

# Note on proposed policy approach to wind energy development proposals following recent Government changes to national policy

The purpose of this note is to provide clarification on the Council's proposed policy approach to wind energy development proposals in Policy CCFR05 'Delivering Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Projects' following recent changes made by the Government to national policy on onshore wind developments. The issue was discussed during the Leicester Local Plan 2020-2036 examination at the hearing on Matter 7. Climate Change and Flood Risk and it was requested by the Inspectors that this note be provided by the Council.

## National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2023, contains footnotes 57 and 58 to paragraph 163, which apply to onshore wind energy development.

Footnote 57 states that wind energy development can be permitted through Local Development Orders, Neighbourhood Development Orders, and Community Right to Build Orders. It further states that in the case of Local Development Orders, it should be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been appropriately addressed and the proposal has community support.

Footnote 58 states that a planning application for 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 or a supplementary planning document; and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by the affected local community have been appropriately addressed and the proposal has community support.

On 8 July 2024, the Government published a 'Policy statement on onshore wind', which states that from 8 July 2024 footnotes 57 and 58 no longer apply. The reasons given for disapplying the footnotes are that they set a higher bar for the acceptability of onshore wind energy development than for other forms of development, and that they have been interpreted to mean that any opposition to a proposed onshore wind energy development means the proposal cannot be considered acceptable.

## The approach to wind energy development proposals in the submitted Leicester Local Plan, 2020-2036

Paragraph 6.17 of the draft Leicester Local Plan, 2020-2036 states that while wind turbines are not suitable in certain built-up areas, they should not be ruled

out entirely. It goes on to identify the north-west of the city and surrounding area as a potentially suitable location for wind energy development proposals. Diagram 5 on p. 79 of the Plan shows the area identified as potentially suitable for the purpose of a wind opportunity assessment as well as buffer zones around residential properties.

Notwithstanding that the Leicester Local Plan 2020-2036 is being examined under the September 2023 NPPF and that strictly the Government policy statement of 8 July may only apply as an amendment to the December 2023 NPPF, it is the Council's intention to conform with up-to-date national policy on wind energy development proposals.

Therefore, the Council proposes modifications to the supporting text to Policy CCFR05 'Delivering Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Projects' to align it with the current national policy position and to remove Diagram 5 from the Local Plan. These modifications will be included as part of the Council's list of main modifications to the Plan. The proposed modifications to the supporting text are set out below.

## Proposed modifications to Policy CCFR05 and its supporting text

To align the Local Plan with the recent Government changes to onshore wind development proposals, the Council proposes the following modifications to paragraphs 6.16, 6.17, 6.18, and Diagram 5 in the Local Plan. The below also includes modification MM17 from EXAM 8, which proposed amendments to the wording of the policy itself.

### MAIN MODIFICATION (TO BE PROPOSED)

#### **"Low Carbon Energy Projects**

6.16 Leicester City Council will support renewable and low carbon energy projects, including community led initiatives.

6.17 Whilst wind turbines and biomass combustion technologies aren't suitable in certain built-up areas, these technologies should not be ruled out entirely. ~~The north-west of the city and surrounding area has been identified as a potentially suitable location for wind energy development proposals.~~ Any wind energy **development** proposals ~~in this area~~ would be subject to a site-specific feasibility assessment.

6.18 ~~Any~~ **Wind energy development** proposals should be designed to avoid compromising the development potential of nearby site allocations, **A detailed wind opportunity assessment will be required to appraise any** potential visual, noise and other environmental impacts, including application of appropriate buffer zones, ~~in the form of a detailed wind opportunity assessment.~~

Diagram 5. Map showing buffer zones around residential properties, for the purpose of a wind opportunity assessment

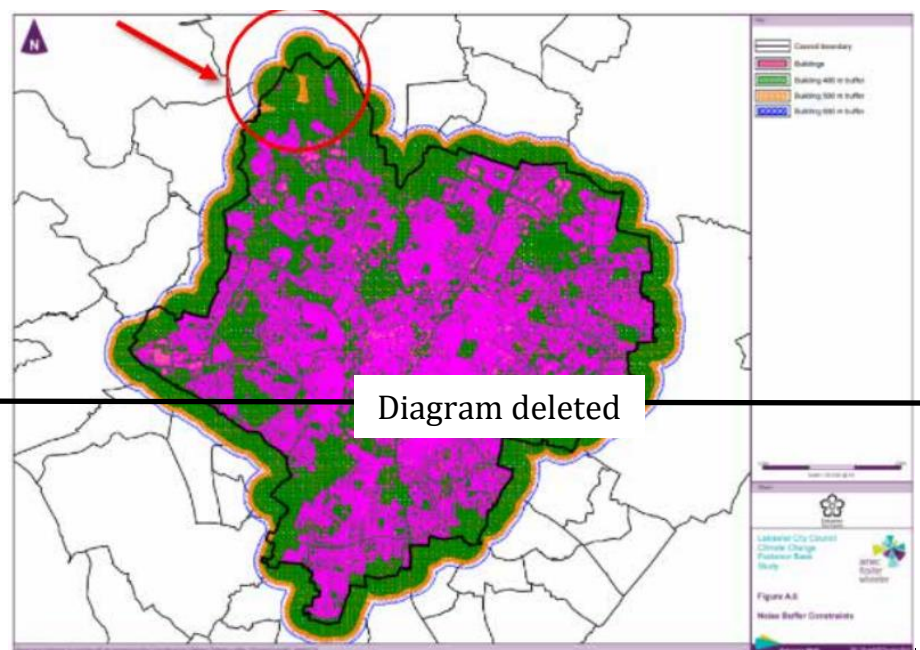


Diagram deleted

(Source of Image © Amec Foster Wheeler, 2015 Climate Change Evidence Base)

### Policy CCFR05. Delivering Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Projects

Proposals for new renewable and low carbon energy projects will be supported ~~subject to the following~~ **unless the project would have adverse impacts on:**

- a) ~~Impacts on~~ the historic environment, local character, appearance, and landscape
- b) ~~Impacts on~~ ecology and biodiversity, including protected species and designated and non-designated wildlife sites (**Policy NE01**)

c) ~~Impacts on~~ residential amenity, including air quality, noise, traffic, recreation, and access (**Policy** DQP06)

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For any proposals for wind turbine projects, consideration should be given regarding air traffic movement and safety, and impacts on electromagnetic transmissions, including radio, television, and phone signals.