



Policy Statement on Renewable Energy Developments

Dated 1 February 2024

1. Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) reiterates and acknowledges Tynwald's declarations of both the climate and biodiversity crises, to which the Isle of Man is not immune. MWT believe that, amongst many other anthropogenic factors, climate change is negatively impacting both wildlife, and the habitats upon which wildlife depends, on a global scale. MWT therefore, in principle, supports renewable power as part of our nation's wider strategies towards increasing energy efficiency, Net Zero 2050 and Nature's Recovery.
2. MWT's position is qualified in that any renewable energy project, onshore or offshore, must be coordinated as part of a wider strategy, be situated in an appropriate location, at an appropriate and proportionate scale, with suitable safeguards for nature and utilise the latest credible science and evidence in this regard. The most appropriate designs and technology should be used to minimise all ecological and environmental impacts to the maximum extent possible, while ensuring the continued protection of our important habitats and species. Both the Precautionary Principle and cumulative effects must be factored into the design, assessment and approval of any project.
3. MWT recognises that a major driver in the push for renewables is the protection of the natural environment. We therefore must ensure that we do not cause avoidable, undesirable, severe or long-term impacts to our habitats and/or species in the quest to ultimately protect them. For this reason, ecological considerations must be paramount during the design, planning, approval, construction, operation, decommissioning and site restoration of any renewable energy development project.
4. MWT believes that all due process and diligence (statutory, Government policy and established industry best practice) must be followed during any renewable power proposal and development. While we recognise the urgency of the climate and biodiversity crises, we also recognise that properly minimising any potential impacts on nature requires an appropriate timescale to deliver the best for our Island.
5. MWT believes that renewable energy developments ¹ must acknowledge and respect the importance of areas which are recognised or designated ² for being of national or international importance ³ for nature conservation. Equally, projects should be avoided where a proposal will likely or demonstrably cause significant impacts on priority habitats, protected/key species or those habitats/species of conservation concern at the national or international level. Where renewable energy projects are proposed adjacent or near to areas of nature conservation importance, adequate safeguards & mitigations must be designed and built into developments to ensure no damage or harm is caused to the conservation interest or nearby sites, including to mobile species.
6. MWT believes that when any major developments are constructed, they must be monitored throughout the project's life for any subsequent negative impacts on nature conservation. Where unforeseen negative impacts are subsequently identified, immediate mitigations should be implemented to eliminate these or reduce them to an ecologically acceptable level. As every renewable energy project will cause some unavoidable, negative impact on wildlife, suitable and robust provisions for Biodiversity Net Gain must be made at the design stage of every renewable energy project and maintained, within the territory of the Isle of Man, throughout the life and decommissioning of the project.
7. MWT, as both an environmental charity and the strongest voice for Manx nature, reserves the right to object and campaign against any proposal which we believe is contrary to our policy and threatens what we exist to protect. In line with the principles of fairness and due process, we will wait until detailed project plans and environmental evidence and assessments are available to allow us to make a fair and credible judgement. ENDS

¹ Including their associated temporary and permanent infrastructure such as roads, yards, buildings, cables or powerlines.

² It should be noted that many habitats of 'designation quality' are yet to be designated on the Isle of Man, therefore each site should be assessed against the established criteria for possible designation, along with any confirmed designations.

³ The following Manx designations **are** recognised in Manx law and indicate that a site is of 'national importance' to nature conservation: National Nature Reserves, Marine Nature Reserves, Areas of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Special Protection, Registered Heathland, Registered Peatland. The following designations **are not** recognised in Manx law however are recognised in Government policy as applicable to the Isle of Man and indicate that a site is of 'international importance' to nature conservation: Ramsar Wetlands Sites, BirdLife International Important Bird Areas. The following designation is recognised in Manx law and indicate that a site is of 'local importance' (or greater) to nature conservation: Bird Sanctuary. The following designations **are not** recognised in Manx law but are recognised in Government policy and indicates that a site is of 'local importance' (or greater) to nature conservation: Wildlife Sites and Nature Reserves.