such is no longer bound by European Directives such as those referenced in section 2.3.4. However, these directives have been transposed into UK legislation by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018 (made under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018), and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

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2.3 Consenting regime

2.3.1.1 The Mona Array Area is located in Welsh offshore waters (beyond 12 nm from the Welsh coast). The Mona Offshore Cable Corridor and Access Area overlaps with both Welsh offshore and Welsh inshore waters. The Mona Onshore Cable Corridor is wholly located in Wales.

2.3.1.2 As set out in Volume 1, Chapter 1: Introduction of the Environmental Statement, the Mona Offshore Wind Project requires consent under the Planning Act 2008. A marine licence under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 is also required from Natural Resources Wales (NRW). This can be deemed within the Development Consent Order (DCO) for activities that are wholly within Welsh offshore waters. This section provides a summary of the consenting process and describes the legal requirements for EIA.

2.3.2 The Planning Act 2008

2.3.2.1 The Planning Act 2008 is the primary legislation that established the legal framework for the application, examination and determination of applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Offshore wind farms (or generating stations) in Wales with a capacity of over 350 MW are defined as NSIPs within the Planning Act 2008.

2.3.2.2 Section 31 of the Planning Act 2008 states that a DCO is required for all NSIPs. The application for development consent for the Mona Offshore Wind Project will cover all offshore aspects of the Mona Offshore Wind Project located within Welsh offshore and inshore waters, as well as all onshore aspects of the Mona Offshore Wind Project. Applications for development consent for NSIPs are examined by the Planning Inspectorate and determined by the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

2.3.2.3 The Planning Act 2008 defines the key stages in the application process for NSIPs. These are summarised in Figure 2.1. The Mona Offshore Wind Project is currently at the submission stage.

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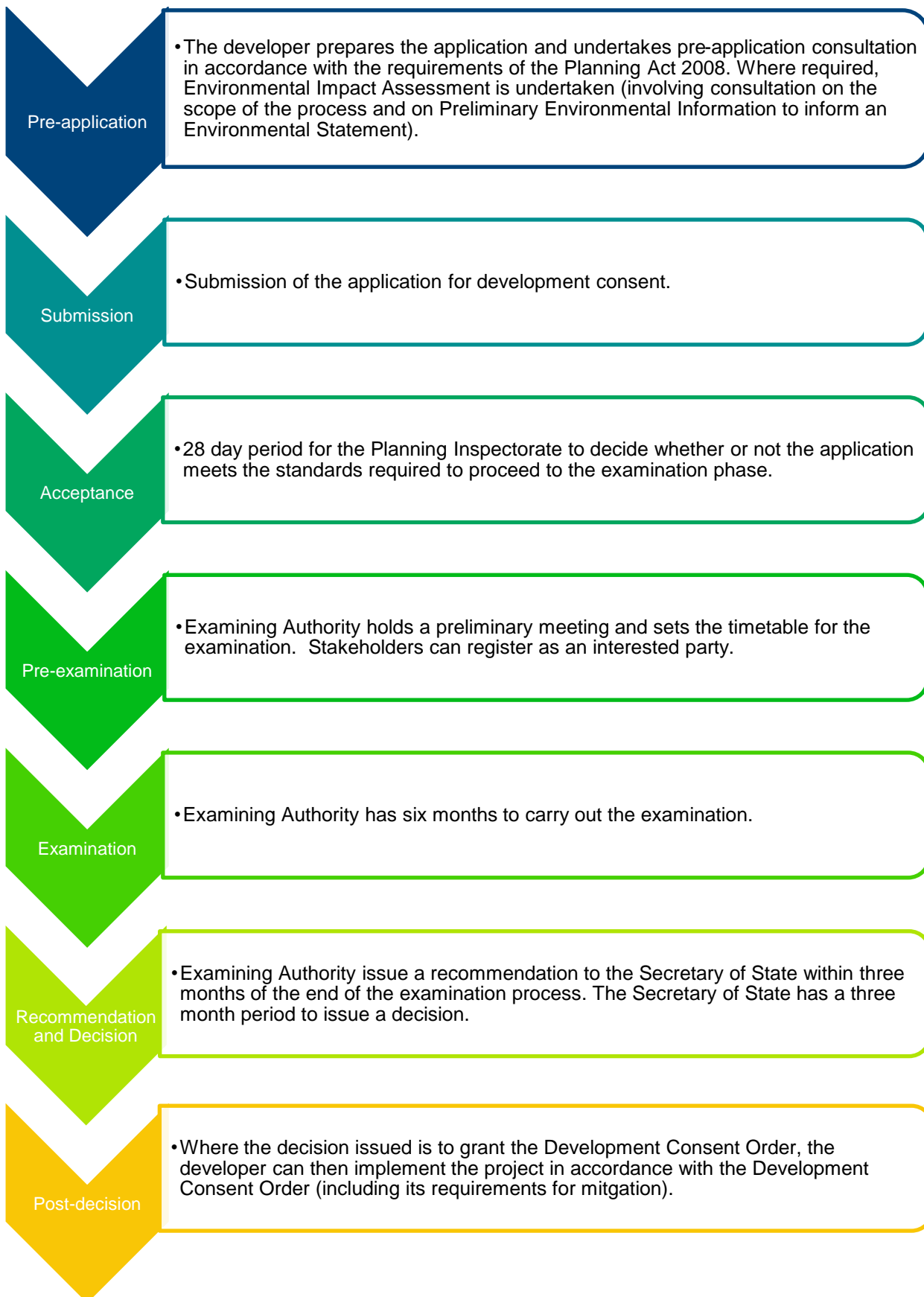


