

Sustainable Energy

Purpose

To support proposals for renewable energy schemes.

Rational and Evidence

National Policy

NPPF Paragraph 151 requires renewable and low carbon energy and heat to be addressed through a positive strategy, identifying opportunities, but ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed.

Local Policy

The Local plan devotes a chapter to Renewable and Low Carbon Energy. Policy WLP8.27 'Renewable and Low Carbon Energy' expands on this with strong support for the role of Neighbourhood Plans:

'The Council will support Neighborhood Plans in identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy development.'

Renewable and low carbon energy schemes, including wind energy schemes, will be permitted where the proposal is in a suitable area for renewable and low carbon energy as identified in a Neighborhood Plan'.

Planning Rationale

The neighbourhood plan supports renewable energy, subject to impacts on the area's sensitive environments. Renewable energy is a growing part of the local economy. Its success is intimately tied the port, Lowestoft's biggest asset and economic opportunity, in particular, to support offshore wind farms. These in turn create significant employment and business opportunities. The port and the town need to ensure that these opportunities are maximised which is best achieved by removing obstacles to growth. In one regard this involves port improvements such as limited draft adjacent quays, clear width through the bascule bridge and the need to upgrade quay headings to meet changes in industry demands.

In another respect, enhancements at the waterfront aim to exploit the town's potential as a renewable energy hub.

The Powerpark project will reconfigure employment land to provide the focus for the energy industry within Lowestoft. It provides 24.7 hectares of excellent port related facilities and the

opportunity to build upon Lowestoft's international position within the offshore renewables, oil and gas industry. It is already home to offshore related companies such as Sembmarine SLP and Scottish Power and Renewables.

Powerpark is also the location of OrbisEnergy, built by Suffolk County Council in 2008, a 3,300m² eco-building, with office accommodation, meeting rooms and conference facilities for the offshore industry. A wind turbine sits adjacent to OrbisEnergy, which is a significant local landmark, at 126 metres high and generating 2.75 megawatts of power.

Policy SE1: Local Energy Schemes

- 1. Local energy schemes will be supported, subject to:**
 - a) The siting, scale and appearance of the scheme causing no significant adverse visual impact, including on listed buildings and their setting or on conservation areas;**
 - b) There being no significant adverse impacts on the amenities of residential properties, including noise, pollution, vibration or, in the case of wind turbines, shadow flicker.**
 - c) There would be no significant adverse impact on the local environment, having regard to other policies in this Neighbourhood Plan.**

Interpretation and Guidance

The policy applies to all local energy schemes, including wind power, solar photovoltaic panels, local biomass facilities, anaerobic digestions and wood fuel products, and innovative schemes such as tidal energy generation.

Application of the policy includes consideration of the cumulative impacts of the scheme, other schemes with planning permission and existing schemes.

Proposals for wind turbine development are more likely to meet the requirements of the policy if they are located in areas identified as suitable for wind energy development (MAP).

Conditions may be used to ensure that local energy structures are removed, once they reach the end of their operational life.