

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure
DATE	15 November 2011
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Supplementary Guidance: Wind Turbine Development in Aberdeen City.
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/11/296

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Planning etc. (Scotland) Act 2006 paragraph 22 (1) states that a planning authority may adopt and issue guidance in connection with a local development plan. Aberdeen City Council has already prepared a number of draft Supplementary Guidance documents and has consulted on 49 of these alongside the Proposed Aberdeen Local Development Plan for a period of 16 weeks (between 24 September 2010 and 17 January 2011). These Supplementary Guidance documents were approved or reissued for further consultation, and a further two draft Supplementary Guidance were published for consultation following the Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee of 13 September 2011.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to obtain Committee approval for a further new item of draft Supplementary Guidance, on Wind Turbines, to be issued for public consultation. Please see appendix 1 for a copy of the Supplementary Guidance. The document has been prepared in support of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan (LDP). A pre-screening report has been carried out for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This states that a full SEA is not required. If this is agreed by the SEA Gateway consultees, an 8 week public consultation will take place from Friday 25 November 2011 until Friday 20 January 2012. This exceeds the statutory minimum of 6 weeks to take account of holidays during the festive period. If the SEA Gateway consultees find that an SEA is required, the consultation on the Supplementary Guidance would be carried out after the 5 week Strategic Environmental Assessment consultation has been completed. The Supplementary Guidance provides the means of assessing development proposals for wind turbines within Aberdeen.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (a) Approve the draft Wind Turbines Supplementary Guidance document for an eight week public consultation.
- (b) Agree that following completion of the relevant consultation, any comments received and subsequent amendments to the draft Guidance be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, other than costs incurred through consultation and publicity related to the proposed guidance. Any such expenses incurred can be met through existing budgets. The implication for the priority based budgeting is positive. Detailed topic-based guidance has value in reducing officer time spent on pre-application discussions, and will therefore prove fruitful in reducing cost. This relates to PBB option EPI PSD02 - Rationalise planning application management.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no known legal or equipment implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 As a major landowner in the city, proposals for the development of land and assets owned by Aberdeen City Council will be subject to assessment in line with the principles and standards set out in the guidance, where applicable.
- 4.3 The progression of the guidance document will provide a clear framework for decision making, allowing comprehensive guidance for both applicants and officers, thereby making a significant contribution towards the Council's aim of promoting and achieving sustainable development.
- 4.4 The proposed Supplementary Guidance on Wind Turbines will provide clear instruction on the level of information that is required with planning applications for wind turbines. The document also gives map based guidance on the locations within the city where wind turbine applications will most likely be refused. This does not guarantee that planning permission will be refused within these areas, or that planning permission will be approved out with these areas. The guidance will work towards helping to achieve the Scottish Government's target of for 40% of Scotland's electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2020. This will help to mitigate the impact of Climate Change, and provide long term environmental benefits to Aberdeen City and beyond.
- 4.5 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be carried out for the draft Supplementary Guidance. This will form a five week consultation that will take place in late 2011.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 To tackle the impacts of Climate Change the Scottish Government has set a target for 40% of Scotland's electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2020. There has been a sharp increase in the number of planning applications for wind turbines in our neighbouring authority of Aberdeenshire Council. It is expected that there may be a similar trend within the city and as such there is the need to supply guidance which will provide applicants and agents with an awareness of the issues which will be considered by planning officers when determining wind turbine applications.
- 5.2 The Supplementary Guidance will inform the Aberdeen Local Development Plan. The Council agreed the content of the Aberdeen Local Development Plan - Proposed Plan on 18 August 2010. The Proposed Plan was a critical stage in the plan preparation process and was the result of a significant amount of assessment and public consultation.
- 5.3 The purpose of the document is to provide guidance on the level of information that is required when submitting an application for wind turbines in the Aberdeen City Council boundary. The document outlines the issues planning officers will consider when determining an application and also provides a map of undesirable locations for wind turbine developments within the city.

6. IMPACT

- 6.1 The Local Development Plan continues to support the vision of Aberdeen becoming an even more attractive place to live and in which to do business and will ensure that high quality employment opportunities exist. This process aspires to improve the access that the people of Aberdeen have to high quality services that meet their needs. The development and refinement of fit for purpose guidance to assist the Aberdeen Local Development Plan is paramount to supporting this vision and achieving the goals that Aberdeen aspires to.
- 6.2 The vision for Aberdeen is to be a city which is vibrant, dynamic and forward looking – an even better place to live and work, where people can expect high-quality services that meet their needs. This means making a visible difference to the quality of the city's urban and natural environment by promoting high quality development and providing an effective infrastructure to make us a world class strategic location.
- 6.3 To do this we must think strategically, facilitate development, engage positively with communities and the business sector and be open and transparent in our decision making. We also have a key role in delivering the vision for the City and Shire as expressed through regional plans and strategies. Planning and Sustainable Development

is tasked with seeing that Aberdeen stays at the forefront of planning for the future.

- 6.4 The guidance represented in this report. relates to the following Single Outcome Agreement objectives: 1- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe; 2- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people; 10- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need; 12- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations; 13- We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity; and 15- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.
- 6.5 The guidance represented in this report meets the vision of the Community Plan in promoting a strong image of the City and a sense of civic pride.
- 6.6 The guidance represented in this report supports the Council's 5 year Business Plan in terms of protecting and enhancing our high quality natural and built environment, attracting visitors, workers and investment to protect the economic future of the city, and, to facilitate new development projects to improve Aberdeen's living and working environment.
- 6.7 An equalities and human rights impact assessment (EHRIA) has been carried out in relation to the proposed Supplementary Guidance documents, with the results included as Appendix 2 to this report.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Aberdeen Local Development Plan – Proposed Plan
http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Planning/ldp/pla_aldp_document_map.asp
- Appendix 1 - Supplementary Guidance: Wind Turbines Development in Aberdeen City
- Appendix 2 – Equalities and human rights impact assessment

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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