

## Technical Annex 5: Relevant sustainable development considerations

The Welsh Assembly Government has always had a duty enshrined in legislation to promote sustainable development and now, following the publication in 2009 of One Wales, One Planet<sup>1</sup>, we are using sustainable development as the central organising principle for all Assembly Government activities.

Clearly, against the imperative of reducing the risks from climate change, this dedication to sustainable development means that the Assembly Government must do all that it can to help accelerate the transition to a low carbon energy based economy in Wales – and in the process demonstrate to the rest of the world what even a relatively small nation can achieve.

In many ways energy and minimising its use is the most important issue within the sustainable development agenda and thus the energy vision in this statement has to be based on sound 'sustainable development' in action – which means that both aggregate development effects, and often individual projects, will need to be assessed against an evidence based framework which looks at the following factors from a whole system / whole life perspective, with the importance of each of the factors often varying with the technology employed and sites under consideration:

- environmental consequences – global, regional and local;
- economic (including energy price and appropriate investment discount-rate issues), job creation and skills aspects;
- social, including fuel poverty, well-being, community, public understanding and privacy issues;
- energy security of supply – since without this our civilisation is at risk;
- physical infrastructure, especially energy grids, ICT networks and transport facilities;
- new technology research, development and deployment opportunities.

For example:

- large scale onshore wind and new nuclear power are heavily dependent on public acceptability;
- large scale marine renewables developments – including offshore wind – depend on the extent of local environmental impacts and cost reductions;

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<sup>1</sup> <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/publications/onewalesoneplanet>

- sustainable bioenergy depends on the scale limitations associated with land availability, crop displacement and air quality issues;
- fossil fuels, with their current vital security of supply roles, are dependent on the international availability of supplies.

The best sustainable development path will require the implementation and design of overarching Assembly and other Government (local, UK and European) policies to produce joined-up government and increase private sector investment confidence – without which little will be achieved. As more nations pursue a low carbon energy transition, there will be increasing international competition for private sector investment funds.