

# **Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales**

## **Consultation Summary**

In April to June 2023 the Design Commission for Wales undertook a second stage of consultation on the draft Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales guidance document.

The consultation included a draft of the new guidance, a questionnaire and invitations to comment via the Design Commission website and social media feeds, as well as by direct email. Key stakeholders, public bodies, non-governmental organisations, Members of the Senedd and previous respondents were contacted.

The Design Commission received 30 responses to the consultation. The responses comprised six businesses; nine members of the public; three professional bodies; two statutory bodies; one non statutory body; four local authorities; one national park authority, one town council; and three community groups.

Some respondents disagreed with the principle of the construction of large-scale on-shore wind farms and solar farms in Wales. There was concern about the impact such developments have on the landscape, as well as other impacts such as loss of biodiversity. Some respondents suggested that there should instead be a greater focus on other renewable energy developments, particularly off-shore wind and tidal energy. These comments are a policy issue and are outside the scope of this project.

This publication is not a policy document. The document provides guidance relating to national planning policy in the Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales: the National Plan 2040. The guide has specifically been developed to support Policies 17 and 18 of Future Wales.

Some respondents wanted more detail on various issues relating to renewable energy development and provided suggestions of additional information that could be included. The Design Commission appreciates this constructive input and has made changes to reflect some of this feedback. Not all suggestions have been

incorporated as the guide is intended to be mutually accessible for multiple audiences. The document provides guidance that:

- Welsh Ministers, Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) and Local Authorities can use in their role reviewing, influencing and determining wind and solar development;
- developers (both private and community led) can use early in the process to identify and address potential issues;
- stakeholders, consultees and community enterprises can draw from; and
- those coming to the planning process for the first time can use to better understand the key issues major wind and solar proposals should consider, the consenting process and wider useful sources of information.

The consultation responses have informed the refinement of the Designing for Renewable Energy in Wales guide. A key change was to reinforce the importance of landscape design leading the design process. The guidance has also been updated to include recent changes to Planning Policy Wales on biodiversity and ecosystems resilience.