

EN13: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Development

Renewable or low carbon energy generation development may be permitted:

- a. For large scale solar PV farms (5 MW and above) within the Solar Indicative Local Search Areas identified on the proposals map;
- b. For small scale and/or community based proposals (less than 5MW) for wind, solar, biomass, energy from waste, anaerobic digestion and hydropower in appropriate locations;

subject to satisfying the relevant policy tests below.

Land is specifically allocated for solar PV farms at Crumps Yard, Connah's Quay and at Castle Park, Flint, as shown on the proposals map.

All renewable or low carbon energy proposals will be permitted provided that:

- i. the development does not prejudice the purpose of the ILSAs to maximise opportunities for large scale solar PV development;
- ii. the siting, design, layout, type of installation and materials used do not have a significant adverse effect on the character and features of the proposed location;
- iii. there would not be unacceptable loss of public amenity or accessibility to the area;
- iv. the impact of the development upon agriculture, forestry, recreation and other land uses is minimised to permit existing uses to continue unhindered;
- v. there would be no individual or cumulative significant adverse effect on the landscape, particularly the AONB and its setting;
- vi. any associated ancillary buildings or structures are sensitively sited and designed to minimize their impact on the character and quality of the locality;
- vii. in sensitive areas where above ground connections will have an unacceptable adverse effect on the landscape, connection lines and pipes should be located underground;
- viii. adequate provision has been made in the scheme for the restoration and aftercare of the site on the cessation of use.

In the case of wind energy proposals:

- i. the turbines are appropriately designed so as to avoid, or mitigate against, unacceptable environmental impacts, including noise, light reflection and shadow flicker;
- ii. sufficient steps are taken to avoid or, where possible, to mitigate electro-magnetic interference to any existing transmitting or receiving systems.

Proposals on land not identified within the Indicative Local Search Areas may still be considered, dependent on the technology proposed, its scale, location, and degree of compliance with the above criteria, particularly where proposals would have a demonstrably positive community or economic benefit.

- 12.46 The Council has undertaken a Renewable Energy Assessment (REA), in line with the Welsh Government guidance to identify the potential for renewable energy generation. This will help work towards achieving the Welsh Governments targets for Renewable Energy Generation as set out in para 5.7.16 of PPW10 and also contribute to reducing carbon emissions.

- 12.47 In relation to the development of wind farms, the County does not fall within one of the Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) identified by Welsh Government on the basis of substantial empirical research, and considered to be the most appropriate locations for strategic scale on-shore wind farm development (over 25MW (megawatts)). The REA has therefore focused on the potential for identifying Indicative Local Search Areas (ILSA) which are suitable to accommodate large scale wind farms of 5MW and above. Having carried out the REA assessment in line with the Welsh Government Toolkit and applying statutory and local constraints, there are no ILSAs for wind farms identified on the proposals map due to the extent of a number of nationally strategic constraints including the NATS Aviation Radar Safeguarding Zone constraint.
- 12.48 In relation to solar, the County has seen in recent years a number of proposals for large scale solar farm developments. The REA has focused on the potential for identifying ILSAs which are suitable to accommodate solar farms of 5MW and above. The REA has adopted the same Toolkit based GIS mapping assessment as for wind. From this assessment, 18 initial ILSAs have been identified for solar potential and are shown on the proposals map. Although the REA has focussed on wind and solar as the two primary technologies with the greatest spatial impacts, it will also consider the potential from other sources of energy, such as energy from waste and heat, particularly considering the industrial activity in parts of the County.
- 12.49 The Council has adopted a pro-active approach in respect of its own land assets and has developed two solar farms on former landfill sites. Two further proposals are being developed at Crumps Yard, Connah's Quay and Castle Park, Flint and these are allocated in the Plan. This is directly in line with the targets for renewable electricity generation set by the Welsh Government and the requirement for local ownership of a proportion of this generation.
- 12.50 The policy also sets out a criteria based approach which will enable detailed development proposals to be assessed against a robust set of criteria. This will be particularly useful to enable the assessment of smaller or community based renewable energy proposals of less than 5MW which may arise over the Plan period, as well as larger schemes that may arise that are not within an ILSA but may still be appropriate subject to assessment against the criteria and provision of suitable mitigation. It is also relevant to note that for proposals of 10MW or more, the determination of these will be made by the Welsh Ministers under the Developments of National Significance (DNS) process and not by the Local Planning Authority.