

5. Planning Policy Context

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This chapter sets out the key planning policies and other material considerations applicable to the Proposed Development which have informed the siting and design process. Specific policies which are contained within policy documents are also referenced within the relevant technical assessments presented in **Chapters 6 - 16** of this EIA Report. The EIA Report is further supported by a Planning Statement supplied with the planning application.

5.2 The Legislative Planning Framework

The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act (as amended) (1997)

- 5.2.1 The Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 (as amended) is the 'Principal Act' which regulates land use planning matters in Scotland. All applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the provisions of this legislation. In particular, under Section 25 of this Act, the determination of all planning applications must be made in accordance with the statutory development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This requirement is reinforced by section 37(2) of the Act, which requires the planning authority to have regard to the material provisions of the statutory development plan when determining an application. The statutory development plan is discussed further in **Section 5.4**.

The Town and Country Planning (Development Hierarchy) Regulations (Scotland) (2009)

- 5.2.2 The Proposed Development comprises up to two wind turbines, each with a rated capacity of up to 5MW, and a 11MW battery storage resulting in an expected overall installed capacity up to 21MW. Under the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009, a development falling within the scope of regulation 2(1) of and Schedule 1 to the Town and Country Planning (Hierarchy of Developments) (Scotland) Regulations 2009 is a major development. Schedule 1 (Major Developments) identifies the major development as follows:

"4. Electricity Generation:

Construction of an electricity generation station [where] [t]he capacity of the generation station is or exceeds 20 megawatts."

- 5.2.3 In accordance with the 2009 Regulations, the Proposed Development is categorised as a major development' as it meets the 20MW threshold.

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Scotland) (2017)

- 5.2.4 The Proposed Development falls within Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Scotland) 2017 (as amended). The EIA report is only required for Schedule 2 developments if the proposal is likely to have

significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its size, nature, or location. From an early stage of the project, the Applicant recognised the likely need to undertake the EIA report owing to the potential for significant environmental effects from the Proposed Development.

- 5.2.5 The EIA process has played a central role in developing the design of the Proposed Development, in order to minimise the potential for any adverse environmental effects and maximise the positive environmental effects of the Proposed Development. Details of the EIA process undertaken are provided in **Chapter 4 – Approach to Preparing the EIA Report**.

5.3 Renewable Energy Policy Framework

International Policy and Targets

- 5.3.1 At the international level, action to tackle climate change is informed by the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change ('IPCC') which has finalised the synthesis report for the Sixth Assessment Report ('AR6') and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change ('UNFCCC'), which aims to stabilise atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at a level sufficiently low to *'prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system'*. It sets non-binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions for individual countries. It does not include any enforcement mechanisms but outlines how specific international treaties (called *'protocols'* or *'agreements'*) may be negotiated to specify further action towards the objective of the UNFCCC. On 12th December 2015, 196 Parties to the UNFCCC including the UK adopted the Paris Agreement, which commits UNFCCC signatory countries to take action to cut carbon emissions and emphasises the aim to limit the temperature rise below 2°C and to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- 5.3.2 The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties ('COP26') was hosted in Glasgow in 2021. The COP26 summit brought nations together to outline how they will achieve the targets of the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC. COP26 marked a step forward in the global effort to address climate change, and an increase in ambitions to reduce emissions across the world. 197 countries agreed to a new climate deal *'The Glasgow Climate Pact'*, and the 'Paris Rulebook' was finalised. The 'Paris Rulebook' is the practical guidance for implementing the Paris Agreement and addresses how the parties are to contribute to achieving the climate targets in the Paris Agreement.

