

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

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CABINET

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CONSULTATION PAPER ON DRAFT NEW PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 22 (PPS22):
RENEWABLE ENERGY

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

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RECENT REFERENCES:

None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report refers to the current consultation by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, in regard to a draft version of a new Planning Policy Statement on Renewable Energy (PPS.22). The Statement forms part of an ongoing review of all government guidance on planning policy and, in particular, reflects the Government's increasingly active promotion of renewable energy issues.

The consultation draft sets out the requirement to meet national and international targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Part of the strategy to achieve this is focused on the need to encourage a more widespread use of renewable energy. The new document is based on the expectation of an increased incidence of such schemes and in a far broader range of locations. Therefore, in seeking to achieve regional and local policies which are fully supportive of these objectives, the consultation document emphasises the need to balance any harm caused by such developments, against the wider environmental benefits and the pressing need to achieve new targets set for electricity generation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister be thanked for the opportunity to comment on the Consultation Paper on the Draft New Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy.
- 2 That, subject to appropriate safeguards for areas subject to national designations, the City Council wishes to state its support for the aims and objectives contained in the consultation document.

WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE9 January 2004CABINET14 January 2004CONSULTATION PAPER ON DRAFT NEW PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 22 (PPS22):
RENEWABLE ENERGYReport of the Director of Development ServicesDETAIL:1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This Consultation Paper introduces and seeks comments on the draft of a new Planning Policy Statement on Renewable Energy (PPS.22). The Government's purpose is that this Statement should eventually replace Planning Policy Guidance Note: 22 (PPG.22).
- 1.2 As part of the strategy, outlined in the Government's Planning Green Paper – "Planning – Delivering a Fundamental Change", it is intended to review and reform all planning policy guidance. As a shorter and more focused statement of national planning policies, the drafting of a new PPS.22 forms part of this review. The main difference between the current Consultation Paper and the extant PPG is that the new document follows on from the active promotion of renewable energy issues in various Government guidance, issued over the past two to three years.
- 1.3 The Purpose of the Consultation
- 1.4 In setting out broad policy objectives relevant to renewable energy in England, the consultation draft now places a stronger emphasis on helping the UK to meet national and international targets for the reduction of emissions of greenhouse gases. These targets include the aim to cut United Kingdom carbon dioxide emissions by some 60%, by 2050.
- 1.5 The statement does not extend to cover those technologies which are outside the remit of the land use planning system, or wider issues such as energy efficiency within buildings. However, the Statement does include issues relating to the use of regional targets for renewable energy, 'buffer' zones and a clear emphasis on criteria based policies for use in regional planning guidance and development plans.
- 1.6 It is the Government's further intention to provide a separate 'companion guide' when the final version of PPS22 is published. This will contain technical advice and guidance on the various individual renewable technologies, together with examples of good practice among development plans and instances of recent renewable energy developments.

2 The Draft PPS22

- 2.1 For the purposes of this PPS, 'renewable energy' concerns those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the external environment – from the wind, the descent of water, the movement of the oceans, the sun and from bio-mass. Therefore, the guidance deals with onshore wind generation, hydro-power, photo-voltaics, passive solar energy, bio-mass and energy crops, energy from waste (excluding mass incineration of domestic waste) and gas from landfill and sewage. Although some of the policies set out in the draft document may be relevant to combined heat and power (CHP) projects, fuelled by a renewable resource, the Statement does not specifically cover this issue.

3 The Government's Wider Objectives

- 3.1 In order to help achieve the national energy policy target referred to in para 2.1 above, the Government has set an associated objective of generating 10% of UK electricity from renewable sources by 2010, with the further aspiration to double that contribution by 2020. A rapidly increasing development of renewable energy resources is seen as the key to achieving such targets, both from the climate change and renewable energy perspectives.
- 3.2 There are four overall objectives which underpin the Government's renewable energy strategy. These are set out in the PPS and provide a broad range of social and economic aims. They are as follows:- achieving social progress by ensuring all homes, including those in remote areas, are adequately and affordably heated; securing the greater protection of the environment; ensuring the prudent use of natural resources and; maintaining high and stable levels of employment and economic growth, helped by the creation of jobs directly related to renewable energy developments.
- 3.3 In terms of achieving these targets, the earlier Energy White Paper had indicated that the Government would be looking to work with regional and local bodies to deliver the stated objectives including, as appropriate, the setting of regional, or sub-regional, targets for renewable energy generation through Regional Planning Guidance (RPG). Such targets should be set for achievement by 2010 and 2020, although these would need to be revised on a regular basis and, where appropriate, revised upwards, bearing in mind that technological advances may mean that new sources of renewable energy are likely to be developed in the longer term.

