

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member – Environment and Transport
<b>Date:</b>	6 November 2012
<b>Title:</b>	Policy on large wind turbines and wind farms on County Council Land
<b>Reference:</b>	4205
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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### 1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to obtain the Executive Member's agreement to the attached draft policy on large wind turbines and wind farms on County Council Land.

### 2. Contextual information

2.1. The Executive Member will be aware of the Council's Energy Strategy, which is being considered by Cabinet on 29 October. The Strategy identifies a role for the County Council in integrating energy generation and infrastructure into place shaping by considering the role of Hampshire County Council-owned land in energy generation.

2.2. Concerns have been expressed over the impact of large onshore wind turbines. Lincolnshire County Council produced a position statement on wind energy in June 2012. As a major landowner, it is considered appropriate for the County Council to have a policy on wind farms and wind turbines on County Council-owned land.

### 3. Future direction

3.1. The intention is for the paper which forms Appendix C of this report to be considered by the Buildings, Land and Procurement Panel at its meeting on 18 December, and then by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources at his decision day on 24 January 2013.

#### **4. Recommendation**

- 4.1. That the attached paper, and policy on large wind turbines and wind farms on County Council land be commended to the Buildings, Land and Procurement Panel and the Executive Member for Policy and Resources for approval.

Rpt/4205/TA

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	N/A
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

**The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)**

DocumentLocation

None

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

1.1 The proposals in this report have been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Council's equality objectives. The assessment of the impacts for the Ensuring that Hampshire is Energy and Climate Change Resilient service area can be found at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-impact-assessments/cx-pu-eqimpact-envi.htm>

1.2 It is considered that the issues covered by this report will not have impacts requiring further specific actions by the Council above those already established in its existing policies and working procedures.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

2.1. It is not considered that the wind farm position statement will have any adverse crime and disorder impacts.

### **3. Climate Change:**

(a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

(b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

It is not considered that the wind farm position statement will have any adverse impacts on climate change when considered alongside the County Council's Energy Strategy.

**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****Decision Report**

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member – Policy and Resources
<b>Date:</b>	24 January 2013
<b>Title:</b>	Policy on large wind turbines and wind farms on County Council Land
<b>Reference:</b>	tbc
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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## **1. Executive Summary**

1.1. The purpose is to agree a position statement on large wind turbine and wind farms on Hampshire County Council owned land. It is recommended that Hampshire County Council adopt a position statement which states that whilst the potential benefits of wind power in providing renewable clean energy are recognised, large wind turbines and wind farms would have an adverse impact on the special qualities and character of Hampshire's landscapes. The County Council considers that in Hampshire the benefits at present do not outweigh these adverse impacts and consequently does not support such developments on its rural landholdings.

## **2. Position statement on large turbines and wind farms on County Council land**

2.1. Hampshire County Council is a substantial rural landowner, in respect of the county farm estate, country parks and other land. Consequently there is the potential for use of its landholdings for large wind turbines and wind farms.

2.2. The County Council is not the Local Planning Authority for this type of development and has no responsibility for making planning policy in relation to wind turbines or wind farms, nor responsibility for deciding planning applications for wind turbines or wind farms. Therefore this position statement is solely in relation to the County Council's role as a landowner.

2.3. The County Council recognises the importance and benefits of secure, affordable, and/or low carbon energy. The aim of the Energy Strategy, which is being considered in another part of this Cabinet's agenda, is to increase the County Council's and the community's resilience to the risks of energy

security, affordability and carbon emissions and contribute to the creation of a sustainable and low carbon economy in Hampshire. The County Council recognises that wind energy can provide additional land based, renewable energy, and as such has a role in meeting government targets for secure renewable energy. However large wind turbines and wind farms are major developments which have a significant visual impact in the countryside.

- 2.4. Hampshire County Council's Corporate Strategy has 3 priorities. One of these is;
- 2.5. **Enhancing our quality of place - This priority is all about making the county a good place to be by protecting local distinctiveness and diversity, ensuring excellent facilities, respecting Hampshire's heritage and planning proactively for the future.**
- 2.6. This priority reflects the fact that the rural landscape and environment of Hampshire is of a very high quality. It is characterised by a broad band of chalk downland across the centre of the County, with the lower lying land of the Thames Basin to the north and the Hampshire Basin to the south. Almost half of the area of the County is covered by designations due to its national importance for landscape, comprising the New Forest National Park, the South Downs National Park, the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Chichester Harbour AONB. These landscapes have an increased level of protection from development due to their designation.
- 2.7. Outside of these protected areas the landscapes of Hampshire are still highly sensitive to the development of large wind turbines and wind farms, due either to their open and undeveloped character and extent of visibility or their significance as small-scale, ancient landscapes with a tranquil character. The management of the County Council's rural estate contributes to the character of these high quality rural landscapes.
- 2.8. The introduction of large wind turbines and wind farms within rural Hampshire will have very significant impacts in terms of visual intrusion, urbanisation, damage to historic character and to tranquillity. This conflicts with the corporate priority to protect local distinctiveness and respecting Hampshire's heritage.
- 2.9. There is a clear conflict between the potential benefits of wind power in providing renewable clean energy and the adverse impact on the special qualities and character of Hampshire's landscapes of large wind turbine and wind farm developments. In the future it is possible that improvements will be made to the design, efficiency, operation and cost of wind turbines, which will add to the attractiveness of onshore wind energy. But at this time, it is considered that for Hampshire the benefits do not outweigh the adverse impacts and consequently the County Council should not support at present such developments on its rural landholdings.

2.10. Therefore the policy should be that large wind turbine and wind farm developments are not supported at present by the County Council on Council owned land in the countryside.

### **3. Finance**

3.1. It is considered that any financial benefits to the County Council would be outweighed by the adverse impacts.

### **4. Recommendation**

4.1. That a policy should be adopted which states that Hampshire County Council will not support large wind turbine or wind farm developments on County Council owned land at present.

Rpt/ref/TA