UK & Scottish Policy and Targets

- 5.3.3 At a UK level, tackling climate change is set out by the Climate Change Act 2008 as amended by the Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019.
- 5.3.4 The UK adopted a 2050 net zero emissions reduction target in June 2019, strengthening its previous 2050 goal of at least an 80% greenhouse gas emission reduction below 1990 levels by 2050. The Climate Change Act 2008 also requires the Government to set legally-binding 'carbon budgets' to act as stepping-stones towards the 2050 target. Carbon budgets cover a five-year period and currently run to 2037. The UK is currently in the Fourth Carbon Budget period (2023 to 2027). The Sixth Carbon Budget (2033 to 2037) looks to cut emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to the 1990 levels. The Sixth Carbon Budget for the first time will incorporate the UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions.
- 5.3.5 A range of policy documents set out the UK Government's binding commitments to cut carbon emissions through the deployment of renewable energy including:

- Energy White Paper (2020);
- Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (2021)
- Build Back Better: our plan for growth (2021);
- Climate Change Strategy 2021 - 2024 (2021); and
- Clean Growth Strategy (2017) (updated 2018).

- 5.3.6 In April 2022, the UK Government updated the British Energy Security Strategy. It emphasises the need to accelerate the transition away from oil and gas towards greener and cleaner energy sources. The Strategy highlights the importance of onshore wind by committing to improve national network infrastructure and explore options to increase the provision of onshore wind across the UK.
- 5.3.7 In April 2019 the Scottish Government declared a climate change emergency. This declaration further emphasised the Scottish Government's commitment to combating climate change and especially reducing Scotland's own contributions to climate change. It is widely recognised that new renewable energy projects are required in order to allow for more sustainable forms of energy to be used and to help combat the climate crisis.
- 5.3.8 Scotland has a world leading legislative framework to combat climate change and transition to a low carbon economy, with the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, as amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced ambitious targets into the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, including increasing the 2045 target to 100% emissions reduction (i.e., net zero emissions) and making provisions for a net zero greenhouse gas emissions target to be set on a credible and costed pathway. The 2045 target date is five years ahead of the current date set for the rest of the UK and aims to ensure Scotland contributes to the worldwide efforts to deliver on the Paris Agreement. The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 also sets out the following interim targets:
- To reduce emissions by 48.5% by 2020¹⁵;
 - To reduce emissions by 75% by 2030, and
 - To reduce emissions by 90% by 2040.
- 5.3.9 Sitting alongside Scotland's world leading climate change legislative framework, 'The Future of Energy in Scotland: Scottish Energy Strategy', which was published in December 2017, sets out the Scottish Government's 2050 vision for energy in Scotland as '*a flourishing, competitive local and national energy sector, delivering secure, affordable, clean energy for Scotland's households, communities and businesses.*' It highlights the importance of renewable energy and its associated infrastructure as being a major industrial sector in its own right, helping to sustain economic growth and employment. The Future of Energy in Scotland: Scottish Energy Strategy sets two new targets for the Scottish energy system by 2030: (1) the equivalent of 50% of the energy for Scotland's heat, transport and electricity consumption to be supplied from renewable sources; and (2) an increase by 30% in the productivity of energy use across the Scottish economy.
- 5.3.10 As of 9th May 2023, the Scottish Government closed consultation on the Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan. The vision set out in the Draft Energy Strategy and Just

¹⁵ This target was recently amended by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (Interim Target) Amendment Regulations 2023 from the previous figure of 56% to 48.5%. The effect of the modification is to "[adjust] the annual target figures for 2021 to 2029, in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2009 Act" and in accordance with "the most up-to-date advice received from the UK Climate Change Committee ("CCC"), advising that the 2020 interim target should be modified for the sole reason of a change in international carbon reporting practice".

Transition Plan is that by 2045 Scotland will have a climate friendly energy system that delivers affordable, resilient and clean energy supply for the households, businesses and communities of Scotland. This will be able to deliver maximum benefit while also enabling Scotland to achieve its wider climate and environmental ambitions. As this is Scotland's first transition plan, steps must be taken to secure this transition which will benefit the whole of Scotland's communities. The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan will look to make sure energy economies are thriving, increase access to affordable energy and maximising community benefits from, and ownership of energy projects. It also allows opportunities to participate in the net zero energy future. The Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan restates the ambition of onshore wind and provides clear positions on community benefit and shared ownership, including how communities can benefit from repowering of existing sites.

