

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 9 JULY 2013** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 11th June 2013.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary or other interests in relation to any Agenda Item. Please see Notes below.

3. NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (Pages 7 - 12)

A copy of the current Notice of Executive Decisions, which was published on 20th June 2013 is attached. Members are invited to note the Decisions and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**Mrs H Taylor
388008**

4. LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY TO WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT DRAFT REVISED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (Pages 13 - 160)

To receive a report from the Planning Services Manager (Policy) seeking approval of the Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document.

**P Bland/C Thompson
388430/388438**

5. UPDATE ON DRAINAGE IN YAXLEY

To receive an update on drainage in Yaxley.

**C Allen
388380**

6. WORK PLAN STUDIES (Pages 161 - 166)

To consider, with the aid of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the current programme of Overview and Scrutiny studies.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS (Pages 167 - 172)

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the Panel's programme of studies.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

8. SCRUTINY (Pages 173 - 180)

To scrutinise decisions as set out in the Decision Digest and to raise any other matters for scrutiny that fall within the remit of the Panel.

Dated this 1 day of July 2013



Head of Paid Service

Notes

A. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

(1) *Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.*

(2) *A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it*

(a) relates to you, or

(b) is an interest of -

(i) your spouse or civil partner; or

(ii) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or

(iii) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners

and you are aware that the other person has the interest.

(3) *Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -*

(a) any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;

(b) any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);

(c) any current contracts with the Council;

(d) any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;

(e) any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;

(f) any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or

(g) a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.

B. Other Interests

(4) *If a Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote.*

(5) *A Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest where -*

(a) a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or

(b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the descriptions referred to above, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association

and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Please contact Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No: (01480) 388006/email: Habbiba.Ali@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk (*under Councils and Democracy*).

If you would like a translation of Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a large text version or an audio version please contact the Democratic Services Manager and we will try to accommodate your needs.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 11 June 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor G J Bull – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, K J Churchill, J W Davies, D A Giles, G J Harlock, D Harty, Ms L Kadic and Mrs D C Reynolds.

Mr D Hopkins – Co-opted Member.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I C Bates and C R Hyams.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Panel held on 9th April and 15th May 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

7. NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel considered and noted the current Notice of Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 3rd June to 31st December 2013. It was confirmed that the Whole Waste System Approach would be submitted to the Panel for consideration prior to its submission to the Cabinet.

8. REVIEW OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE - SERVICE STANDARDS

(Councillor D M Tysoe, Executive Member for Environment, was in attendance for consideration of this item).

With the aid of a report prepared by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel gave consideration to the first stage of a review of grounds maintenance service standards. By way of background, the Executive Member for Environment reported that the Cabinet had been tasked with identifying £2 million of savings and that this was one area in which it was felt that savings could be achieved.

The Head of Operations reported on the range of work being undertaken by the Grounds Maintenance Team and the current service standards provided. It was noted that service changes and a

reduction in service standards had previously been introduced in 2011 following an earlier review. Members of the Panel were therefore provided with an opportunity to comment on the service standards prior to any consideration being given to service delivery options.

It was reported that owing to the complexity of the way in which the service operated, a reduction in cost would not necessarily be achieved by reducing service standards. Service reductions relating to grass cutting could potentially result in an increased level of spend elsewhere within the service and an increase in the risk of claims being made against the Council. Members concurred with the view that the standards for grass cutting should be retained at the current levels.

An explanation was then delivered of the duties placed on the Council to maintain open spaces and, in particular, closed churchyards. Having regard to the latter, it was reported that town and parish councils could serve statutory notices upon the District Council to undertake this work. However, attempts were being made to work in conjunction with the town and parish councils to rationalise all grounds maintenance. The Panel also received an update on the latest position with regard to the existing County Council and Luminus contracts.

The Panel suggested that there was a need to educate residents on the effects of littering and that the Council should work with local "Friends of the Park" groups to discourage littering in their areas. Following discussion on the Council's strategic approach to the service, Panel Members put forward a further suggestion that the opportunities presented by outsourcing the service, or alternatively undertaking more work on behalf of town and parish councils or other local authority areas, should be explored.

It was reported that the District was likely to continue to obtain open space in developments through S106 Agreements. However, Members were informed that the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy raised doubts about whether funding would be available for their maintenance. Even if funding was forthcoming, such agreements were usually time limited and the Council would eventually become responsible for their maintenance. This would put further pressure on the service.

A report on the opportunities to achieve savings in respect of litter picking would be submitted to the Panel in the autumn. Other suggestions for savings made by the Panel included the use of growth inhibitors and the introduction of a single grounds maintenance service for town parks, small areas of amenity land, the leisure centres and the country parks. The latter might result in efficiencies through joint working such as the effective utilisation of equipment. The Executive Councillor for Environment undertook to investigate these matters once senior management's plans for savings had been published.

In his concluding remarks, the Executive Councillor for Environment thanked the Panel for their views and contributions.

RESOLVED

- (a) that further work be undertaken to investigate the potential for making savings from reducing the level of litter picking and from the Panel's other suggestions relating to the operational practices and organisation of grounds maintenance; and
- (b) that the remaining service standards, including grass cutting, be retained as set out in the report now submitted.

9. MEETING OUR OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED FOR HOUSING: MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION - SUPPORTING THE SPATIAL APPROACH 2011 - 2031

(At 8.15pm, during discussion on this item, Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds left the meeting).

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which outlined the joint work undertaken by the Council with other partner authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to assess the District's future housing needs. Under the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Council could now set its own future housing targets. The Panel noted that the work had been undertaken in compliance with the Duty to Co-operate as outlined within the Localism Act 2011.

It was reported that there would be a need for 93,000 homes across the Cambridge Sub-Region Housing Market Area between 2011 and 2031. Peterborough's housing market area overlapped into Cambridgeshire, and as Peterborough had already accommodated a proportion of its housing need, its contribution was assumed to amount to approximately 2,500 homes. This would mean that 90,500 dwellings were required in the Cambridge Sub-Region Housing Market Area, with Huntingdonshire contributing 17,000 homes by 2031 and 21,000 homes by 2036. The Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning reported that in Huntingdonshire, 10,000 of these homes would roll forward from the former Core Strategy and that there currently were planning applications for around 11,000 dwellings within the planning system. It was therefore, expected that the 21,000 homes allocation for Huntingdonshire would be achieved by 2036. In addition, the Planning Service Manager (Policy) confirmed that the housing need assumptions which underpinned the future growth proposals contained within the emerging Local Plan were in accordance with the Memorandum of Co-operation.

