South Worcestershire

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Supplementary Planning Document

Scoping Paper, February 2017
South Worcestershire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD (February 2017)

The South Worcestershire Councils (SWC) of Malvern Hills District, Wychavon District and Worcester City are preparing a Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), to provide guidance on the application of planning policy SWDP27 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) in the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP).

We are seeking your comments at this early stage to decide what level of guidance and background information should be contained in the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD.

Comments are invited between Monday 13 February and Monday 27 March 2017

In particular we are seeking views from individuals and organisations who are involved in the design and delivery of new development in south Worcestershire (residential and non-residential). Also, those who may be involved in the installation of renewable and low carbon energy technologies. This leaflet identifies some important issues. Please let us know if you agree with these and whether there are additional issues you would wish the SPD to cover.

What is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

A SPD does not set or introduce new policy, rather it gives guidance on the interpretation and implementation of the policies and strategies contained within the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). SPDs are subject to public consultation under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Planning policies on renewable and low carbon energy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the key role planning plays in supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy. To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, the NPPF says that local planning authorities should design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development.

Policy SWDP27 in the adopted SWDP requires all new developments over 100 square metres gross to incorporate the generation of energy from renewable or low carbon sources equivalent to at least 10% of predicted energy requirements, unless it has been demonstrated that this would make the development unviable.

SWDP27 also requires large scale development proposals (residential developments of 100+ dwellings or non-residential developments of more than 10,000 m²) to examine the potential for a decentralized energy and heating network. If practical and viable, a decentralised energy and heating network should be provided as part of the development.

With the exception of wind turbines, SWDP27 also welcomes proposals for stand-alone renewable and other low carbon energy schemes providing they conform to national planning policy and other relevant policies in the SWDP.

The SPD will set out advice and guidance on the implementation of SWDP27.
Definition of Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Renewable and low carbon energy includes energy for heating and cooling as well as for generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Related planning policies

The principal Local Plan policy to which the SPD is related is SWDP27 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy. However, there are other relevant and interlinked policies that can have implications on proposals for renewable and low carbon energy schemes including:

- SWDP1 Sustainable Development
- SWDP6 Historic Environment
- SWDP12 Employment in Rural Areas
- SWDP21 Design
- SWDP22 Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- SWDP23 The Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- SWDP25 Landscape Character
- SWDP31 Pollution and Instability
- SWDP38 Green Space

Role of the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD

The Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD will provide additional guidance on how policy SWDP27 should be interpreted and applied. It is particularly aimed at those involved in the design and delivery of new development and those involved in the planning and installation of renewable and low carbon energy technologies. However, it will also be relevant to others involved in preparing planning applications for housing, such as self-builders and landowners, as well as anyone interested in the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

National planning policy indicates that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) are not required for a SPD unless it is considered that there are likely to be significant environmental effects or exceptional circumstances.

This SPD builds on policies in the adopted SWDP all of which have been subject to SA and detailed scrutiny at the Examination. Furthermore, the criteria in Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 have been taken into consideration and it is the view of the SWCs that these have not been triggered to the extent that it is necessary to subject this SPD to SEA. It is requested that, as part of this consultation, relevant bodies specifically respond to the consultation Q4 on this matter.
Key issues for consideration in the SPD:

• Guidance on how Energy Assessments should be undertaken.
• Advice on how the 10% renewable and low carbon energy target should be calculated.
• Advice on information that needs to be provided to demonstrate that the renewable and low carbon energy target will be met.
• Advice on how opportunities for decentralised energy and heating networks can be explored with respect to very large scale development proposals.
• Advice on information that will need to be provided if renewable or low carbon energy is deemed not practical or financially viable.
• Explain permitted development rights for renewable and low carbon energy technologies.
• Advice on the planning issues and requirements for different renewable and low carbon energy technologies.
• Explain how the SWCs will monitor the implementation of policy SWDP27.

Consultation questions:

We are seeking responses on the following questions:

Q1 Do you agree with the issues identified? If not, please outline your reasons. Are there any other issues you feel should be covered?

Q2 What do you think are the main planning issues that need to be considered when assessing the potential suitability of planning applications for particular renewable energy technologies?

Q3 What are the wider benefits of renewable and low carbon energy projects that should also be material considerations when assessing planning applications? For example, should wider benefits include the contribution to CO2 reduction, the diversification of rural economies and creation of new jobs?

Q4 It is considered that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is not required. If you believe one is required please set out what exceptional circumstances you think would justify one to be undertaken.
How to comment:

Copies of this leaflet and a response form are available electronically on the SWDP website www.swdevelopmentplan.org

and on the three Councils websites at:


Your comments can be submitted via e-mail (attaching the response form) to:

contact@swdevelopmentplan.org

Hard copies of this leaflet and response forms will be available at Customer Service Centres (CSC) and/ or Libraries.

You can also write directly to:

South Worcestershire Development Plan
c/o Wychavon Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Pershore
WR10 1PT

What next?

An indicative timetable is provided below which reflects that set out in the 2016 Local Development Scheme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Stage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2017</td>
<td>Approval from relevant Committees to publish draft SPD for six weeks public consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2017</td>
<td>Publish draft SPD for 6 weeks consultation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>Incorporate comments and produce draft for adoption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>Approval from relevant Committees to adopt the SPD.</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>Publish adopted South Worcestershire Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD.</td>
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The first stage is to produce an initial draft Renewable and Low Carbon Energy SPD that we will publish for consultation in the early summer of 2017. Any comments received will be taken into consideration in a final version of the SPD that will be adopted and published by October 2017.