

## Improving Resource Efficiency and Renewable Energy

### National Context

- 7.36 National Planning Guidance in the NPPF establishes the requirement to; reduce energy use; promote water efficiency; reduce emissions, promote renewable energy use and increase development of renewable energy.
- 7.37 Most recently, The 2009 UK Renewable Energy Strategy and The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan 2009 explicitly require the planning system to support carbon reduction, and secure energy generation from renewable sources. This includes energy generated from dedicated biomass fuelled power stations, co-firing with coal and clean coal technologies.
- 7.38 From 2016 all new homes are intended to be zero carbon and new non-domestic buildings should be zero carbon from 2019. More demanding mandatory requirements for new homes to meet the 'Code for Sustainable Homes' standards are also being introduced alongside the development of standards such as BREEAM ratings for commercial buildings<sup>85</sup>. These proposals will be supported by planned changes in the Building Regulations.

### Relevant Strategic Objective

12, 15, 16 and 17

### Local Context

- 7.39 Planning permissions have been granted for a number of renewable energy schemes including wind turbines and energy from waste, some of which are already operational. For example Rusholme Windfarm has capacity to generate 24 MW of electricity and the Selby Renewable Energy Park could produce up to 6 MW when fully functioning.
- 7.40 Recovering energy from waste adds value before final disposal (after other opportunities for recycling or composting have been explored). The North Yorkshire County Council, as Waste Disposal Authority

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<sup>85</sup> See Background Paper 8 Climate Change and Sustainable Development, for further information on the Code and BREEAM

would deal with any planning applications for energy from waste schemes. Developments would be considered against the saved policies in the Waste Local Plan until such time as they are replaced by the emerging Waste Local Plan.

- 7.41 Both Eggborough Power Station and Drax Power Station produce energy from co-firing biomass. Drax Power has received planning permission for additional biomass handling equipment and infrastructure which will provide the capability to deliver a target of 500 MW (i.e. 12.5% of its output) from renewable fuels. In addition, Drax has applied to the Department of Energy and Climate Change for permission to build a dedicated biomass-fired renewable energy plant on land adjacent to Drax power station capable of producing nearly 300 MW of grid-connected electricity.
- 7.42 In the light of known planned schemes, and the existence of local coal mines and traditional coal fired power stations, Selby District is particularly well placed to exploit opportunities for carbon capture, clean coal technology and coal bed methane as well as potential for appropriate biomass, energy from waste and combined heat and power.
- 7.43 Proposals for carbon capture and storage (clean coal technology) may be of such a scale as to be determined at national level rather than the District Council as planning authority. Proposals for coal bed methane extraction are a minerals matter and therefore fall within the remit of North Yorkshire County Council as the minerals authority. Planning applications will be considered against the relevant saved policies in the Minerals Local Plan until replaced by the emerging Minerals Local Plan.

### **Local Targets**

- 7.44 With the changes in the planning system, Government has given much greater planning responsibilities to Local Authorities and top-down target-setting is being removed. As a result, communities will have both the responsibility and the opportunity to deal with the impacts of climate change.
- 7.45 Understanding the potential for the supply of and demand for renewable and low-carbon in a local area is an essential starting point in considering the opportunities to move to low-carbon communities.
- 7.46 Studies at sub-regional level (2004 and 2005)<sup>86</sup> reviewed technical constraints and opportunities for renewable energy developments and undertook some landscape sensitivity assessment.
- 7.47 Evidence from the studies has been used to establish a local target for indicative potential, installed, grid-connected renewable energy within Selby District of 32 megawatts by 2021.
- 7.48 A further sub-regional study<sup>87</sup> assessed the potential for the full range of renewable energy technologies in the District as well as looking at

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<sup>86</sup> For SREATS see Background Paper 8 for website link to reports and further information.

the possible constraints to implementation as a basis for further local studies and ultimately potentially identifying local targets. The current target of 32 MW by 2021 may therefore be revised. The range of renewable technologies includes: Solar thermal, Photovoltaics, Wind, Biomass, Fuel cells, Energy from waste (Biological and Thermal), Hydro, Heat pumps, Wave and Tidal, and CHP or CCHP<sup>88</sup>.

- 7.49 It is appropriate to adopt renewable energy targets locally through the Core Strategy based on the substantial evidence available at regional and sub-regional level. The Council will continue to encourage the provision of new sources of renewable energy generation, provided any harm to the environment and other adverse impacts are minimised and clearly outweighed by the need for and benefits of the development.
- 7.50 The NPPF requires that local planning authorities adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008. To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources. To support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should when setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards. The regional and sub-regional research established a 10% requirement for energy from decentralised<sup>89</sup>, and renewable<sup>90</sup> or low-carbon sources<sup>91</sup> on developments meeting a size threshold, and subject to type of development, design and feasibility/viability. This requirement is carried forward in the Core Strategy, and the Olympia Park Strategic Development Site and key sites allocated in future Local Plans will be expected to derive the majority of their energy needs from such sources in the light of local circumstances.
- 7.51 Changes to building regulations<sup>92</sup> and the move to zero-carbon buildings will push the boundaries of current energy efficiency and encourage greater use of decentralised and renewable energy. Therefore, authority-wide targets to secure decentralised energy supply to development may in time become redundant however they remain an important interim measure. Further, site specific or development specific targets may still be justified by local circumstances and could be introduced through future Local Plan documents /SPDs.
- 7.52 In addition to contributing towards carbon-reduction by supporting the

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<sup>87</sup> 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Capacity Study for Yorkshire and Humber Part B: Opportunities and Constraints Mapping – Draft Report', April 2010, AECOM for Local Government Yorkshire and Humber <http://www.lgyh.gov.uk/dnlds/YH%20Part%20B%20report.pdf>

<sup>88</sup> The Climate Change and Sustainable Development Background Paper 8 provides further details.

