

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to carry out consultation on the Draft Supplementary Planning Document on Renewable Energy.
- 1.2 The outcomes of consultation are reported to Full Council prior to adoption.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are prepared under the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, and form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) which delivers the Spatial Strategy for a council's area. Whilst SPDs do not have the status of the statutory development plan they do have material weight in the consideration of planning applications. Their purpose is to expand or supplement policies within development plan policies where necessary.
- 2.2 This SPD has been prepared by North Lincolnshire Council to supplement the policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) that relate to renewable energy proposals (Policy CS18: Sustainable Resource Use and Climate Change). Since its adoption the Core Strategy now forms part of the development plan for North Lincolnshire.
- 2.3 The need to address climate change and global warming is one of the key challenges currently facing the planning system. The burning of fossil fuels for energy is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time the demand for energy grows whilst many traditional forms of fossil fuels are declining, particularly oil, gas and coal. This makes the need to find cleaner, more secure, more diverse forms of energy vital if we are to continue to ensure prosperous and sustainable communities and a healthy environment.
- 2.4 Renewable energy is the term used to describe energy flow that occurs naturally and continuously in the environment, such as energy from wind and the sun. These sources are not depleted by being used. Renewable energy has an important role to play as an alternative to energy generated using fossil fuels and nuclear energy generation. The environmental, economic and social benefits are important factors when considering applications for such schemes.

- 2.5 Over recent years North Lincolnshire has attracted significant interest from energy companies who are looking to develop renewable energy projects. Since 2003/2004 North Lincolnshire has received around seven proposals for wind energy developments at various locations across the area. Of these three have been approved (two by the Government and one by the council). There are also a number of proposals consented for wind energy developments in neighbouring local authority areas at Tween Bridge (Doncaster), Goole Fields, Twin Rivers and Sixpenny Wood (East Riding of Yorkshire) and Stallingborough (North East Lincolnshire).
- 2.6 The South Humber Gateway is strategically placed to take advantage of its location close to where three large areas for offshore wind energy developments will take place over the next decade or so. Given this it is attracting significant interest and investment from wind turbine manufacturers who are seeking to establish manufacturing facilities for off-shore turbines. To meet this interest a Marine Energy Park (MEP) will be developed on the South Humber Gateway. Further renewable energy schemes are being proposed in this area such as the Heron Renewable Energy Plant (Biomass) and the Abengoa bioethanol plant.
- 2.7 Whilst there are undoubted benefits from providing energy from renewable sources, proposals for such development can cause concerns for local communities in terms of their impact upon them. Therefore we need to plan appropriately for renewable energy development. The communities of North Lincolnshire have found themselves under significant pressure from Wind Farm developers and applications have been submitted, and continue to be submitted for these types of scheme. North Lincolnshire Council and its communities feel that they are leading the way as one of the countries 'renewable energy capitals', but feel that we have met the targets in the Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and Humber and that in relation to proposals for renewable energy (particularly Wind Farms) North Lincolnshire has had enough and that the council should be opposing these controversial Wind Farm proposals where they affect North Lincolnshire's communities and most significant landscape areas.
- 2.8 This draft SPD sets out North Lincolnshire Council's approach to planning for renewable energy proposals. It aims to promote the development of renewable energy technology in those locations in North Lincolnshire which have the capacity to accommodate such development without it having an adverse effect on the natural and built environment. The draft SPD aims to provide guidance for developers in preparing planning applications for renewable energy developments in North Lincolnshire, as well as assisting elected members and council officers in determining planning applications.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1 – Approve the draft Renewable Energy SPD for public consultation and subsequent adoption.
- 3.2 Option 2 – Do nothing and rely on existing national and local planning policy.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is the preferred option as this will allow North Lincolnshire Council to progress with the adoption of the SPD which will put in place further specific planning policy that has been locally developed and locally determined. The SPD will further supplement the policies of the Core Strategy and allow local factors (such as, impact on surrounding communities, landscape etc) to be assessed in determining applications.
- 4.2 Without further locally determined policy the council will have to rely on existing local planning policy, which has now become superseded by national policy (Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to PPS1, and Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy), and also will have to refer to the national policy, in determining planning applications, which does not reflect the requirements of the local communities who will be greatest affected by any scheme.
- 4.3 Option 2 would result in the use of mainly national policy to determine local applications in North Lincolnshire as the existing local planning policies will be superseded by national policy. It is imperative that the council is able to influence decisions locally as its communities are the most affected, and it is unfair that decisions are made without their input. Furthermore without this SPD there is risk that under the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' that all renewable energy proposals should be approved unless there is up to date local policy in place. Therefore it is even more imperative that this SPD is implemented as soon as is practicable.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

No additional financial resources will be required to deliver the policy outlined in this report.

5.2 Staffing

There are no additional staffing implications arising from this report.

5.3 Property

There are no additional property implications arising from this report.

5.4 IT

There are no additional IT implications arising from this report.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Environmental

The council has a duty to bring forward local development plans that deliver sustainable development wherever possible, but that contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change. However it is essential that local communities are provided with an opportunity to influence decisions locally where it has potential for negative environmental impacts.

6.2 Diversity

The draft Renewable Energy SPD is subject to Integrated Impact Assessment.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 No consultation has taken place as yet. The SPD will be subject to consultation in conformity with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. There is a risk that a substantial number of comments could be received during the consultation period. If this occurs it may be necessary to review the adoption timetable period.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Head of Regeneration and Planning be authorised to:

- a) Approve the carrying out of pre-deposit consultation on the draft SPD for 21 days
- b) In consultation with the Leader make any adjustments to the draft SPD and prepare a Statement of SPD Matters
- c) To publish on the council's website the SPD and Statement of SPD Matters, and allow a further four week period of public consultation.

8.2 That the outcomes of consultation to be reported to Full Council and that the SPD is recommended for adoption.

HEAD OF REGENERATION AND PLANNING

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Background papers used in the preparation of this report

North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework: Core Strategy Adopted June 2011.