Bassetlaw District Council response to Inspectors Action List

Action 74 - Matter 12 – ST51 Renewable Energy Generation

BDC to provide note on the Council's approach to wind energy. The current approach means BDC should confirm in the supporting text that there is 'no support' for wind energy in the Plan and reference to 'flicker' in ST51 should be removed.

BDC Response

The Council take a positive approach to planning for renewable and low carbon energy schemes in the adopted Core Strategy. However, the renewable energy policy does not specifically identify any suitable areas for wind energy.

The Local Plan looked to maintain that approach. But we acknowledge that in the intervening period national policy has changed, with the NPPF paragraph 155 stating that plans should: consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development.

In the case of wind energy, footnote 54 of the NPPF states that 'a proposed wind energy development involving one or more turbines should not be considered acceptable unless it is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in the development 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'.

Currently the proposed policy approach (ST51) in the Local Plan would exclude wind energy, as the policy does not identify any suitable areas for wind development.

The Council acknowledge that the NPPF paragraph 155 also asks that Plans provide a positive strategy for energy from renewable and low carbon energy sources, to maximise the potential for suitable development.

The District takes a very proactive approach to neighbourhood planning, having 21 made neighbourhood plans, with a number of others in preparation/at review. The vast majority are in the rural area, which comprises a significant part of the District.

The rural area may also provide opportunities for appropriate wind energy development, particularly if this can benefit local communities. The Council are keen to enable communities to be invested in where wind turbines (commercial/small scale) should go, and consider that the neighbourhood planning process provides an appropriate mechanism for this to happen.

As such, the Council proposes to change Policy ST51 (overleaf) to promote the identification of suitable areas for wind energy development through the neighbourhood plan process should there by community support. This is in line with national policy.

As the Council is making provision for wind energy in the district, we'd suggest that reference to 'flicker' should remain in Policy ST51.

10.2 Renewable Energy Generation

10.2.1 The UK Government has committed to cut Greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035 and to achieve net zero by 2050[3] in line with the Zero Carbon Strategy. Strategic planning policy can contribute towards this commitment by positively supporting forms of renewable energy developments in the District over the plan period.

10.2.2 The Government's National Policy Statements apply to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. As such, Policy ST51 applies only to renewable and low carbon energy development of 50 megawatts or less installed capacity. Many small scale renewable technologies are now permitted development, therefore the requirements of Policy ST51 do not apply in those cases.

10.2.3 Renewable energy includes two forms of energy generation:

a) low-carbon: where technologies emit low levels of carbon emissions or no net carbon emissions are created (carbon emissions created are balanced by taking the same amount out of the atmosphere e.g. through tree planting); and,
b) zero-carbon: where technologies emit no carbon emissions.

10.2.4 In Bassetlaw, the preference is for zero-carbon energy generation to make a positive contribution to meeting national energy targets and to minimise the District's impact on Climate Change. Whether commercial or domestic, appropriate renewable energy developments will help contribute towards reducing the reliance on more conventional forms of energy and the use of fossil fuels facilitating an easier transition to zero carbon by 2050. ~~Elsewhere, micro to medium scale commercial renewable energy generation and community wind generation will be supported where they are consistent with relevant policies in this Plan.~~

10.2.5 This approach will also help transition Bassetlaw from a net carbon producer (historically the District housed three coal fired power stations) to a net contributor of zero carbon and low carbon renewable energy. <u>The green energy sector may be an appropriate part of the long term regeneration plans for the three power station sites at Marnham, Cottam (see Policy ST6) and West Burton because of each site's ability to provide direct connectivity to the national electricity grid via existing energy switching and/or transmission infrastructure. In these locations, proposals that are consistent with Policy ST51 and the wider development plan will be supported however, this should not preclude the consideration of other uses, where consistent with other relevant policies in this Plan.</u>

10.2.6 Proposals should consider a diverse mix of renewable energy technologies. This will help facilitate a secure, reliable, affordable net zero energy system that is resilient in 2050 and that is not overly reliant on any one technology.