In response to a question by Councillor G J Harlock, it was reported that Huntingdonshire had been the only authority to identify housing allocations up to 2036 because it already had a Local Plan in place to 2026 and there was a requirement for the new Plan to last for at least a further 15 years. It was for this reason that the District's housing needs had been forecast for the period to 2036.

Having been advised of the methodology employed to determine allocations across each local authority area and of the factors that were likely to produce an increase in demand for housing including fluctuations in birth rates, the ageing population and local economic pressures, the Panel noted that the Council regularly collaborated with partner authorities on infrastructure matters such as local bus services and the rail network. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to

- (a) note the effective joint working that has taken place; and
- (b) endorse the content of the Memorandum of Co-operation as appended to the report now submitted.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided Members with an opportunity to establish their work priorities for 2013/14. In doing so, Members' attention was drawn to the functions and responsibilities of the Corporate Governance and Employment Panels.

Members undertook a review of the memberships of their Working Groups and appointed Councillor Mrs L Kadić as the Panel's representative on the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Initiative. Given that the studies relating to the Tree Strategy and Design Principles were nearing completion, the Panel decided that no further changes would be required to the memberships of these Working Groups.

Having considered the addition of new subject areas to the Panel's work programme, various suggestions were made including car parking management, the impact of large scale housing developments upon the A428, local bus services within Towns and recycling in flats. Members would discuss how this work would proceed at their next meeting.

In noting the outcome of the recent review of the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny, the Panel endorsed the content of an Overview and Scrutiny Protocol which provided a framework for the Council's overview and scrutiny function.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the content of the report now submitted be noted;
- (b) that car parking management, the impact of large scale housing developments upon the A428, local bus services within Towns and recycling in flats be included in the Panel's work programme as potential new study areas;

- (c) that Councillor Mrs L Kadić be appointed as the Panel's representative on the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Initiative; and
- (d) that the Overview and Scrutiny Protocol as appended to the report now submitted be endorsed.

11. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social Well-Being and Economic Well-Being.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions. In doing so, it was reported that a site visit to the Great Fen would take place on 17th September 2013. Additionally, it was noted that owing to resource constraints within the Planning Service, work to finalise the Tree Strategy and Design Guide was currently being undertaken; however, this was taking longer than anticipated.

13. SCRUTINY

The 134th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman

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NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Prepared by Councillor J D Ablewhite
Date of Publication: 20 June 2013
For Period: 1st July to 31st December 2013

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Councillor J D Ablewhite | - Executive Leader of the Council, with responsibility for Strategic and Delivery Partnerships | 3 Pettis Road St. Ives Huntingdon PE27 6SR Tel: 01480 466941 E-mail: Jason.Ablewhite@huntingdonshire.gov.uk |
| Councillor N J Guyatt | - Deputy Executive Leader of the Council with responsibility for Strategic Planning and Housing | 6 Church Lane Stibbington Cambs PE8 6LP Tel: 01780 782827 E-mail: Nick.Guyatt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk |
| Councillor B S Chapman | - Executive Councillor for Customer Services | 6 Kipling Place St. Neots Huntingdon PE19 7RG Tel: 01480 212540 E-mail: Barry.Chapman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk |
| Councillor J A Gray | - Executive Councillor for Resources | Shufflewick Cottage Station Row Tilbrook PE28 OJY Tel: 01480 861941 E-mail: Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk |
| Councillor R Howe | - Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities | The Old Barn High Street Upwood PE26 2QE Tel: 01487 814393 E-mail: Robin.Howe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk |

| | |
|---|---|
| Councillor T D Sanderson - Executive Councillor for Economic Development and Legal | 29 Burmoor Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon PE29 6GE Tel: 01480 412135 E-mail: Tom. Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk |
| Councillor D M Tysoe - Executive Councillor for Environment | Grove Cottage Maltings Lane Ellington Huntingdon PE28 OAA Tel: 01480 388310 E-mail: Darren.Tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk |

Notice is hereby given of:

- Key decisions that will be taken by the Cabinet (or other decision maker)
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part).

A notice/agenda together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restrictions on their disclosure, copies may be requested by contacting Mrs Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01480 388008 or E-mail Helen.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Agendas may be accessed electronically at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Formal notice is hereby given under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that, where indicated part of the meetings listed in this notice will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See the relevant paragraphs below.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made or wishes to object to an item being considered in private may do so by emailing Legal&DemServDemocratic@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or by writing to the Senior Democratic Services Officer. If representations are received at least eight working days before the date of the meeting, they will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the District Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be verbally reported and considered at the meeting.

Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) (Reason for the report to be considered in private)

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the Financial and Business Affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations that are arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of or office holders under the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes:-
 - (a) To give under any announcement a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) To make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Colin Meadowcroft
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

- Notes:- (i) Additions changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated ***
(ii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ## and shown in italic.

| Subject/Matter for Decision | Decision/ recommendation to be made by | Date decision to be taken | Documents Available | How relevant Officer can be contacted | Consultation | Relevant Executive Councillor | Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel |
|---|--|---------------------------|---------------------|---|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>CCTV Operations - Shared Service Proposal***##</i> | Cabinet | 18 Jul 2013 | | Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | R Howe | Social Well-Being |
| Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 - 2023 | Cabinet | 18 Jul 2013 | | Sue Bedlow, Economic Development Manager Tel No. 01480 3887096 or email Sue.Bedlow@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | T D Sanderson | Economic Well-Being |
| Loves Farm - Request for Supplementary Estimate | Cabinet | 18 Jul 2013 | | Chris Allen, Project and Assets Manager Tel No. 01480 388380 or e-mail Chris.Allen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | J A Gray | Economic Well-Being |

