

## **NINE STEPS TO DEVELOPING A WIND ENERGY PROPOSAL**

This guidance has been developed jointly by the Cumbrian local planning authorities to support the implementation of renewable energy policies in the Local Development Frameworks<sup>1</sup> and provide consistent guidance for wind energy development across the County. This section summarises the main issues addressed by the SPD and acts as the Executive Summary.

### **1 Understanding Climate Change**

The need to tackle climate change is firmly on the UK's agenda. The Government's energy strategy is seeking an energy mix in the future that will reduce harmful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This includes the need for 20% of our energy to come from renewable sources by 2020. Wind energy, is a proven technology, and a key renewable source and important to the future UK energy mix. This guidance helps to facilitate new wind energy development in Cumbria to meet climate change objectives.

Find out more in Part 1 Section 1.

### **2 Understanding the Policy Framework**

The full range of national, regional and local policies and strategies need to be understood when dealing with renewable energy schemes. Targets have been set at national and regional levels for renewable energy production and wind is set to play a big part in achieving these. Schemes that do not cause significant harm to a range of environmental, economic and social issues should be favourably considered through the planning system.

Find out more in Part 1 Section 1.

### **3 Understanding Wind Energy and its effects**

A range of planning related issues need to be taken into account when developing a wind energy proposal. These are all equally important and planning policy requires these issues to be given careful consideration. These include aircraft and radar, biodiversity, community, cultural heritage, highways, landscape and visual, local amenity, local economy, soils and hydrology and telecommunications.

Find out more in Part 1 Section 2  
Key guidance is highlighted in bold.

### **4 Understanding Cumbria**

Cumbria has a high wind resource and lends itself well to wind energy development in that regard. Cumbria also has a high quality environment containing wide ranging nature conservation sites and species, a diverse historic legacy, important landscape character and many dispersed settlements throughout the countryside. A clear understanding of the environmental, economic and social issues is needed to determine the best place for wind energy development.

Find out more in Part 1 Section 2, Maps 1 – 6 and Part 2

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<sup>1</sup> and relevant saved and Cumbria Joint Structure Plan policies.

## 5 **Understanding the Local Community and Stakeholders**

Engaging with the local community and other stakeholders at the pre and post application stages can bring many benefits. Positive engagement and good quality information can result in the community understanding a scheme better, and potentially taking ownership of it. This could reduce the time spent considering a planning application and assist in identifying constraints and opportunities for a scheme.

Find out more in Part 1 Section 2.  
Key guidance is highlighted in bold.

## 6 **Understanding the Local Planning Authority**

It is important to engage with planning officers from the relevant local planning authority at an early stage. They can provide signposting to relevant policies and background information, contact with other officers and assist in interpreting guidance when developing a scheme. Pre application scoping meetings with officers, held very early on in the process, can help ensure that all relevant issues are considered and can help with the iterative design process.

## 7 **Understanding Landscape Capacity**

It is important that future decisions are made against a robust assessment of the landscape capacity of Cumbria to accommodate wind energy development. A detailed landscape capacity assessment that specifically relates to wind energy development provides the foundation for future development and decisions. This is based on landscape character, sensitivity and value.

Find out more in Part 2.  
Key guidance is highlighted in bold.

## 8 **Understanding Cumulative Effects**

Future wind energy schemes will need to consider cumulative effects and demonstrate the potential impacts on aircraft and radar, biodiversity, cultural heritage, highways, landscape character and visual effects, local amenity, local economy soils and hydrology and, telecommunications.

Find out more in Part 1 Section 3.

## 9 **Understanding Site Characteristics and Good Design**

When working on the design of wind energy schemes the full range of technical, environmental and other characteristics of a site need to be considered. A thorough assessment of the characteristics on and surrounding the site is needed. If a site is initially considered appropriate, careful design can ensure a scheme relates well to its environs and can assist in mitigating adverse effects. This process should be integrated with the Environmental Impact Assessment, if one is required. This guidance signposts to advice on a range of issues and includes more detailed advice on landscape issues.

Find out more in Part 1 Section 4 and Part 2 Section 3  
Key guidance is highlighted in bold throughout the SPD.