Figure 2.1: Overview of the DCO process.

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- 2.3.2.4 In accordance with section 104(2) of the Planning Act 2008, the Secretary of State must have regard to the following in determining applications for consent:
- Any national policy statement which has effect in relation to development of the description to which the application relates
 - The appropriate marine policy documents
 - Any local impact reports
 - Any matters prescribed in relation to development of the description to which the application relates
 - Any other matters which the Secretary of State thinks are both important and relevant to its decision.

- 2.3.2.5 Section 104(3) highlights the importance of NPSs in relation to decision making, requiring applications to be decided in accordance with any relevant national policy statement, except where any of the following apply:
- The decision would lead to breaching of international obligations or statutory duty
 - The decision would be unlawful by virtue of any enactment
 - The adverse impact of the development is considered to outweigh its benefits
 - A condition prescribed for deciding an application otherwise than in accordance with a national policy statement would be met.

2.3.3 The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009

- 2.3.3.1 The Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA) 2009 introduced a new marine planning system for overseeing the marine environment and a requirement to obtain a marine licence for certain activities and works at sea.
- 2.3.3.2 Section 149A of the Planning Act 2008 allows an applicant for a DCO to apply for a deemed marine licence as part of the DCO process. The Wales Act 2017 amended section 149A of the Planning Act 2008 to allow a DCO to include a deemed marine licence where activities are wholly within Welsh offshore waters. NRW is the responsible authority for deemed marine licences in Welsh waters and works with the Planning Inspectorate to ensure that deemed marine licences are transposed into the DCO. NRW remains the monitoring and enforcement body in respect of the conditions and restrictions contained within the deemed marine licence. Licensable marine activities within 12 nm of the Welsh coast require a separate marine licence from NRW. As part of the offshore export cables are located within 12 nm of the Welsh coast, an application will be made to NRW for a marine licence for the total extent of the offshore export cables and related works located within and between the Mona Array Area and the landfall along the coast of north Wales.
- 2.3.3.3 The deemed marine licence incorporated into the DCO extends as far as the Mona Array Area, whereas the marine licence from NRW will cover the Mona Array Area and the Mona Offshore Cable Corridor and Access Areas.
- 2.3.3.4 This Environmental Statement has been prepared in support of the DCO application and the application for a marine licence from NRW.

2.3.4 Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations

- 2.3.4.1 EIA is the process of identifying and assessing the significant effects likely to arise from a project. This requires consideration of the likely changes to the environment,

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where these arise as a consequence of a project, through comparison with the existing and projected future baseline conditions.