| Subject/Matter for Decision | Decision/ recommendation to be made by | Date decision to be taken | Documents Available | How relevant Officer can be contacted | Consultation | Relevant Executive Councillor | Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel |
|--|--|---------------------------|---------------------|---|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Draft Revised Supplementary Planning Document - Land Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development | Cabinet | 18 Jul 2013 | Draft revised SPD | Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | N J Guyatt | Environmental Well-Being |
| Financial Strategy | Cabinet | 19 Sep 2013 | | Steve Couper, Assistant Director of Finance and Resources Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | J A Gray | Economic Well-Being |
| Town and Parish Council Charter | Cabinet | 19 Sep 2013 | | Dan Smith, Community Health Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or e-mail Dan.Smith@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | N J Guyatt | Social Well-Being |
| Customer Services Strategy | Cabinet | 19 Sep 2013 | | Kathryn Sexton, Customer Services Manager Tel No. 01480 387040 or e-mail Kathryn.Sexton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | B S Chapman | Economic Well-Being |
| Affordable Housing Policy - Update | Cabinet | 19 Sep 2013 | | Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No. 01480 388203 or email Jo.Emmerton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | N J Guyatt | Social Well-Being |
| Consultation and Engagement Strategy | Cabinet | 17 Oct 2013 | | Louise Sboui, Senior Policy Officer Tel No. 01480 388032 or email Louise.Sboui@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | J D Ablewhite | Social Well-Being |

| Subject/Matter for Decision | Decision/ recommendation to be made by | Date decision to be taken | Documents Available | How relevant Officer can be contacted | Consultation | Relevant Executive Councillor | Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel |
|---|--|---------------------------|---|---|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Whole Waste System Approach | Cabinet | 17 Oct 2013 | | Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | D M Tysoe | Environmental Well-Being |
| A14 | Cabinet | 17 Oct 2013 | Preferred option for consultation | Steve Ingram, Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | N J Guyatt | Environmental Well-Being |
| Huntingdon West Masterplan | Cabinet | 17 Oct 2013 | Following consultation. Preferred option. | Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | N J Guyatt | Environmental Well-Being |
| Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines SPD*** | Cabinet | 21 Nov 2013 | | Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | N J Guyatt | Environmental Well-Being |
| Local Plan to 2036 - Proposed Submission | Cabinet | 12 Dec 2013 | | Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | N J Guyatt | Environmental Well-Being |
| Draft Budget & MTP | Cabinet | 12 Dec 2013 | | Steve Couper, Assistant Director of Finance and Resources Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk | | J A Gray | Economic Well-Being |

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|--|----------------------------|
| COMT | 24 th June 2013 |
| OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING) | 9 th July 2013 |
| DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PANEL | 15 th July 2013 |
| CABINET | 18 th July 2013 |

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY TO WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT DRAFT REVISED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Report by Planning Service Manager (Policy)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval for the 'Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document' and the endorsement of supporting technical evidence.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The 'Wind Power Supplementary Planning Document' (Wind Power SPD) was adopted by the Council in 2006. It has since been used as part of the local policy basis for determining wind turbine planning applications, and also as part of the Council's policy defence at related appeals and public inquiries.
- 2.2 Changes in circumstance since then, which include new national policy guidance, experience gained by the Council in handling wind turbine planning applications, and learning from the experiences of other authorities, have made it appropriate to update the Wind Power SPD
- 2.3 A new 'Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document' (Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD – attached as Appendix A) has been prepared to update, clarify, and replace the Wind Power SPD. This takes into account:
- The publication of new national policy guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
 - The development of the technical methodological approach to assessing the landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development that has taken place since 2005.
 - The need for guidance on the siting and design of smaller scale wind turbines.
 - A need to clarify the evidence base that underpins the documents.
- 2.4 It is important to note that the new Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD does not, and was never intended, to change the main conclusions of the Wind Power SPD (2006), which remain valid. The intention was to produce an up to date, consistent, and usable document that is NPPF compliant.

- 2.5 Both the existing and new Supplementary Planning Documents are primarily concerned with guiding the location of wind turbine development with reference to the key characteristics of the District's component Landscape Character Areas. Both assume, for policy purposes, a nil wind farm scenario as a starting point.

3. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 The draft Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD was subject to a six week consultation between 16th November 2012 and 4th January 2013. Presentations on the draft document were given to Full Council (on 19th December 2012) and to Development Management Panel (on 17th December 2012).

- 3.2 Over 350 responses were received from a wide range of consultees, including members of the public, local pressure groups, council members, Parish Councils, other Local Planning Authorities, several Non-Governmental Organisations, planning consultants, and national and international renewable energy companies.

- 3.3 The Statement of Consultation, attached as Appendix B, focuses on presenting a consistent Council response to the themes and issues raised during the consultation, rather than individual consultee responses. The most common consultation responses focussed on the following issues:

- Cumulative impacts of wind turbines, and the lack of assessment of the current situation with regard to operational and consented turbine developments.
- Health issues, especially those associated with noise.
- Differing impacts associated with wind turbine development of varying sizes and scales.
- The establishment of a minimum distance between wind turbines and residential properties.

- 3.4 Each consultation response has been considered and minor clarifications have been made to the draft Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD, or in the preparation of additional supporting evidence. However, it is not intended to take forward a policy stance on establishing a minimum distance between wind turbines and residential properties.

4. CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF WIND TURBINES

- 4.1 Both the NPPF and Companion Guide to Planning Policy Statement 22 'Planning for Renewable Energy' (which remains extant) confirm that a local planning authority's renewable energy strategy needs to address cumulative landscape and visual impacts of renewable developments.

- 4.2 To address this, and the concerns raised by consultation respondents about cumulative impacts of wind turbine developments, the Council commissioned a study entitled 'Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire' as a further piece of technical evidence to assess the current situation as of 1st May 2013 (attached as Appendix C). This study has detailed all operational and consented wind turbine developments in the district, and also those awaiting determination.