- 5.3.11 Scotland's 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan was updated in December 2020 due to the introduction of the Climate Act 2019. The Climate Change Plan sits alongside the Future of Energy in Scotland: Scottish Energy Strategy. It sets out policies and proposals on how the Scottish Government intends to meet its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets from 2018 – 2032. It provides the strategic framework for transition to a low carbon Scotland. The Scotland's 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan 2020 Update reflects the ambitious targets introduced by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 into the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 to reduce emissions by 75% by 2030 (compared with 1990 levels) and to be net zero by 2045. The Ministerial Forward to the 2020 Update states that *'COVID-19 does not change our ambitions. As Scotland emerges from COVID-19 we have a chance to rebuild the economy in a way that delivers a greener, fairer and more equal society. This Plan sets out our approach to delivering a green recovery and sets out a pathway to deliver our world leading climate change targets. In line with the 2018 plan, the focus is on the period up to 2032.'*
- 5.3.12 The Onshore Wind Policy Statement, which sets out the Scottish Government's position on onshore wind, was published in December 2022. The Onshore Wind Policy Statement sets out the need for greater security of supply and lower cost electricity generation, which are now key drivers alongside the need to deal with the climate emergency:
- "[t]hat is why we must accelerate our transition towards a net zero society. Scotland already has some of the most ambitious targets in the world to meet net zero but we must go further and faster to protect future generations from the spectre of irreversible climate damage" and recognises that 'Scotland has been a frontrunner in onshore wind and, while other renewable technologies are starting to reach commercial maturity, continued deployment of onshore wind will be key to ensuring our 2030 targets are met.'*
- 5.3.13 The Onshore Wind Policy Statement has set an overall ambition of 20GW of installed capacity by 2030. The Scottish Government acknowledges that onshore wind technology is moving towards more powerful turbines and that, by necessity, this will require taller towers and larger blades. It is noted that larger wind turbines present an opportunity for landscape improvement, as well as increasing the amount of electricity generated. Onshore Wind Guidance is discussed in Section 5.5. of the Planning Statement.

5.4 The Development Plan

- 5.4.1 Following adoption of National Planning Framework 4 ('NPF4') on 13th February 2023, the statutory Development Plan covering the Proposed Development comprises:
- NPF4; and
 - East Ayrshire LDP (2017).

- 5.4.2 The publication of NPF4 has coincided with the implementation of certain parts of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. A key provision is that in the event of any incompatibility between a provision of NPF4 and a provision of a Local Development Plan, then whichever of them is the later in date will prevail. That will include where a LDP is silent on an issue that is now provided for in NPF4.
- 5.4.3 Section 13(2) of the 2019 Act amends Section 24 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 to provide that: *'In the event of any incompatibility between a provision of the National Planning Framework and a provision of a local development plan, whichever of them is the later in date is to prevail.'*¹⁶
- 5.4.4 NPF4 sets out a new national policy position for spatial planning, whilst replacing National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy ('SPP').

National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) (2023)

National Spatial Strategy

- 5.4.5 NPF4 provides the national spatial strategy for Scotland to 2045 and takes account of the target of net zero emissions by 2045 set by the Scottish Government. It provides a strong framework for the deployment of renewable energy developments and identifies the need for strategic scale renewable energy developments, including onshore wind farms and of particular relevance to the Proposed Development, extensions to existing wind farms.
- 5.4.6 NPF4 first sets out the National Spatial Strategy for Scotland 2045. The introductory text to the Spatial Strategy starts by stating (page 3) *"The world is facing unprecedented challenges. The global climate emergency means that we need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the future impacts of climate change."* The Spatial Strategy plans for future places in line with six spatial principles which are:
- Just transition;
 - Conserving and recycling assets;
 - Local living;
 - Compact urban growth;
 - Rebalanced development; and
 - Rural revitalisation.
- 5.4.7 The Strategy states that *"...this is an integrated strategy to bring together cross-cutting priorities and achieve sustainable development."* These principles will be applied to support the delivery of:
- Sustainable places;
 - Liveable places; and
 - Productive places.
- 5.4.8 Sustainable places are about ensuring that Scotland's future places will be net zero, nature-positive places that are designed to reduce emissions, while adapting to climate change. As part of sustainable places under the Spatial Strategy states *'We will*

¹⁶ 1997 Act, section 24(3).

encourage low and zero carbon design and energy efficiency, development that is accessible by sustainable travel, and expansion of renewable energy generation.'