2.3.4.2 An EIA is required for the assessment of the effects of certain projects on the environment under EU Directive 2011/92/EU (as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU) (the EIA Directive). The EIA Directive is transposed into English law for NSIPs by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

2.3.4.3 The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 set out the requirements for EIA under the Planning Act 2008 (in compliance with the EIA directive) and the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 respectively.

2.3.4.4 This ensures that the determining authority has sufficient information relating to the likely significant effects on the environment arising from a project. The approach to EIA for the Mona Offshore Wind Project is set out in Volume 1, Chapter 5: Environmental Impact Assessment methodology of the Environmental Statement. This Environmental Statement presents the findings of the EIA process and has been prepared in accordance with The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations) 2007.

2.3.5 Habitats Regulations

2.3.5.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 require the assessment of significant effects on internationally important nature conservation sites where these may arise as a result of a project.

2.3.5.2 These internationally important sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), or candidate SACs (cSACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or potential SPAs (pSPAs), sites of community importance (SCI) and Ramsar sites. These have been traditionally referred to as European Sites or Natura 2000 sites. Following the UK's departure from the EU they are now referred to as the National Site Network. The assessment is to be undertaken by the 'competent authority', which in the case of the Mona Offshore Wind Project is the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (formerly the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)) for the infrastructure located wholly within Welsh offshore waters, and NRW for the offshore export cables and related works located within both Welsh offshore and inshore waters.

2.3.5.3 In order to carry out the Habitat Regulations Assessment, the competent authority requires a report to be submitted alongside the application for development consent. Information to Support the Appropriate Assessment (ISAA) is provided alongside this Environmental Statement.

2.3.5.4 The Habitats Regulations also provide protection for certain species of plants and animals, referred to as European Protected Species (EPS). These Regulations set out those species that are protected and the activities that are prohibited, such as deliberate disturbance or creating damage to a breeding place.

2.3.5.5 The Habitat Regulations also provide for licences to be granted for certain operations, such as proposed developments that may affect protected species, subject to:

- There being no satisfactory alternative

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- The action authorised not being detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

2.3.5.6 With respect to the Mona Offshore Wind Project, the species present have been identified and the likely effects assessed. Where possible, effects on protected species have been avoided or minimised. Where such effects cannot be avoided, then an application for an EPS licence will be made.

2.3.6 The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017

2.3.6.1 These regulations set out objectives for surface and groundwater bodies, including water quality with the aim of improving the water environment. Objectives are set for waterbodies in terms of their status.

2.3.6.2 The effect of the Mona Offshore Wind Project in relation to The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 and the effect on environmental objectives for surface and groundwater bodies is considered within Volume 6, Annex 2.2: Water Framework Directive coastal waters assessment, Volume 7, Annex 2.3: Surface water abstraction licences, discharge consents and pollution incidents and Volume 7, Annex 2.4: Water Framework Directive surface water and groundwater assessment of the Environmental Statement.

2.3.7 Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016

2.3.7.1 The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 aim to ensure that authorised activities and their discharges do not endanger the environment or human health.

2.3.7.2 The Regulations apply to England and Wales. In Wales, Environmental Permits are granted by NRW and provide for ongoing supervision and controls to regulate activities that could adversely impact on groundwater quality.

2.3.8 Planning (Wales) Act 2015

2.3.8.1 The Act sets out the requirement for Welsh Ministers to prepare a National Development Framework for Wales and sets out key sustainable development planning principles.

2.3.8.2 The Planning (Wales) Act 2015 also sets out provisions for the consideration of the Welsh language in the appraisal of development plans and in dealing with applications for planning permission.

2.3.8.3 Although this is not a requirement under the Planning Act 2008 for the Mona Offshore Wind Farm Project, the effects of the project on the Welsh language have been considered in Volume 4, Chapter 3: Socio-economics of the Environmental Statement.