- 4.3 The study considers the current cumulative effects of wind turbines in the district, and offers guidance on the capacity of local landscapes to accommodate further wind turbine development. It is intended that its analysis will be used in the consideration of potential cumulative impacts resulting from new wind energy proposals. The evidence it presents will support Huntingdonshire District Council's emerging Local Plan policies, as well as the Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD.
- 4.4 It is envisaged that the new Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development SPD, along with the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire study, are likely to be fully compliant with the forthcoming new national planning guidance on wind turbine development, which will follow on from the Ministerial Statement on 'Local Planning and Onshore Wind' issued on 6th June 2013.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That Cabinet adopts the 'Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document', with the making of any minor amendments prior to publication being delegated to the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning and Housing Strategy.
- 5.2 That Cabinet notes the Statement of Consultation and endorses the officer responses to the issues raised during the consultation on the draft Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.3 That Cabinet endorses the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire study as technical evidence that supports the Council's policy approach to renewable energy developments.

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this report to Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) 01480 388400.

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Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

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Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

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1 Introduction

Purpose of this document

- 1.1** Supplementary Planning Documents (or SPDs) are produced to expand upon the policies contained in the adopted development plan for the area⁽¹⁾. The role of an SPD is to provide guidance on the application of existing Policies in the Adopted Development Plan. The SPD does not form part of the development plan nor is it intended to provide policies beyond those within the development plan. The overall purpose of this SPD is to assist the interpretation and application of those policies concerned with landscape character and the location of renewable energy schemes. In particular the guidance seeks to:
- provide information on the relative sensitivity and capacity of the district's landscapes in relation to wind turbines;
 - indicate criteria that need to be taken into account when considering specific proposals of this type; and
 - provide guidance on potential mitigation measures where appropriate.
- 1.2** This SPD is a revision of the February 2006 SPD: Wind Power. The SPD has been revised in the light of:
- the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
 - the development of the methodological approach to assessing the landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development that has taken place since 2005;
 - certain inconsistencies that have been identified between the SPD and *Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire* (2005), the study undertaken by Land Use Consultants that underpinned the SPD (described in this SPD as the LUC study); and
 - the need for guidance on the siting and design of smaller turbines
- 1.3** This SPD contains important information for anyone contemplating or concerned with this type of development, and will be taken into account as a 'material consideration' when planning proposals are assessed.
- 1.4** Clearly, turbines can form a very visible feature in the landscape, although not all landscapes are sensitive to the same degree. This SPD provides strategic guidance on the characteristics that need to be considered, and is intended to set out a positive approach to guide development rather than absolute thresholds. It should help to guide proposals to the most appropriate locations and ensure that the key features and values of Huntingdonshire's landscapes are safeguarded.
- 1.5** **While this SPD provides an initial indication of the relative sensitivity and capacity of different areas it should not be interpreted as a definitive statement that a particular landscape is suitable for a particular development. Every site is unique, and any proposal involving wind turbines must be informed by a detailed site-specific analysis of landscape constraints and impacts.** Proposals will also need to address the many other factors that need to be taken into account, such as biodiversity value, the historic environment, tranquillity and the effect upon people living and working in the vicinity. Each proposal will be assessed on its own merits.
- 1.6** This SPD is split into sixteen chapters. This introduction continues with a brief overview of recent trends involving wind power development, and explains the basis for the guidance. Chapter 2 'Overview of landscape capacity' then sets out the principles that have informed the work, and provides an overview of the potential capacity of each landscape character area [LCA]. This is followed by ten chapters that provide detailed guidance for each of the nine character areas, and additionally for proposals located at the edge of urban areas. There has been no revision to the guidance for proposals located at the edge

¹ See 15 'Policy sources' for details.

1 Introduction

of urban areas. Chapter 13 and 14 are new; 13 'Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m' contains advice on the siting of single or small groups of turbines below 100m, 14 'Landscape Sensitivity Criteria' list the criteria on which the landscape sensitivity assessments are based. Chapter 15 'Policy sources' provides links to relevant policies and Appendix 1: 'Glossary' contains a glossary of terms used in the SPD.

Recent trends

- 1.7** The effects of climate change have had an important impact on national and international policies towards energy supply. The UK Government has committed itself to achieving significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and an increase in the proportion of our energy that comes from renewable sources.
- 1.8** This commitment, coupled with Government support for renewable technologies, has led to an increasing number of applications for wind turbine developments across the country.
- 1.9** Paragraph 97 of the NPPF requires that local planning authorities should:
- have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable sources;
 - design policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts; and
 - consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources.
- 1.10** The footnote to the above paragraph in the NPPF recommends that planning authorities should follow the approach set out in the National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (read with the relevant sections of the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy Infrastructure). Where plans identify areas as suitable for renewable and low-carbon energy development, they should make clear what criteria have determined their selection, including for what size of development the areas are considered suitable⁽²⁾.
- 1.11** The NPPF requires local planning authorities to approve applications if their impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. It also requires that once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas⁽³⁾.
- 1.12** This guidance does not seek to identify suitable areas for wind turbine development, however it does identify:
- the potential capacity of the landscape character areas [LCAs] found in the district to accommodate wind turbine development, of a range of group sizes, without significant adverse changes to the character of the landscape; and
 - criteria to be used in the assessment of individual sites so that the landscape and visual impacts of individual proposals can be assessed in a consistent and transparent manner.
- 1.13** At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development⁽⁴⁾. The primacy of the development plan remains, so development proposals that accord with the plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, if the plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals

2 National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 97

3 National Planning Policy Framework Paragraph 98

4 NPPF paragraph 14

should be approved unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or policies in the NPPF indicate that developments should be restricted.

- 1.14 Other relevant considerations and criteria are contained in the development plan detailed in Chapter 15 'Policy sources'.