- 5.4.9 Other subject specific policies within the NPF4 which are of relevance to the Proposed Development are listed in Table 4.1 of the Planning Statement.

Spatial Planning Priorities

- 5.4.10 Annex C of NPF4 sets out Spatial Planning Priorities. The information within the priorities is intended to guide the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies and LDPs to help deliver Scotland's National Spatial Strategy. For the region of Central Scotland, which covers the Ayrshires, the priority stated in NPF4 is:

"To deliver sustainable places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area should support net zero energy solutions including extended heat networks and improved energy efficiency, together with urban greening and improved low carbon transport."

- 5.4.11 Along with the priority, it also states that:

"Planning has the potential to address the impact of climate change on communities whilst also generating renewable heat and facilitating urban cooling from our rivers. Mine water, solar and onshore support for offshore renewables, including development that makes use of existing infrastructure at strategic hubs, all provide opportunities for decarbonisation."

- 5.4.12 For South Scotland, which includes East Ayrshire, the priority states:

"To deliver sustainable places, Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Plans in this area should protect environmental assets and stimulate investment in natural and engineered solutions to climate change and nature restoration, whilst decarbonising transport and building resilient physical and digital connections."

- 5.4.13 The priority goes on to state:

"The South of Scotland is an important centre for renewable energy generation. Proposals for consolidating and extending existing wind farms and associated grid improvements and supply chain opportunities will require a carefully planned approach."

Climate Emergency and Nature Crisis

- 5.4.14 The most important policy for all developments which sets the foundation for all other policies within NPF4 is Policy 1. Policy 1 intends:

'To encourage, promote and facilitate development that addresses the global climate emergency and nature crisis.'

- 5.4.15 NPF4 also focuses on energy through Policy 11, with the intent:

"To encourage, promote and facilitate all forms of renewable energy development onshore and offshore. This includes energy generation, storage, new and replacement transmission and distribution infrastructure and emerging low-carbon and zero emissions technologies including hydrogen and Carbon Capture Utilisation and Storage ('CCUS')."

East Ayrshire Local Development Plan (2017)

- 5.4.16 The East Ayrshire LDP was adopted by East Ayrshire Council ('EAC') in February 2017. The East Ayrshire LDP aim is that *"East Ayrshire will be a desirable place in which to live, work, invest and visit."* The East Ayrshire LDP sets out a vision statement (paragraph 2.14) for 'The Rural Area' of East Ayrshire, which the Development Site lies within:
- "The rural area of East Ayrshire will be one of its most valuable assets. Limited housing and business development will have taken place to sustain the rural economy and sympathetic tourism opportunities will have been developed attracting more people into the area. Wind energy development will have taken place to ensure that the potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources is achieved, in line with national climate change targets, whilst giving due regard to relevant environmental, community and cumulative impact considerations."*
- 5.4.17 The East Ayrshire LDP contains a number of policies of relevance along with a proposed wind energy spatial framework. Policy OP1: Overarching Policy sets out a number of criteria relating to general environmental and amenity issues which should be considered in the determination of all development proposals.
- 5.4.18 Map 12 of the East Ayrshire LDP reflects the spatial framework for wind energy development above 50m in height. This spatial framework identifies three groups of areas:
- Group 1: Areas where development will not be acceptable (only applicable to National Parks and National Scenic Areas, none of which are located within East Ayrshire);
 - Group 2: Areas of significant protection; and
 - Group 3: Areas with potential for development.
- 5.4.19 The Development Site covers areas identified within Group 3.
- 5.4.20 Policy RE3 (Wind Energy Proposals over 50m in height) provides support for proposed wind energy developments in Group 3 areas *'where it can be demonstrated that they are acceptable in terms of all applicable Renewable Energy Assessment Criteria set out in Schedule 1.'*
- 5.4.21 Schedule 1: Renewable Energy Assessment Criteria sets out a number of assessment criteria for renewable energy developments:
- Landscape and visual impacts;
 - Cumulative impacts – likely cumulative impacts arising from all considerations below, recognising that in some areas the cumulative impact of existing and consented energy development may limit capacity for further development;
 - Impacts on carbon rich soils, deep peat and peatland habitats, using the carbon calculator;
 - Effects on the natural heritage, including birds. Renewable energy proposals will only be approved where Council has ascertained that they would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site;
 - Impacts on wild land;
 - Impacts on all of the historic environment;
 - Effects on hydrology, the water environment, flood risk and groundwater dependent terrestrial ecosystems;