2.3.9 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

2.3.9.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies to place the principles of sustainability and sustainable development at the heart of its decision-making processes. The relevant objectives of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 include:

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- A resilient Wales – contributing to the protection and improvement of the environment, to improve the quality of life and protect local and global ecosystems
- A healthier Wales – contribute to the protection and, where possible, the improvement of people's health and well-being as a core component of achieving the well-being goals and responding to climate change
- A globally responsive Wales – support the need to tackle the causes of climate change by moving towards a low carbon economy.

2.3.9.2 The potential impacts on human health arising from the Mona Offshore Wind Project are considered in the following topic chapters of the Environmental Statement where relevant:

- Volume 2, Chapter 6: Commercial fisheries
- Volume 2, Chapter 7: Shipping and navigation
- Volume 2, Chapter 8: Seascape and visual resources
- Volume 2, Chapter 10: Other sea users
- Volume 3, Chapter 5: Landscape and visual resources
- Volume 3, Chapter 6: Land use and recreation
- Volume 3, Chapter 8: Noise and vibration
- Volume 4, Chapter 3: Socio-economics
- Volume 4, Chapter 4: Human health assessment.

2.3.10 International conventions

The Ramsar Convention

- 2.3.10.1 The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (referred to as the Ramsar Convention) is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of designated wetland areas, known as Ramsar sites. The Convention came into force in 1976.
- 2.3.10.2 Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the criteria of the Ramsar Convention (i.e. the wetland supports 20,000 water birds and/or supports 1% of the individuals in a population of one species or subspecies of water bird).
- 2.3.10.3 In the UK, Ramsar sites are protected under the National Site Network, in the same way as SPAs and SACs (see section 2.3.5).

The OSPAR convention

- 2.3.10.4 The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (referred to as the OSPAR Convention) was signed at the ministerial meeting of the Oslo and Paris Commissions in Paris in 1992. The Convention aims to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.
- 2.3.10.5 The OSPAR Convention includes a series of Annexes with details of measures for the prevention and elimination of pollution, assessment of quality of the marine environment and protection and conservation of marine ecosystems and biodiversity.
- 2.3.10.6 As part of this work, the need for a network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) has been identified. The UK has identified the following MPA designation types:

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- Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)
- SACs with marine components
- SPAs with marine components
- Nature Conservation MPAs
- National MPAs in Scotland.

The Espoo Convention

- 2.3.10.7 The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (referred to as the Espoo Convention) came into force in 1997. The Convention sets out the obligations of Parties to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse impact across international boundaries (transboundary effects).
- 2.3.10.8 The Espoo Convention has been transposed into UK legislation by the EIA Regulations (see section 2.3.4).

The Convention on Biological Diversity

- 2.3.10.9 The Convention on Biological Diversity entered into force in 1993 with three main objectives:
- The conservation of biological diversity
 - The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity
 - The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.
- 2.3.10.10 The overall objective is to encourage actions that will lead to a sustainable future. The Secretariat of the Convention is based on Montreal in Canada and aims to assist governments to implement the Convention and its programmes of work.

2.4 National Policy Statements

- 2.4.1.1 The energy NPSs were first designated in 2011, following the context for them to be produced being set out under the Planning Act 2008. Following consultation, the NPSs were amended with final drafts published in November 2023. These came into force on 17 January 2024. They describe the national case and establish the need for certain types of infrastructure development including energy, as well as identifying key issues that should be considered by the Examining Authority and decision-maker when examining an application for development consent.
- 2.4.1.2 There are six energy NPSs, three of which are relevant to offshore wind development and therefore the Mona Offshore Wind Project, specifically:
- Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1) which sets out the UK Government's policy for the delivery of major energy infrastructure (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2024a)
 - NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3) (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2024b)
 - NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5) (Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, 2024c).

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- 2.4.1.3 Key aspects from these NPSs of relevance to the Mona Offshore Wind Project are outlined in Table 2.1.
- 2.4.1.4 Each NPS sets out environmental topic-specific policy considerations. Where appropriate, these are outlined and taken into account within the relevant topic chapters of this Environmental Statement. A full summary of NPS requirements relevant to the Mona Offshore Wind Project, and how these have been addressed, is provided in the NPS tracker appended to the Planning Statement (Document Reference J2).