Basis for the guidance

- 1.15 This Supplementary Planning Document is a revision of the February 2006 Wind Power SPD which was based upon the research undertaken for the District Council in the LUC study. That study built upon earlier work undertaken by Landscape Design Associates to characterise Huntingdonshire's landscapes. This was adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance in 2007⁽⁵⁾. The Landscape and Townscape Assessment identified nine landscape character areas in Huntingdonshire, ranging from the rolling Wolds in the west to the low-lying Fens in the north-east. These landscape character areas are shown in figure 1.1.
- 1.16 The work carried out by LUC aimed to articulate those characteristics of the landscape character areas that are sensitive to different forms of turbine development, and to combine this with an understanding of any special values attached to those landscapes in order to gain an understanding of their relative capacity for wind turbine development. In recent sensitivity studies the section on landscape values is more likely to be included as perceptual characteristics whose sensitivity to wind turbine development can be assessed alongside the sensitivity of the physical characteristics. Although the approach in the LUC study is more complicated it addresses the same issues and the final capacity judgement reflects both the physical and perceptual sensitivities of the landscape.
- 1.17 The LUC study was undertaken in accordance with best practice approaches to landscape assessment current in 2005⁽⁶⁾ and was also informed by an understanding of those types of turbine development most likely to come forward in the area (taking into account prevailing wind speeds and the relative efficiency of different turbine models). The study assumes that commercial turbines of up to 120m in height (to the top of the blade) will be most efficient, but that variations in height of + or - 20m will not be discernible on the ground. Although there are now commercial turbines of up to 150m none of these have yet been proposed for Huntingdonshire. This SPD does not assess the capacity of the landscape to accommodate 150m high turbines although the analysis of the landscape characteristics would be relevant to the assessment of any proposals for turbines above 140m in height.
- 1.18 **When the LUC study was undertaken there were no operational or consented wind turbine developments in Huntingdonshire. The conclusions reached in the study refer to the capacity of the landscape without any existing wind turbines and these conclusions have not been revised. Their inclusion in this revised SPD does not imply capacity over and above those schemes that have been consented or built since the study was undertaken.**
- 1.19 The LUC study was concerned with turbines of between 100 and 140m. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of applications for single turbines below 100m. It is anticipated that these applications will continue and that in addition there may be applications for small groups of say 2 to 3 small turbines. Additional guidance on the siting of turbines below 100m in height has been provided in a new chapter (13 'Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m').
- 1.20 A number of important points should be borne in mind concerning the scope and use of both the LUC study and this Revised Supplementary Planning Document:

5 Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (HDC, 2007)

6 The principal guidance is still Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2002)

1 Introduction

- the study was undertaken from the starting point that wind turbine applications will continue to come forward within the district; it does not debate the merits of wind turbines *vis-à-vis* other forms of renewable energy development or offshore turbine development;
- the LUC study only considers landscape and visual considerations and, as noted above, there are many other factors which will influence decisions;
- this SPD provides a starting-point for decision-making, but local variations in character will need to be considered in relation to individual proposals, as part of the detailed site-specific assessment.

1.21 Huntingdonshire District Council has prepared a Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents of Wind Turbine Developments. This sets out what information the Council requires in order to effectively progress Pre-Application discussions and Planning Applications. It can be viewed on the HDC Planning and Buildings [website](#).

Key to Figure 1.1

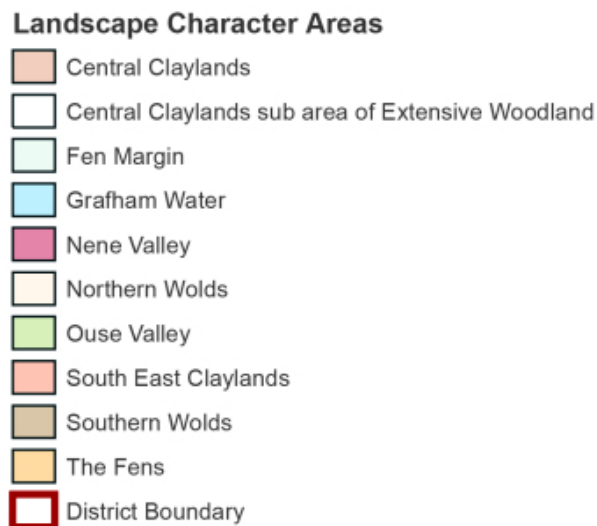
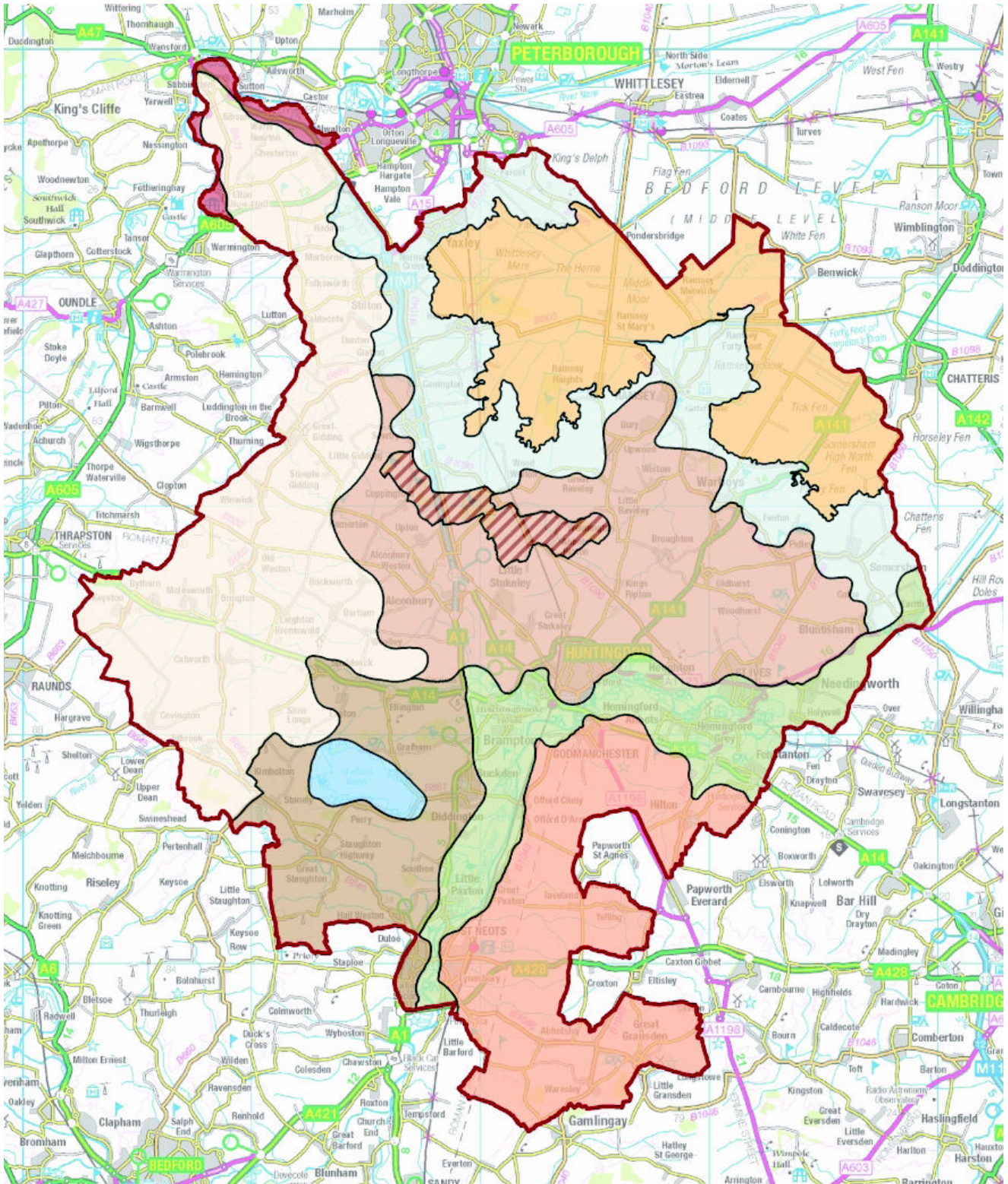