- Impacts on forestry and woodland;
- Effects on greenhouse gas emissions;
- Impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including visual impact, residential amenity, noise, and shadow flicker;
- Impacts on tourism and recreation;
- Public access including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes identified in National Planning Framework 3;
- Net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business, and supply chain opportunities;
- Impacts on aviation and defence interests;
- Impacts on road traffic including during construction and decommissioning;
- Impacts on adjacent trunk roads;
- Impacts on telecommunications and broadcasting installations, particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised;
- The appropriate siting and design of turbines and ancillary works;
- The scale of contribution to renewable energy targets; and
- Opportunities for energy storage.

5.4.22 All other relevant policies within the East Ayrshire LDP are listed in **Table 4.2** of the Planning Statement.

Planning for Wind Energy Supplementary Guidance (2017)

- 5.4.23 This supplementary guidance is statutory and forms part of the East Ayrshire LDP. It supports the implementation of Policy RE3 of the East Ayrshire LDP by clarifying the criteria against which proposed medium and large-scale wind energy development will be assessed.
- 5.4.24 In Section 1.3 it is noted that “*a broad upland arc*” running around the eastern and south-eastern edges of East Ayrshire represents a landscape type commonly associated with wind energy development. The Development Site is located within this upland arc.
- 5.4.25 Table 2 within the document lists individual constraints within East Ayrshire relevant to the spatial framework methodology set out in Table 1 of the former SPP. Table 2 of the document states that Class 1 (nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat and areas likely to be of high conservation value) and Class 2 (nationally important carbon-rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat and areas likely to be of high conservation value and restoration potential) areas as defined within the Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) Carbon and Peatland Map 2016 have been considered as constraints. These definitions of Class 1 and Class 2 are also in accordance with that are used in the East Ayrshire LDP. All of the identified constraints are mapped in Map 2 to produce the wind energy spatial framework for East Ayrshire. Section 2.3 of the document clarifies the implications of the wind energy spatial framework for wind energy proposals. It is only Group 1 areas which are to be afforded a presumption against wind energy development. For Group 3 areas, the supplementary guidance reiterates the requirements of Policy RE3.

- 5.4.26 Section 3 then sets out detailed criteria and information requirements to be considered in the determination of wind energy applications. Criteria of relevance to the Proposed Development is set out in Paragraph 4.2.11 of the Planning Statement.

Dark Sky Park Lighting Supplementary Guidance (2017)

- 5.4.27 This supplementary guidance is statutory and forms part of the LDP. It supplements the Dark Sky Park LDP Policy TOUR 4 to ensure that external lighting is designed and installed correctly in order to protect the quality of the dark sky within the Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park. It advises that, within the surrounding area, or Transition Zone, new external lighting should be Dark Sky friendly where possible, in order to help safeguard and enhance the quality of the Dark Sky Park.

Minerals Local Development Plan (2020)

- 5.4.28 The Minerals Local Development Plan ('Minerals LDP') sets out East Ayrshire's ambitions for mineral developments and provides further information for consideration over the next 20 years. The Minerals LDP acknowledges that a significant amount of wind farm development has taken place in East Ayrshire. Policy MIN T2: Cumulative Impacts of Minerals Related Traffic acknowledges that mineral development proposals are required to assess the cumulative transportation impacts in respect of traffic movement related to wind farms under construction or consented in their submission and implement mitigation measures as required.

