

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure
DATE	19 March 2013
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Supplementary Guidance: Wind Turbine Development in Aberdeen City
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/031

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.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to obtain Committee approval of Supplementary Guidance for submission to the Scottish Government to provide further detail on applications for Wind Turbines. A copy of the Supplementary Guidance is contained in Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
 - a) Agree the responses to the representations received on the draft Supplementary Guidance; and
 - c) Agree for officers to send the Supplementary Guidance to be ratified by the Scottish Government.

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 beneficial in reducing costs. 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 adoption 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 to be submitted with planning applications for wind turbines. The document also gives map based guidance on the known environmental and safety constraints to the development of wind turbines. This does not guarantee that planning permission will be refused within these areas, or that planning permission will be approved outwith these areas. Such decisions will depend on site-specific details. The guidance will work towards helping to achieve the Scottish Government's target of for 100% 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.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The purpose of preparing this Supplementary Guidance is to identify all of the issues that must be considered when determining applications for wind turbine developments. To aid developers and the Council these constraints are shown spatially on a map. The purpose of this Guidance is not to identify areas of search or areas where turbines will not be permitted. It will be through the assessment of all the relevant supporting information that decisions on the suitability of each application will be made.
- 5.2 The Draft Supplementary Guidance was reported to Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 06 November 2012 for public consultation. Public consultation on the document ran from 14 November 2012 to 09 January 2013. An advert was placed in the local paper, a notice was posted on the Council's website and letters were sent to community councils and key agencies. The comments received to the consultation and how these comments have been addressed are summarised in Appendix 2.
- 5.3 Seven responses were received during the consultation period from: Royal Aberdeen Golf Club, Forestry Commission Scotland, Council's Environment Planner, SEPA, Transport Scotland, Culter Community Council, SNH. The responses received did not object to the Supplementary Guidance, but made suggestions as to how the

Guidance could be improved or clarified. The issues raised covered: tourism and access, woodland, impact on peat land and wetlands, safety impact on trunk roads, landscape impact, clarification of the type of turbine covered, viability of locations for wind turbines, impacts on designated sites for nature conservation and geological and geomorphological sites.

5.4 In addition to the consultation on the Supplementary Guidance an Environmental Report and Habitats Regulations Appraisal was published and submitted to the Consultation Authorities (Scottish Natural Heritage, Historic Scotland and Scottish Environment Protection Agency).

5.5 The comments on the Supplementary Guidance, the Environmental Report and Habitats Regulations Appraisal have resulted in improvements to the Guidance to ensure that all relevant factors are considered and that the impact of wind turbine development on the environment, landscape and local communities is minimised.

6. IMPACT

6.1 The Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance contribute to the following Single Outcome Priorities: 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 and enhance it for future generations.

6.2 The Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance supports the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular the aim of delivering high levels of design from all development, maintaining an up to date planning framework, promoting sustainable development.

6.3 The Local Development Plan and associated Supplementary Guidance contribute to "Aberdeen – A Smarter City" and the Smarter Environment by maximising the use of low carbon technology and materials and increase energy efficiency and introduce carbon reduction measures in our processes and our housing and non housing assets to reduce our carbon footprint, save money and to bring people out of fuel poverty.

6.4 The proposal is consistent with the Planning and Sustainable Development Service Plan, in particular Adoption of Supplementary Guidance to Local Development Plan and production of Technical Advice Notes.

6.1 An equalities and human rights impact assessment (EHRIA) has been carried out in relation to the proposed Supplementary Guidance and there have been no negative impacts outlined as a result of the EHRIA.

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 Turbine Development in Aberdeen City
- Appendix 2: Summary of Comments and Responses
- Appendix 3: Strategic Environmental Assessment (available online at: http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_aldp_committee_reports.asp)
- Appendix 4: Habitats Regulations Appraisal (available online at: http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/planning_environment/planning/local_development_plan/pla_aldp_committee_reports.asp)

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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