Figure 1.1 Landscape Character Areas in Huntingdonshire



2 Overview of landscape capacity

2 Overview of landscape capacity

How to use the guidance

- 2.1** This chapter provides an overview of the guidance in the SPD, including the key landscape and visual considerations that need to be assessed and a summary of the potential capacity in the different landscape character areas.
- 2.2** More detailed guidance on the siting, form and arrangement of turbines and ancillary structures is contained in each of the chapters that follow (one for each character area). Further information on the basis for the capacity assessments can be found in the LUC Study.
- 2.3** One of the most significant changes between the original SPD and this revised SPD is the definitions of the scale of turbine development with regard to number of turbines within a group. The LUC study is one of the earlier landscape sensitivity studies undertaken in England. The assessment considered the sensitivity of the landscape to four broad types of development based on the number of commercial turbines and defined these as single (1), small (2-12) medium (13-24) and large (25 plus).
- 2.4** Subsequent wind turbine landscape sensitivity studies undertaken in southern and eastern England both by LUC and other consultants have tended to subdivide the first group and it is now widely recognised that 12 turbines do not represent a small group in terms of the landscapes of southern and eastern England. In more recent studies a small group has rarely included more than 6 turbines and sometimes as few as 3. Medium scale groups are generally up to 12 turbines with 12-25 considered either a large group or a medium/large group. 25 turbines and above are described as large or very large groups⁽⁷⁾. Even within a small group defined as 2-6 turbines it has been accepted at appeal⁽⁸⁾ that it may be justified to advise that fewer than six (e.g. 2-3 turbines) may be the maximum that can be accommodated.
- 2.5** In the light of more recent approaches to the assessment of landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development the scales of turbine development applied in the original SPD have been refined and the original assessments reviewed.
- 2.6** The new group sizes to be considered are as follows:
- Single turbine
 - Small Group: 2-5 turbines
 - Medium Group: 6-12 turbines
 - Large Group: 13-24 turbines
- 2.7** Within each of these groups there may be minor qualifications. These will be drawn out from the details of the original LUC study as assessed using professional judgement of suitably qualified landscape personnel, with the aim of making this revised SPD a more usable and coherent document.
- 2.8** The 25 plus group has been omitted from this SPD. Although this group size was initially considered the LUC study concluded that nowhere in the district was suitable for turbine groups of above 25. This conclusion is consistent with current approvals. The largest approved/ operational onshore scheme (not including those schemes with later extensions) in eastern England is a 13 turbine scheme at Wadlow Farm in Cambridgeshire⁽⁹⁾. Further support for this conclusion can be found in the 2008 study by Ove Arup for the East of England Regional Assembly⁽¹⁰⁾ which undertook a regional level landscape sensitivity

7 Appendix A of the SPD consultation draft provided a comparative study of wind turbine sensitivities assessments with regard to the numbers of turbines considered within each group class.

8 Appeal Decision APP/L2630/A/08/2084443 Land around Busseys Loke, Hempnall, Norwich, Norfolk

9 Information derived from Renewable UK's (formerly BREa) UK Wind Energy Database – UKWED

10 Placing Renewables in the East of England, Ove Arup & Partners Ltd 2008

Overview of landscape capacity 2

and capacity study. This study considered groups of 25 turbines and above but concluded that groups of this size were unlikely to be appropriate in the East of England⁽¹¹⁾. In the detailed findings of the study the maximum number of turbines considered likely to be acceptable was 16⁽¹²⁾.

- 2.9 Capacity judgements in relation to each scale of development are presented on the following basis:⁽¹³⁾
- **Low capacity** to accommodate wind turbines: development would be likely to result in a significant adverse change in landscape character and/or affect key landscape values
 - **Moderate capacity** to accommodate wind turbines, without detriment to landscape character: there are likely to be key sensitivities or values that must be respected in relation to turbine development; in particular, proposals must follow the guidance on siting, form and cumulative impacts
 - **High capacity** to accommodate wind turbines: there is an opportunity to locate turbine development without affecting key characteristics and/or values in the landscape, although the guidance on siting, form and cumulative impacts should be followed.
- 2.10 Note that in the following chapters detailed guidance is provided only for those character areas where potential capacity has been assessed as either moderate or high.