10.2.7 Large scale ground mounted proposals for solar farms are capable of contributing substantially to total solar power generation nationally, and the District is currently experiencing an increase in interest for such schemes, particularly in the countryside. This has the potential for adverse impacts, so in accordance with the UK Solar Photovoltaics Strategy[11,12], the preference is for future expansion of solar photovoltaics to be on commercial and industrial roof-space. Nevertheless, large scale ground mounted proposals may be acceptable subject to meeting the criteria in Policy ST51.

~~**Area of Best Fit for Renewable Energy Development**~~

10.2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework[2] emphasises that a positive strategy should be adopted to promote energy from renewable energy sources, with policies designed to maximise the development of renewable energy and heat. ~~It states that plans should consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development.~~

10.2.9 Given the national and local recognition of the need to transition to a low carbon future, the Local Plan encourages wind energy within the district's energy mix, most notably to serve local communities.

10.2.10 Reflecting national policy, applicants for wind energy development involving one or more turbines will be expected to demonstrate how the local community has been involved in developing proposals, that the planning impacts identified by the community have been addressed, and that the submitted scheme has their support. In the first instance, the production of Neighbourhood Plans provides a meaningful opportunity to obtain local community support in the identification of suitable areas for wind energy as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process. The Greening Bassetlaw SPD, to be produced following adoption of this Local Plan, will support this process.

~~10.2.9 In Bassetlaw, when assessing the suitability of land for renewable energy development, developers should first consider whether the proposal could be located within the Area of Best Fit as identified by Policy ST51 and on the Policies Map.~~

~~10.2.10 The Area of Best Fit focuses renewable energy development at the former High Marnham Power station, recognising the site's previous use for energy generation; and its ability to provide a significant opportunity for direct connectivity to the national electricity grid, via existing energy switching and/or transmission infrastructure.~~

~~10.2.11 Additionally, this approach promotes the positive regeneration of an area of brownfield land whilst minimising likely associated impacts on the wider environment and nearby communities.~~

~~10.2.12 The Area of Best Fit does not preclude renewable energy development elsewhere in the district nor does it mean that land within the area must be developed for renewable energy exclusively.~~

~~10.2.13 On that basis, proposals within the Area of Best Fit should be guided by a comprehensive masterplan framework, a delivery strategy and phasing plan in accordance with Policy ST58. The masterplan framework should include all relevant technical assessments considered necessary to address site-specific issues relevant to the site such as relating to the historic and/or the natural environment. Together these will coordinate delivery of the site. Community consultation and Council approval will be required prior to submission of a planning application.~~

~~10.2.14 In practice, there will be other parts of the District that will be suitable for renewable energy. The benefits of delivering increased renewable energy capacity will need to be assessed against any potential adverse effects. The type of possible impacts will vary depending on the technology being used, but the need to protect residential amenity is likely to be a common issue for many scheme types. Other considerations will include impact on the local environment or wider landscape, harm to sites of biodiversity value, impact on heritage assets and interference with telecommunications and aviation equipment.~~

~~10.2.15 The District also has two other former power station sites; at Cottam (see Policy ST6) and West Burton. The Council recognise the significant regeneration that will need to be undertaken at both sites in the long term, which could include some form of zero carbon energy generation. Both are at different stages in the decommissioning process; on that basis the Council will continue to work with the landowners and site promotors to ensure that the opportunities for regeneration of both sites, and potentially zero energy generation, are maximised appropriately through the review of the Local Plan.~~

10.2.12 As the number of <u>all types of</u> renewable energy developments across the District continues to increase, it is important that all proposals consider their impact on the affected community and neighbouring land uses. Developers should <u>therefore</u> demonstrate community support through an appropriate developer led pre-application consultation or through the neighbourhood planning process, where applicable. This should <u>provide details of</u> ~~demonstrate~~ the community response, including <u>that</u> from the relevant parish/town council~~, is positive overall.~~

10.2.13 <u>Additionally,</u> the issue of cumulative impact will need to be carefully considered. Cumulative impacts can relate to landscape and visual amenity, bird populations and other wildlife, the historic environment or any other matter. Such impacts may be experienced through the provision of a new renewable energy development alongside existing or proposed schemes, and/or by the extension and intensification of an existing scheme. Policies ST40, ST42 and ST37 are particularly relevant when considering these issues.

