

LANCASTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

**PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO A LOCAL PLAN POLICY AND JUSTIFICATION
FOR APPROACH ADOPTED**

POLICY DM52: RENEWABLE AND LOW CARBON ENERGY GENERATION

21st MAY 2019

It is understood that 2 main points were raised in relation to policy DM52 during the Local Plan Examination hearings:

1. The policy could be expressed more positively in accordance with paragraph 007 95-007-201-40306) to positively allow renewable and low carbon energy generation
2. Consideration needs to be given to the way in which 'areas suitable for wind energy' are allocated, in accordance with paragraph 32 (5-032-150618).

Response to Point 1

The Council recognise that the wording in policy DM52 could be more phrased more positively, and so the revised wording below is proposed as a main modification (text highlighted in yellow shows where changes have been made):

"Policy DM52: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

The Council is committed to supporting the transition to a lower carbon future and will seek to maximise the renewable and low carbon energy generation in the District where this energy generation is compatible with other sustainability objectives.

The Council will support proposals for renewable and low carbon energy schemes, including ancillary development, where the direct, indirect, individual and cumulative impacts on the following considerations are, or will be made, acceptable (unless material considerations indicate otherwise):

- I. *As a result of its scale, siting or design impacts on the landscape character, visual amenity, biodiversity, geodiversity, flood risk, townscape and historic assets of the district, highway safety, aviation and defence navigation systems/communications;*
- II. *The amenities of sensitive neighbouring uses and local residents are minimised (including by virtue of noise, dust, odour, shadow flicker, air quality or traffic);*
- III. *The wider environmental, economic, social and community benefits directly related to the scheme outweigh any significant adverse effects; and*
- IV. *The proposal is consistent with other relevant policies within the local development plan.*

In areas that have been designated for their national importance, as identified in the National Planning Policy Framework, large-scale renewable energy infrastructure will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would be appropriate in scale, located in areas that do not contribute positively to the objectives of the designation, is sympathetically designed and includes any necessary mitigation measures.

Proposals for wind turbines will only be supported where they are located within an area identified as suitable for wind energy as shown on the proposals map and in Figure 1 (Areas identified as suitable for Wind Energy). Wind turbines in the areas identified as suitable for wind energy will be considered acceptable where the development can be positively assessed against the criteria outlined in (I) to (IV), National Planning Policy, the relevant Ministerial Statements and/or Guidance and following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.

The Council will require that where renewable energy installations become non-operational for a period in excess of one year, the facility will be removed and the site will be fully restored to its original condition within one year."

Response to Point 2

Paragraph 32 (5-032-150618) of the National Planning Practice Guidance states that “suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated clearly”.

The Local Plan is being assessed within the context of the 2012 NPPF which makes no reference to identifying ‘suitable areas’. However, on the 18th June 2015 the Government published a Written Ministerial Statement which stated that the Local Planning Authority, when determining planning applications for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines, should only grant permission if:

- The development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and
- Following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.

Therefore, in the submitted Development Management DPD policy DM52 is accompanied by a map showing areas which are not constrained (for example by environmental designations) and these areas are shown in white. Proposals within these areas would be subject to the criteria laid out within the policy and would need to demonstrate that the proposal has the backing of the local community. Only then would a proposal be considered to be acceptable. The purpose of identifying areas as suitable for wind energy is to guide potential wind energy proposals towards the areas which are considered to be the most suitable areas in the district. However, as noted, this does not mean they will be automatically permitted, they will be subject to further assessment as each site and situation is different, and needs to be assessed based upon individual merits.

Having given the matter some further consideration, it is believed that it would be more appropriate to identify these areas considered to be suitable for wind energy on the Local Plan Policies Map, as opposed to be shown only on a map accompanying policy DM52. For context the original map will remain in the Development Management DPD to demonstrate how the areas were identified.

In coming to this conclusion, the Council investigated the approach taken by a number of other Local Planning Authorities nearby. The research showed that a number of Council’s have taken a similar approach. For example, in Wyre their Local Plan was recently adopted in February 2019 under the NPPF transitional arrangements and they have designated the whole Borough as ‘an area of search suitable for wind energy’, subject to further policy criteria. In Eden their Local Plan was adopted in October 2018, and they took the same approach that we are proposing and identified relatively large areas of the district as suitable for wind energy on their Policies Map, subject to further policy criteria. Both approaches were found to be sound at Examination.

Therefore Lancaster City Council believe that the approach they are proposing is appropriate and in accordance with national policy and guidance.