Other Material Considerations

East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study (2018)

- 5.4.29 This advisory, non-statutory planning guidance, which revises and updates the 2013 East Ayrshire Landscape Wind Capacity Study, was informed by SPP, which was the relevant guidance at the time (now replaced by NPF4). Whilst this document was prepared under policy that has now been replaced, its findings remain relevant. It is a strategic study that aims to inform strategic planning for wind energy development in line with the former SPP and to provide guidance on, rather than criteria for, the determination of individual planning applications. It does not replace site specific assessments of individual proposals.
- 5.4.30 Key findings from the Study include:
- There is some scope to site additional wind farm development with turbines above 70m in height within upland areas of East Ayrshire although this would be limited by potential cumulative and other landscape and visual constraints including effects on adjacent smaller scale settled valleys and lowland landscapes.
- 5.4.31 The Proposed Development lies mainly within the 'Southern Uplands with Forestry' landscape character type (20c), with just the northern most area (although no turbines) within the East Ayrshire 'Southern Uplands' landscape character type (20a).
- 5.4.32 The study notes at paragraph 15.2 that capacity for additional new development is considered close to being reached in landscape character type 20c, with sensitivity concluded to be High for the Very Large and Large typologies (turbines >70m).

East Ayrshire Local Development Plan 2

- 5.4.33 On the 5th December 2022, EAC submitted Local Development Plan 2 to Scottish Ministers for Examination. The plan and all necessary paperwork were submitted on 24th February 2023. Following this, on 3rd April 2023, the Scottish Government appointed Mr Stephen Hall BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI to carry out the Examination of the East Ayrshire LDP2. Additional Reporters may be appointed in due course to aid the speedy delivery of the report. The Reporter will first commence the examination of conformity with the planning authority's participation statement. The Examination process was understood to begin around 24th April 2023.
- 5.4.34 Once adopted, the East Ayrshire LDP 2 will supersede the East Ayrshire LDP (2017) and the East Ayrshire Minerals LDP (2020) to form (along with NPF4) the Development Plan for East Ayrshire.
- 5.4.35 Policies of relevance within the East Ayrshire LDP2 include Policy: RE1 Renewable Energy and Policy NE12: Water, air, light and noise pollution. The relevant criteria of Policy RE1 seeks to protect environmental receptors including the landscape, cultural and natural heritage, water and general amenity from unacceptable significant adverse impact. Policy NE12 provides support for
- 5.4.36 Other policies within the East Ayrshire LDP 2 which are of relevance to the Proposed Development are listed in Paragraph 4.3.7 of the Planning Statement.

National Planning Advice and Circulars

- 5.4.37 National planning policy is supported by Planning Circulars, Planning Advice Notes, Advice Sheets, National Policy Statements and Ministerial/Chief Planner Letters to Planning Authorities. Planning Circulars contain guidance on policy implementation through legislative or procedural change, while Planning Advice Notes expand on national policy and incorporate best practice advice.
- 5.4.38 Revised for consultation in March 2023, the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) (identifies the importance of improving the reliability and security of UK energy supply, especially in light of recent energy price fluctuations due to actions by foreign entities. It also identifies a need for more renewable energy to be developed in order for current net zero goals to be achieved and for the energy industry to become decarbonised. The Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) provides guidance on how large-scale energy developments should consider their potential effects on a wider range of topics, such as socio-economic effects and landscapes. Whilst it is recognised that Scotland has devolved powers in terms of planning policy, Section 1.5.2 of the revised NPS states: *"In Scotland and in those areas of the REZ [Renewable Energy Zone] where Scottish Ministers have functions, the Secretary of State will have no functions under the Planning Act 2008 in relation to consenting energy infrastructure projects except as set out in this section. However, energy policy is generally a matter reserved to UK Ministers and this NPS may therefore be a relevant consideration in planning decisions in Wales and Scotland."*
- 5.4.39 The Scottish Government Planning Circulars and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (now referred to as NatureScot) advice documents that are considered to be of relevance to the Proposed Development are listed in Paragraph 4.3.13 of the Planning Statement.