~~Proposals will be considered in terms of their impact on neighbouring land uses and the affected community. Developers should demonstrate community support through an appropriate developer led pre-application consultation or through the neighbourhood planning process, where applicable. This should~~

~~demonstrate the community response, including from the relevant parish/town council, is positive overall.~~

10.2.15 Where planning permission is required for renewable energy projects, this shall include a planning condition requiring the removal of associated infrastructure and the reinstatement of a building or restoration of land to its original condition or appearance, where appropriate within three years of the equipment becoming permanently non-operational.

10.2.16 Proposals which include the generation of energy from waste are a County matter and as such will be dealt with by Nottinghamshire County Council.

10.2.17 Policy ST51 requires developers to provide evidence based assessments of power generation based upon ~~actual~~ expected yield rather than installed capacity. This is necessary to enable the Council to have a robust understanding of the district's contribution towards national zero carbon targets. Further details are found in the Local Plan's monitoring framework.

10.2.18 More detailed guidance relating to the provision of renewable energy or local carbon technology development will be set out in the Greening Bassetlaw Supplementary Planning Document following the adoption of the Local Plan.

POLICY ST51: Renewable Energy Generation

~~Development that generates, shares, transmits and/or stores zero carbon and/or low carbon renewable energy will be supported in principle at the Area of Best Fit at the former High Marnham power station site, as identified on the Policies Map as a result of the ability of on site development to connect to the on site national electricity grid infrastructure.~~

~~Proposals for renewable energy development on land at the Area of Best Fit should deliver a scheme in accordance with an agreed masterplan framework, relevant supporting technical assessments, delivery strategy and phasing plan for the site in accordance with Policy ST58, and other relevant policies in this Plan.~~

1. ~~Outside the Area of Best Fit, d~~ Development that generates, shares, transmits and/or stores zero carbon and/or low carbon renewable energy including community energy schemes will be supported ~~and expected to demonstrate an operational and/or economic need for the development in that location, and~~ subject to the satisfactory resolution of all relevant site specific and cumulative impacts upon: ~~that the scheme could have on the area~~, ~~taking into account operational and approved developments, as well as any proposed intensification to operational or approved proposals. An assessment should address cumulative~~
    a) location, setting and position in the wider landscape, resulting from its siting and scale; ~~and landscape impacts~~, ~~as well as~~
    b) natural and heritage assets and their settings;
    c) air and water quality;
    d) hydrology and hydrogeology;
    e) the best and most versatile agricultural land;
    ~~ecology;~~
    ~~traffic and transport;~~

f) existing highway capacity and highway safety;
g) noise, light, glare, smell, dust, emissions or flicker;
h) aviation and radar;
i) recreation and local amenity ~~impacts~~.

Proposals must take into account operational and approved developments, as well as any proposed intensification to operational or approved proposals.

2. A proposal involving one or more wind turbines will only be supported where:
   a) the site is located within an area defined as being suitable for wind energy in a made neighbourhood plan; and
   b) following consultation, it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that all potential adverse planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed, including cumulative impacts identified in Part 1 above.

3. All renewable energy development will be expected to provide details of the expected power generation based upon expected yield or local self-consumption to enable effective monitoring of the district's contribution to the national zero carbon targets.
4. A decommissioning programme applied by a Condition to any planning permission granted will be required to demonstrate, the effective restoration of land and/or buildings to their original use, where appropriate ~~(such as agriculture) and condition~~ three years after cessation of operations.