

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

The purpose of this policy is to help increase the use and supply of renewable energy and low carbon energy and heat.

In June 2019, the government committed to a legally binding target requiring the country to be net zero carbon by 2050. The updated NPP Framework requires that Local Plans develop a positive strategy to promote energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources. The Framework encourages Local Plans to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily and to consider identifying suitable areas for development, and support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy.

The Framework states that when determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

North Norfolk declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and with the implementation of a Green Agenda and the production of an Environmental Charter, renewable energy alternatives and the move towards low carbon energy sources are at the forefront of future plans for North Norfolk and an integral part of achieving net zero

Whilst the Council is keen to support renewable energy developments, ~~these~~ such developments can have ~~significant negative effects~~ adverse impacts on the natural and built environment, as well as residential amenity, all of which, ~~and these~~ needs to be carefully managed. There is a need to ensure sufficient protection for the distinctive and sensitive landscape and environment in North Norfolk.

The North Norfolk Landscape Sensitivity Assessment SPD (LSA) (adopted January 2021) Study, 2018 (LSS), provides evidence and context for policies within the Draft Plan and has been used to inform the draft Renewable Energy policy and to assist in the identification of potentially suitable areas for all types of renewable energy development wind turbines. The LSA S uses the updated 2018 adopted Landscape Character Assessment 2021 (LCA) as the basis for identifying the overall sensitivity to different renewable energy developments for each Landscape Character Type (LCT) , and in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and airfields, indicating areas that may will be more or less sensitive in the landscape, ranging from high to low sensitivity.

In order to provide greater certainty in providing opportunities for renewable energy development, whilst protecting sensitive landscape character types within the district, the policy directs proposals for all types of renewable energy development to be located within areas of the district that do not exceed 'Moderate- High' within the LSA sensitivity classification. Careful consideration will also be needed in areas close to High sensitivity landscapes, such as the AONB, Heritage Coast and Undeveloped Coast and the cumulative impacts of an increasing number of renewable developments within an area.

In addition to this spatial aspect, all proposals will be assessed against a comprehensive set of criteria and also seeks conditions around the restoration of a site if a renewable energy development is subsequently removed.

Onshore Wind Energy

The PPG states that proposals for wind energy development should not be considered acceptable unless it is located in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in Local or Neighbourhood Plan and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the

planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed and the proposal has their backing.

Wind energy development proposals will be supported in principle where it can be demonstrated that the landscape sensitivity for the proposed scale of turbine does not exceed 'Moderate- High'. This sensitivity classification maintains opportunities for wind energy development of up to 60m hub/100m tip height across the least sensitive parts of the District. All proposals should complement the particular characteristics of the surrounding landscape and the LCA will assist in assessing the impact of individual proposals.

Offshore Wind Energy

In November 2020, the government published The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, which sets out the ten areas that are being promoted in order to achieve the net zero carbon target by 2050. Point 1 relates to the aim of quadrupling offshore wind capacity and by 2030, the aim is to produce 40GW of offshore wind, including 1GW of innovative floating offshore wind in the windiest parts of our seas. As such, there is considerable potential for offshore wind power to contribute to renewable energy production and while offshore proposals are not subject to local authority planning consent, permission is required for the associated on-land infrastructure, including cable routes. To date, North Norfolk has positively embraced offshore wind developments in the North Sea. However, there is concern about the potential increasing number of cable corridors and grid related infrastructures, including substations and cable relay stations, being proposed by offshore wind developments, due to the potential loss of landscape features and habitats and their cumulative adverse impacts. Consequently, the Council is encouraging and supportive, at a National level, of the development of an Offshore Ring Main, to minimise the construction impacts on the coastal region in the short term and to rationalise grid connections for greater efficiency in the long term. An Offshore Ring Main would connect to the National Grid through one single cable connection, potentially saving the North Norfolk countryside from widespread infrastructure works delivered over many years. These applications will be determined in line with the criteria contained in the policy below.

Solar Photovoltaic Farms

Field- sized solar farms provide an opportunity for greater energy production as well as potential enhancement to biodiversity, but it is important that they are carefully planned and screened to ensure any amenity and visual impacts are minimised. The PPG encourages the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value. Where a proposal involves greenfield land, it will also need to be demonstrated that the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, that poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays

Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plants

AD plants can be classified into two general categories: those that process predominantly agricultural feedstock (such as manures, slurries, crops and crop residues); and those that use predominantly municipal, commercial and industrial waste streams as feedstock. The biogas produced can either be burned on-site to generate heat and/or power (Combined Heat and Power – CHP); or upgraded to biomethane for injection into the national gas grid.

Anaerobic Digestion proposals are regarded as waste treatment facilities, where feedstock is classified as waste under relevant legislation and so relevant related national and county best

practice guidance and policies will apply. Anaerobic Digestion proposals raise a number of planning issues including visual and landscape impacts arising from industrial scale plant / buildings; location concerns, in terms of sustainability relative to the source of biomass and where relevant, combined heat and power (CHP); electricity and/or gas grid connection), potential odour impacts, air emissions, noise impacts, protection of the water environment and traffic impacts.

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Renewable energy proposals, **including from community-led initiatives**, will be supported and considered in the context of Sustainable Development and climate change, taking account of the wider environmental, social and economic benefits of renewable energy gain and its contribution towards energy supply.

Proposals for renewable energy technology **including the landward infrastructure for offshore renewable schemes or the** integration of renewable technology on existing or proposed structures **with any** associated infrastructure, will be ~~permitted~~ **supported where the site is located in an area that does not exceed 'moderate-high' sensitivity within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2021 SPD and it is demonstrated that any individual or cumulative, there are no significant adverse impacts effects on would be satisfactorily mitigated in respect of all of the following;**

- 1. the visual impacts on the surrounding landscape, townscape and ~~cumulative-landscape character and visual impacts;~~ and**
- 2. the special qualities of all designated nationally important landscapes and **heritage assets** including their settings ~~which must be conserved or enhanced;~~ and**
- 3. the special qualities of nationally and internationally designated conservation sites and their qualifying features, habitats and biodiversity;**
- 34. residential and local amenity relating to {visual dominance, noise, fumes, odour, vibration, glint and glare, shadow flicker traffic generation, broadcast interference};**

~~In the case of proposals for wind energy development proposals that lie outside of an area classified as having 'high sensitivity' within the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment 2018 and there are no significant adverse effects on;~~

- ~~1.5. the cumulative impacts on air traffic safety, radar, reflected light, ~~heritage, radar and telecommunications, or any such impacts have been adequately mitigated;~~ and~~
- 6. there is appropriate details / mechanism in place to restore the land to its original use and the removal of the technology at the end of its generating term**
- ~~2. residential amenity in terms of shadow flicker, vibration and visual dominance; and~~
- ~~3. landscape character, unless it can be demonstrated that the impact is acceptable in accordance with the adopted landscape character evidence base.~~

The location of all planning applications proposals for wind turbines should be informed by the relevant wind energy map* detailing the suitable areas for such development and following

consultation, must demonstrate that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been fully addressed ~~and the proposal should have their backing.~~

*map to be based on Figs. 5.2 and 5.3 of the Landscape Sensitivity Assessment SPD