Table 2.1: Summary of Relevant NPSs.

NPS	Key Aspects
NPS EN-1	Overarching energy NPS, setting out a broad basis for considering applications for development consent.
	Sets out the Government's policy for the delivery of major energy infrastructure and support the overarching policy set out in section 2.2.
	States that the Secretary of State should consider applications that fall within the scope of EN-1 on the basis that the government has demonstrated there is a need for those types of projects.
	States that in considering applications the Secretary of State should take into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential benefits of the project including its contribution to meeting the need for energy infrastructure, job creation and any long-term or wider benefits Potential adverse impacts, including any long-term and cumulative adverse impacts, as well as any measures to avoid, reduce or compensate for any adverse impacts.
	Sets out general assessment principles in relation to EIA and key environmental topic areas.
NPS EN-3	NPS for renewable energy infrastructure.
	Confirmed the role of the Secretary of State in the offshore consenting process, including the power of the Secretary of State to grant deemed marine licences as part of a project's DCO.
	Highlighted the use of the 'Rochdale Envelope' method (referred to as the 'maximum design scenario' in this Environmental Statement), which allows for the maximum adverse and positive scenario to be assessed in the EIA process, with DCO granted on this basis.
	Sets out assessment principles in relation to assessment for renewable projects.
NPS EN-5	NPS for electricity networks (including grid connections for wind farms).
	Sets out assessment principles in relation to assessment for electricity networks.

2.5 Other relevant national planning policy

- 2.5.1.1 Although reference to the NPSs is sufficient in principle for compliance purposes, the EIA process has had regard to other extant planning policy and guidance, where relevant.

2.5.2 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

- 2.5.2.1 Future Wales (Welsh Government, 2021b) is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It addresses key national priorities, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving

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decarbonisation and climate-resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of communities.

2.5.2.2 It is noted that it is vital that emissions are reduced to protect well-being and to demonstrate global responsibility. Future Wales together with Planning Policy Wales will ensure the planning system focuses on delivering a decarbonised and resilient Wales. Future Wales identifies that Wales can become a world leader in renewable energy technologies. Wales' wind and tidal resources, potential for solar generation, its support for both large and community scaled projects and commitment to ensuring the planning system provides a strong lead for renewable energy development means it is well placed to support the renewable sector, attract new investment and reduce carbon emissions.

2.5.3 Planning Policy Wales

2.5.3.1 Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Government, 2021a) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. The objective is to ensure the planning system contributes towards sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales.

2.6 Marine policy

2.6.1 UK Marine Policy Statement

2.6.1.1 The UK-wide Marine Policy Statement (MPS) was published in March 2011, under the MCAA 2009, in order to provide a framework for marine spatial planning, specifically for the preparation of Marine Plans and taking decisions that affect the marine environment (Defra, 2011).

2.6.1.2 The MCAA requires all public authorities taking authorisation or enforcement decisions that affect or might affect the UK marine area to do so in accordance with the MPS and the relevant Marine Plans.

2.6.1.3 The MPS provides that the following issues should be taken into account by decision makers when examining and determining applications for energy infrastructure:

- The national level of need for energy infrastructure, as set out in NPS EN-1
- The positive wider environmental, societal and economic benefits of low carbon electricity generation and carbon capture and storage as key technologies for reducing carbon dioxide emissions
- The potential impact of inward investment in offshore wind, wave, tidal stream and tidal range energy related manufacturing and deployment activity; as well as the impact of associated employment opportunities on the regeneration of local and national economies. All of these activities support the objective of developing the UK's low carbon manufacturing capability (MPS, paragraph 3.3.4).

2.6.1.4 The MPS does acknowledge that renewable energy developments can potentially have adverse impacts on fish, mammals and birds and that further research is required to better understand potential impacts, however it goes on to state that:

'The UK has some of the best wind resources in the world and offshore wind will play an important and growing part in meeting our renewable energy and carbon emission targets and improving energy security by 2020, and afterwards towards 2050' (MPS, paragraph 3.3.19).