4 The Delivery of Planning Policies

- 4.1 It is the Statement's intention that, in terms of providing for future energy development, criteria based policies should be set out in regional planning guidance. These criteria should then be used to identify broad areas, at the regional or sub-regional levels, where development of particular types of renewable energy may be appropriate. However, it is not intended that fixed targets for specific technologies should be included, bearing in mind that these might be too restrictive.
- 4.2 However, at the local level, the PPS indicates that planning authorities should set out the criteria that will be applied in assessing applications for planning permission for renewable energy projects. In general, it is intended that development plan policies should encourage, rather than restrict or prevent, energy development. They should not, therefore, contain criteria for assessing renewable energy applications that are based on assessing levels of harm.

- 4.3 On the contrary, such criteria are expected to focus on how to mitigate any undesirable effects. Development plan policies should also recognise that renewable energy development depends on both the availability of resources and consequent scheme viability and should not seek to impose any other sequential tests for site selection.
- 4.4 Generally, planning policies which seek to constrain the development of all, or specific types of, renewable energy should not be included in development plans. To further reflect the Government's more positive approach, development proposals should demonstrate any environmental, economic or social benefits, as well as how any environmental or social impacts has been minimised through careful consideration of location, scale, design, or related measures.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 5.1 The fundamental difference between this document and its predecessor, PPG.22 (1993) is that the new document follows the substantial promotion of renewable energy, in Government guidance issued over the last few years. The previous guidance was based on limited expectations of development and concentrated on minimising the harm from such developments. However, the new document is based on an expectation of development across the country and in a wide variety of locations. It also states a need to balance any harm caused by such developments against the significant environmental benefits and the need to achieve the targets set for electricity generation.
- 5.2 The new guidance should make it easier to achieve consent for renewable energy development, by virtue of the increased prominence this is now being given and the 'direction' to all local authorities to encourage such development. However, it is recognised that there are still sensitive issues to be taken into account and the onus is still largely on the developer to demonstrate the acceptability of their proposals in accordance with the criteria set by local authorities. Furthermore, for sites protected by a national designation (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, etc.), planning permission for renewable energy projects should only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the objectives of designating the area would not be compromised by the development. Any significant adverse effects would need to be clearly outweighed by the scheme's environmental, economic and social benefits.
- 5.3 At the present consultation stage a comparison can be made between the Government's new targets for the future contribution from various forms of renewable energy, as reflected in the tone of this consultation document, and the policy proposal on renewable energy currently contained in the Revised Deposit Winchester District Local Plan Review (DP.18). In making such a comparison it becomes apparent that, following the consultation and amendment stages, a new PPS.22 covering these matters is likely to result in the need for some adjustments to be made to the Council's Local Plan Review policy and explanatory text.
- 5.4 However, the upward revision of targets and the strengthening of purpose, both contained in the consultation draft document, are generally in line with the Council's own approach to environmental and resource issues, much of which is contained in the Review Plan's Chapter 3. It is accepted that the new guidance marks a significant change in emphasis, if not in direction. Nevertheless, in terms of protecting the environment and, in particular, seeking to reduce the burning of fossil fuels, it is considered that the guidance represents an enlightened step forward. It is not recommended, therefore, that any objections should be made to the consultation draft

document. Instead, it is recommended that, subject to appropriate protection being given to areas protected by national designations, the City Council should state its support for the aims and objectives of this consultation document.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

6 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 6.1 This report is of relevance to the Corporate Strategy's Aim of maintaining and supporting the local economy and conserving the resource base and the rural landscape, together with the Strategy's objective of sustaining and improving the natural environment.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 None at the present time.

8 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- 8.1 File and correspondence held in the Planning Department of Development Services.

APPENDICES:

None.