



CABINET – 20TH JANUARY 2016

SUBJECT: PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR SMALLER SCALE WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT/CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY AND CAPACITY STUDY

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 1.1 The attached report, which was presented to the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 8th December 2015, provided an update on technical work undertaken in respect of supplementary planning guidance for wind turbines and outlined the results of public consultation and representations received in respect of the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development and the Caerphilly County Borough Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study.
- 1.2 The report sought the comments of Members on the representations received and the minor amendments proposed to the guidance in respect of wind turbine development as a result, prior to its presentation to Cabinet and thereafter Council for approval as formal Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (LDP) up to 2021.
- 1.3 Members were advised that concerns have arisen over the significant number of applications for single and multiple wind turbines being received in the area, and the cumulative impact arising from this. Landscape Officers felt there was insufficient guidance for local authorities or developers to allow consistent assessment of the potential impacts of these smaller scale developments. In response to this, Blaenau Gwent Council (on behalf of the Heads of the Valleys Authorities, including Caerphilly County Borough Council) commissioned a specialist company to undertake a study on this matter.
- 1.4 This work informed the new guidance, which has been prepared in two parts (Supplementary Planning Guidance for Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development and the Caerphilly County Borough Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study). Details of the consultation process and the representations received in respect of the guidance were summarised within the report, together with a copy of the consultation reports included within the appendices.
- 1.5 Members commented on the low consultation response received from the public in respect of the new guidance and Officers explained that this could be due to the technical nature of the document in that it is of greater relevance to the planning and development industry than to the general public. It was confirmed that a good response had been received from a cross-section of environmental organisations, industry representatives and local authorities against both parts of the new guidance, who were in agreement with a number of the proposals contained therein.
- 1.6 Members raised concerns regarding the proposed landscape sensitivity and capacity guidance in that it did not stipulate additional policy. Members expressed a need for strict planning criteria to be applied to the development of wind turbines. Officers outlined current

policy in respect of such developments and explained that the Supplementary Planning Guidance is a piece of technical guidance that sits within the Council's planning policy (the Local Development Plan up to 2021). Officers confirmed that they would examine emerging policy to determine whether it can be strengthened in the forthcoming Replacement LDP in terms of required criteria for future wind turbine applications. Members requested that their concerns on this matter be reported to Cabinet and Council.

- 1.7 Following consideration and discussion of the report, and in noting the representations received, the Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee unanimously recommended to Cabinet (and thereafter Council) that for the reasons contained therein:-
- (i) the representations received as part of the consultations undertaken and the minor amendments proposed in Appendix 3 of the report with regards to the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Smaller Scale Wind Turbine Development and the Caerphilly County Borough Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study be considered;
 - (ii) the guidance be approved as formal Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan up to 2021.

1.8 Members are asked to consider these recommendations.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 Report to Regeneration and Environment Scrutiny Committee on 8th December 2015
– Agenda Item 7