2.6.1.5 In addition, the MPS states that offshore wind:

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‘...has the potential to have the biggest impact in the medium-term on security of energy supply and carbon emission reductions through its commercial scale output’ (MPS, paragraph 3.3.19).

2.6.1.6 The MPS identifies certain environmental topic-specific policy considerations. Where appropriate, these are outlined within the relevant topic chapters of this Environmental Statement.

2.6.2 Welsh National Marine Plan

2.6.2.1 The Welsh National Marine Plan was published in November 2019 (Welsh Government, 2019b) and introduces a framework to support sustainable decision-making for the marine environment. It includes policies specific to the renewable energy sector.

2.6.2.2 The Welsh National Marine Plan represents the start of a planning process in order to shape Wales’ seas to support economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives. The purpose of the plan is to *‘guide the sustainable development of our marine area by setting out how proposals will be considered by decision makers’*.

2.6.2.3 The Welsh National Marine Plan sets out four key objectives in achieving a sustainable marine economy, namely:

- Contribute to a thriving Welsh economy by encouraging economically productive activities and profitable and sustainable businesses that create long-term employment at all skill levels
- Support the opportunity to sustainably develop marine renewable energy resources with the right development in the right place, helping to achieve the UK’s energy security and carbon reduction objectives, whilst fully considering other’s interests, and ecosystem resilience
- Provide space to support existing and future sustainable economic activity through managing multiple uses, encouraging the coexistence of compatible activities, the mitigation of conflicts between users and, where possible, by reducing the displacement of existing activities
- Recognise the significant value of coastal tourism and recreation to the Welsh economy and well-being and ensure such activity and potential for future growth are appropriately safeguarded.

2.6.2.4 The policy provisions within the Welsh National Marine Plan relevant to each physical, biological and human environment topic of the EIA are presented and addressed in the individual technical topic chapters of the Environmental Statement.

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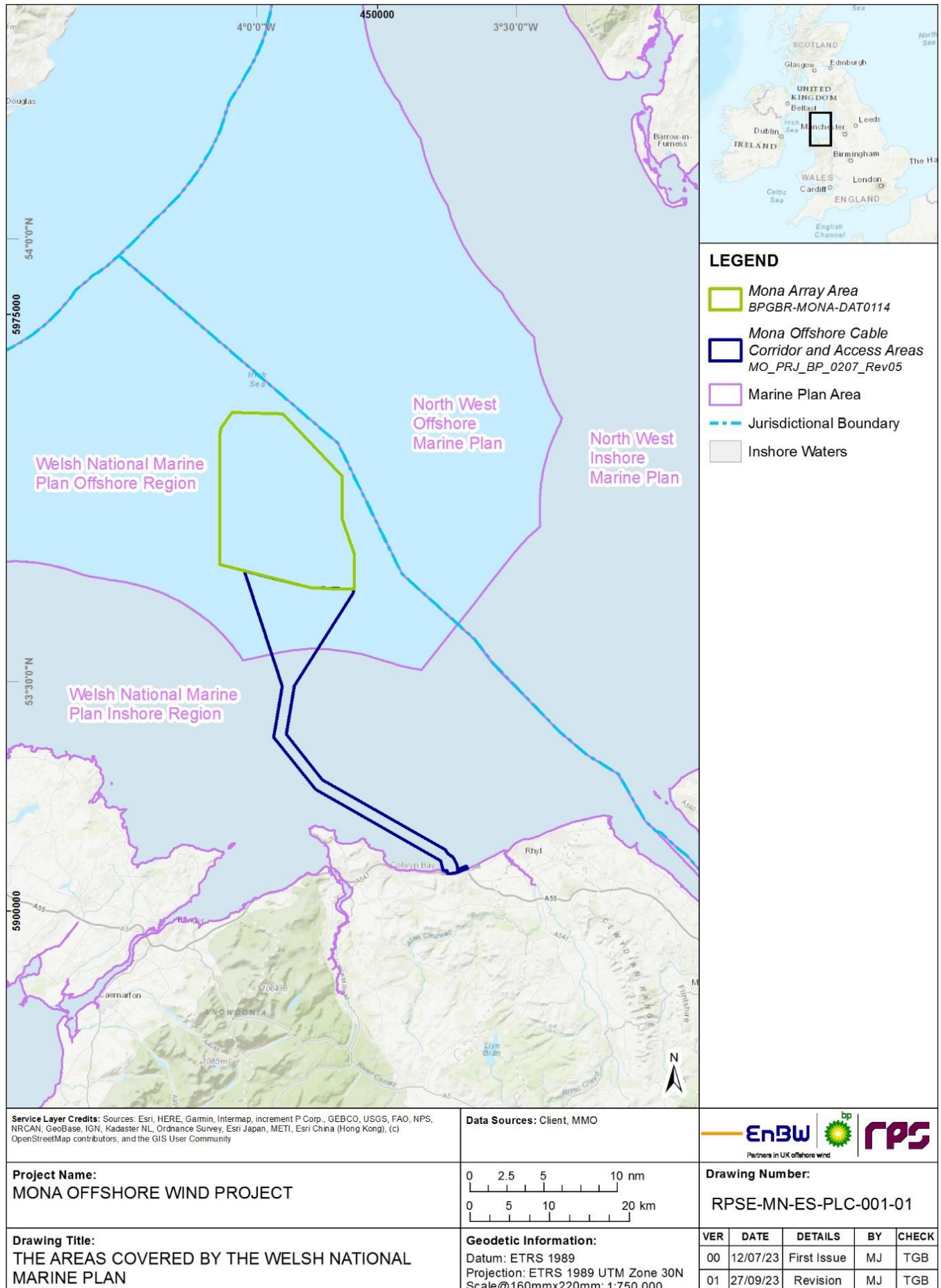