<sup>89</sup> See Glossary

<sup>90</sup> See Glossary

<sup>91</sup> See Glossary

<sup>92</sup> Proposed 2013 revisions to Part L of Building Regulations

full range of renewable energy technologies, the Council will seek to improve resource efficiency in new build developments as a contribution to tackling climate change. Wherever possible, developments will be encouraged to meet national standards and best practice schemes, which seek to improve environmental standards, moving towards the Governments target of zero carbon development (Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM)<sup>93</sup>.

- 7.53 In view of national expectations as well as the impending mandatory requirements for the Code levels, the following strategic policies require development schemes to employ the most up-to-date national regulatory standards for Code for Sustainable Homes on residential schemes, and BREEAM standards on non-residential schemes until such time as replaced by specific local requirements through further Local Plan documents or SPDs.

#### **Strategic Development Management Issues**

- 7.54 Although the District contains some international, national and locally designated protection areas, none would automatically preclude renewable energy developments. However, elements of many, renewable energy projects would conflict with the openness of the Green Belt and are therefore inappropriate within the NPPF definition. In such cases, developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances that clearly outweigh any harm to the Green Belt and also be in accordance with Policy SP3. Very special circumstances may include wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.
- 7.55 Each application will be considered on its individual merits subject to national and local policies with careful consideration given to cumulative impacts where a number of proposals come forward. For example, schemes such as wind farms which have the potential to impact on international nature conservation sites (there are three Natura 2000 sites in the District) will need careful consideration<sup>94</sup>.
- 7.56 Submitting good quality information with planning applications on energy demand and savings is a means of demonstrating that development proposals meet policy objectives for incorporating a proportion of energy from low-carbon, renewable and decentralised sources. The Council will expect developers to submit such energy statements and any necessary viability assessments in order to assess compliance with the Core Strategy policies, including whether schemes are demonstrably unviable or impractical.
- 7.57 Future Local Plan documents, SPDs and guidance will consider setting local targets and requirements and tackle detailed issues such as siting and design, landscape and cumulative visual impact, noise/odour,

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<sup>93</sup> See Climate Change Background Paper BP8 for further information on the Code and BREEAM

<sup>94</sup> The European Commission has published guidance (November 2010) on wind farm development in protected natural areas. The guidelines apply to the Natura 2000 network. The document notes that “while in general terms wind energy does not represent a threat to wildlife, poorly sited or designed wind farms can have a negative impact on vulnerable species and habitats”.

habitat or species disturbance. The Site Allocations Local Plan will consider whether it is appropriate, based on further evidence, to identify suitable areas for renewable and low carbon sources. Proposals for conversion of historic buildings and developments in conservation areas will require special consideration to assess the practicality of incorporating on-site renewables against the objectives of the designation to ensure they will not be compromised.

**Policy SP16 Improving Resource Efficiency**

**In order to promote increased resource efficiency unless a particular scheme would be demonstrably unviable or not feasible, the Council will require:**

- a) New residential developments of 10 dwellings or more or non-residential schemes of 1000 m<sup>2</sup> gross floor space or more, to provide a minimum of 10% of total predicted energy requirements from renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy sources (or else in accordance with the most up to date revised national, sub-regional or local targets).**
- b) Strategic Development Sites identified in the Core Strategy and key sites identified in future Local Plan documents to derive the majority of their total energy needs from renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy sources. Developers to investigate particular opportunities to take advantage of any or a combination of the following for example:
  - i) Local biomass technologies,**
  - ii) Energy from waste (in accordance with the County Waste Policies),**
  - iii) Combined Heat and Power schemes, and**
  - iv) Community Heating Projects.****
- c) Development schemes to employ the most up-to-date national regulatory standards for Code for Sustainable Homes on residential schemes, and BREEAM standards on non-residential schemes until such time as replaced by specific local requirements through further SPDs or Local Plan documents.**

**Policy SP17 Low-Carbon and Renewable Energy**

**A. In future Local Plan documents, the Council will:**

- seek to identify opportunities where development can draw its energy from renewable, low carbon or decentralised energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers; and
- consider identifying 'suitable areas' for renewable and low carbon energy sources and supporting infrastructure.

**B. The Council will support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy developments being taken forward through neighbourhood plans including those outside any identified suitable areas.**

**C. All development proposals for new sources of renewable energy and low-carbon energy generation and supporting infrastructure must meet the following criteria:**

- i. are designed and located to protect the environment and local amenity or
- ii. can demonstrate that the wider environmental, economic and social benefits outweigh any harm caused to the environment and local amenity, and
- iii. impacts on local communities are minimised.

**Schemes may utilise the full range of available technology including;**

- a) Renewable energy schemes, which contribute to meeting or exceeding current local targets of 32 megawatts by 2021 or prevailing sub-regional or local targets;
- b) Micro-generation schemes, which are not necessarily grid-connected but which nevertheless, reduce reliance on scarce, non-renewable energy resources;
- c) Clean Coal Bed Methane extraction, clean coal energy generation and Carbon Capture and Storage technologies (in accordance with County Minerals Policies); and
- d) Improvements at existing fossil fuel energy generating plants to reduce carbon emissions, within the national energy strategy for a balanced mix of energy sources to meet demands.

**D. In areas designated as Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development and in such cases applicants must demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed and proposals must meet the requirements of Policy SP3 and national Green Belt policies.**