Key considerations

- 2.11 There are many issues that need to be taken into account when considering wind turbine development. This SPD deals solely with landscape and visual matters. Other considerations are set out in the policy documents listed in 15 'Policy sources', and these must also be addressed in the course of developing specific proposals. However there is a necessary overlap between the assessment of landscape and visual impacts and the assessment of the impact of wind turbines on the setting of heritage assets because in almost all cases the impacts on setting will be as a result of visual changes.
- 2.12 Included in the landscape characteristics identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (HDC 2007) are those characteristics of the landscape that are derived from the presence of heritage assets, for example the presence of church spires or towers as landmark features. The impact on the setting of heritage assets will be considered separately as part of a cultural heritage assessment, however where heritage assets play a role in the defining the local landscape character it is essential that they are also considered as part of the sensitivity of the landscape. The Guidance Note for Wind Turbine Developments includes further information on the role of photographs and photomontages with regard to effects on cultural heritage assets, landscape character and visual amenity. It can be viewed via the HDC Planning and Buildings [website](#).
- 2.13 Up-to-date advice on approaches to landscape assessment is set out in *Landscape Character Assessment: Guidance for England and Scotland* published by The Countryside Agency and Scottish Natural Heritage (2002)⁽¹⁴⁾.
- 2.14 The LUC study identifies the landscape attributes, both physical and perceptual against which any proposal for wind turbines should be assessed. However it should be recognised that these headings are closely linked; for example information on scale and enclosure and land cover will influence the extent to which any development is visible in the landscape. The LUC study does not provide a list of criteria for assessing

11 Placing Renewables in the East of England Section 6.7.1 Pages 31-2

12 Placing Renewables in the East of England Appendix D Pages D11-12

13 In respect of landscape impacts, with reference to National Policy Statement EN-1 (5.9.15) it should be noted that significant adverse impacts do not necessarily render a proposal unacceptable in planning terms if it can be demonstrated that such significant adverse effects would be outweighed by the benefits (including need) for the project.

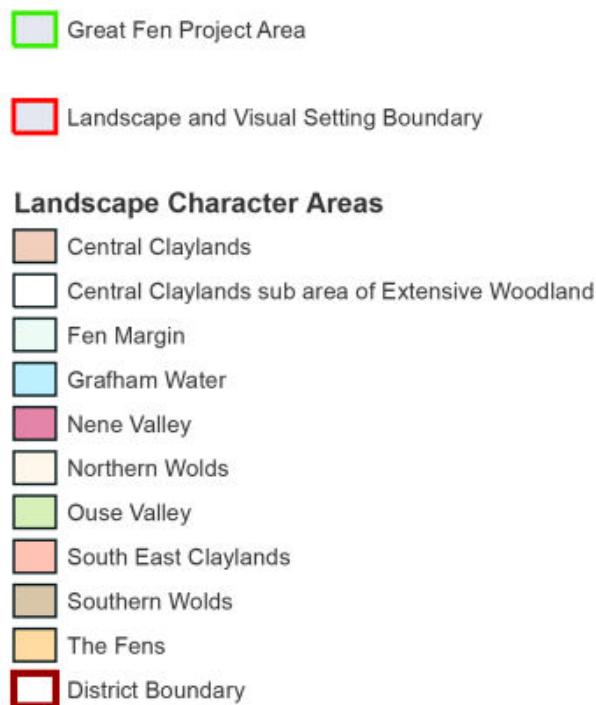
14 The accompanying Topic Paper 6 sets out further guidance on approaches to evaluating landscape sensitivity and capacity

2 Overview of landscape capacity

landscape sensitivity to wind energy development but 14 'Landscape Sensitivity Criteria' of this SPD contains a list of criteria, derived from the conclusions of the LUC study and from more recent work by LUC⁽¹⁵⁾.

- 2.15** The Great Fen Project had begun at the time of the original SPD but progress has been more rapid than originally envisaged. A landscape and visual setting for the Great Fen has been identified in the report produced by Landscape Design Associates and policy protection in this area⁽¹⁶⁾ will limit the capacity for wind turbine development. This is illustrated in figure 2.1 which shows the different landscape character areas, the Great Fen boundary, and the boundary of its Landscape and Visual Setting.

Key to Figure 2.1



15 An Assessment of the Landscape Sensitivity to Onshore Wind Energy & Field-Scale Photovoltaic Development in Torridge District November 2011.

16 Defining the Landscape and Visual Setting to the Great Fen Project Area, LDA July 2008 and HDC Huntingdonshire's Draft Local Plan: Stage 3, policy LP 7 and paragraph 4.75

2 Overview of landscape capacity

Summary of potential capacity

- 2.16** Table 1 provides a summary of the overall capacity for wind turbine development in Huntingdonshire. It is accompanied by a map showing the various landscape character areas. The map at Figure 2.1 shows the different Landscape Character Areas, The Great Fen boundary, and the boundary of its Landscape and Visual setting.
- 2.17** The information in this table provides a ‘quick guide’ but should not be used in isolation; it must be read in conjunction with the further guidance and information on cumulative development provided in chapters 3 to 13, together with the background material in the LUC Study.

Table 1 Summary of landscape capacity for wind turbine development

| Landscape character area | Single turbine (1 turbine) | Small-scale group (2-5 turbines) | Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines) | Large -scale group (13-24 turbines) |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 1: The Fens | High | High | High | Moderate (lower end of scale e.g. 13-15 turbines) |
| 2: Fen Margin | High | High | High | Moderate (lower end of scale e.g. 13-15 turbines) |
| 3: Central Claylands | High | High | High | Moderate |
| 4: Ouse Valley | High | Moderate (lower end of scale 2-3 turbines) | Low | Low |
| 5: South East Claylands | High | High | High | Moderate |
| 6: Northern Wolds | High | Moderate | Low | Low |
| 7: Grafham Water | High | Moderate (2 turbines only) | Low | Low |
| 8: Southern Wolds | High | High | Moderate | Low |
| 9: Nene Valley | Moderate | Low | Low | Low |

Cumulative Capacity

- 2.18** Capacity judgements in relation to the potential for cumulative development with regard to each scale of development are presented on the following basis:
- **High capacity:** There is scope to accommodate a number of turbine developments of this scale without significant adverse changes in landscape character or key landscape values. However care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other and the specific guidance provided in Sections 3 -13 should be followed.
 - **Moderate capacity:** There is some scope to accommodate a number of turbine developments of this scale without significant adverse changes in landscape character or key landscape values. However there are likely to be key sensitivities or values that will limit the number of potential schemes,

Overview of landscape capacity 2

care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other and the specific guidance provided in Sections 3 -13 should be followed.

- **Low capacity:** More than one development of this scale is likely to result in significant adverse change in landscape character and/ or affect key landscape values.
- **None:** this character area would not be able to accommodate more than one scheme of this scale.

2.19 There is no assessment of cumulative capacity if the landscape character area has been assessed as unable to accommodate even a single development of the scale under consideration.