Figure 2.2: The areas covered by the Welsh National Marine Plan.

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2.7 Local planning policy

- 2.7.1.1 The Planning Act 2008 does not incorporate section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which provides the principal basis in legislation for the determination of planning applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, namely that they must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Applications for development consent made under the Planning Act 2008 are determined as set out above.
- 2.7.1.2 The local development plan (Table 2.2) is not therefore the starting point for the consideration of an application for development consent. Nevertheless, local policy has been considered through the EIA process where relevant.
- 2.7.1.3 In addition, supplementary planning documents have also been considered where they are relevant. Where study areas for individual topics extend beyond the administrative areas identified in Table 2.2, planning documents relevant to additional administrative areas within the study areas have been taken into account.

Table 2.2: Key Local Plans.

Authority	Adopted Policy	Emerging Policy
Conwy County Borough Council	<p>Conwy Local Development Plan 2007-2022 adopted October 2013 (Conwy County Borough Council, 2013). The purpose of the Conwy Local Development Plan is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a practical and detailed basis for the control of development and use of land • Afford protection to the natural and built environment • Provide incentive to developers by allocating land for particular types of development • Bring local and detailed planning issues before the public. <p>The Conwy Local Development Plan sets out 16 spatial objectives, relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable levels of population growth • Regeneration • Housing • Jobs and economic prosperity • The economy • Town centres • Infrastructure networks • Tourism • Strategic movement/transport corridors • Sustainable, inclusive design • Energy consumption • Undeveloped coast and countryside • Accessibility to essential services and facilities • Minimising waste and waste management • Regional and local mineral needs • Supporting and sustaining the well-being of the Welsh language. 	Replacement local plan currently being consulted on

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Authority	Adopted Policy	Emerging Policy
Denbighshire County Council	<p>Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan 2006 – 2021, adopted June 2013 (Denbighshire County Council, 2013). The Denbighshire County Council Local Development Plan sets out five key themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting Distinctiveness • Building Sustainable Communities • Promoting a Sustainable Economy • Valuing Our Environment • Achieving Sustainable Accessibility. <p>The Denbighshire Local Development Plan also sets out sixteen spatial objectives, relating to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population and Community • Economy and Jobs • Retail • Transport • Welsh Language • Public Open Space • Minerals • Waste • Energy • Infrastructure • Mixed Use Development • Design • Tourism • Areas of Protection. 	Replacement local plan in preparation – aiming to be adopted in 2025

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