2.20 The assessments for cumulative capacity are given in relation to each scale of development. However there will also be cumulative issues where proposals are for different scales of development. For example, a landscape may have high capacity for a number of single turbines but this capacity will be reduced where there is an existing consent for one or more turbine groups. Similarly the presence of several single turbines may reduce the capacity of a landscape for a group of turbines.

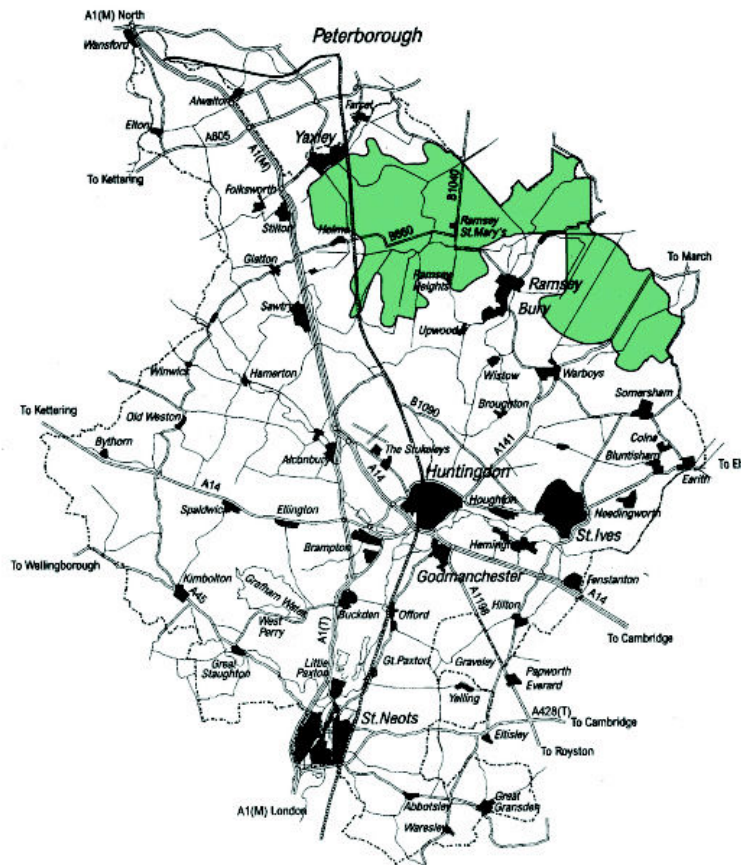
2.21 Consideration will need to be given in all circumstances to the visual relationship between one turbine or turbine group and another when these can be viewed simultaneously. Visual relationships with other turbines or turbine groups will also be an important consideration when considering the location of turbines under 100m in height. The potential for cumulative impacts as a result of combinations of small, medium and large scale wind turbine developments, both in terms of height and turbine numbers, has added additional complexity to the cumulative assessments required, including assessments for turbines of less than 100m in height.

2.22 A key consideration will be the avoidance of cluttered or visually confusing images particularly from sensitive locations such as settlements; the location and style of turbines will be important in avoiding such impacts. Consideration will also need to be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in adjacent landscape character areas and adjacent districts.

2.23 Cumulative assessments also need to consider the effect on the landscape area of successive and/or sequential views of single turbines or groups of turbines. It is important to avoid creating areas where wind turbines dominate the landscape character, or areas where turbines become the all pervasive landscape element.

3 The Fens

3 The Fens



Single Turbine

3.1 The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The expansive scale of the landscape, flat topography and simple land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could form a landmark feature or focal point. However, care will need to be taken in siting turbines to avoid the sites and setting of valued landscape components. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Provide a positive contribution providing a focal point within long-range open views.
- b. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.
- c. Consider relationships with the small-scale dispersed settlement pattern. The traditional linear form and single plot depth suggests there is no scope to attach a turbine to a settlement.
- d. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape for example the occasional large farm building, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main roads.
- e. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the geometric field patterns.
- f. Avoid introducing solid built structures into isolated areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.

- g. Avoid the site and setting of valued landscape components notably the remaining areas of peat, and woodland and wetland SSSI, plus areas identified for habitat restoration (Great Fen).*
- h. Consider the visual relationship with existing and proposed turbine developments in the adjacent areas of Fen landscape beyond the district boundary.*
- i. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment.*

Cumulative development

- 3.2** There is scope for the Fens to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine could dilute this perceived landmark function and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Particular consideration should be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in the adjacent districts.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

- 3.3** The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to conserve isolated tranquil areas and important habitats including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter. Introduction of new pylon lines will not generally be appropriate in the Fens.*
- b. Avoid the site and setting of valued habitat components (pasture, woodland and wetland) including areas identified as having potential for habitat creation through the Great Fen Project.*
- c. Consider relationships with the dispersed settlement pattern. Small-scale turbine developments should be sited away from settlements.*
- d. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the rigid geometric field patterns which could provide a template for the arrangement with a consistent and repetitive spacing of turbines. Note that some areas within the Fens have a more sinuous, organic pattern, where a geometric arrangement would be inappropriate.*
- e. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. Additional buildings or infrastructure associated with turbine development should not be introduced into areas characterised as being remote with an absence of built features.*
- f. Conserve and maintain areas characterised as having a strong sense of remoteness and isolation.*
- g. Consider the visual relationship with existing and proposed turbine developments in the adjacent areas of Fen landscape beyond the district boundary.*
- h. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment.*

Cumulative development

- 3.4** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments to respect the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape long-range views are often characteristic and

3 The Fens

views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Particular consideration should be given to the visual relationship with turbine developments in the adjacent landscape character area and adjacent districts.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

3.5 The Fens have a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to conserve isolated tranquil areas and important habitats including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The location of a medium-scale group: should follow the guidelines set out for a small-scale group. In addition the location of a medium-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Consider a clustered arrangement to avoid disrupting long views to the horizon.*
- b. *Respect existing landmark features and the views towards them.*

Cumulative development

3.6 The landform and land cover pattern may provide scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. However the Great Fen and the surrounding policy area constitute roughly 44% of this landscape character area and the consequent limitations on development here will limit the scope for further medium scale schemes. The location of developments should follow the guidance set out for cumulative small scale groups.

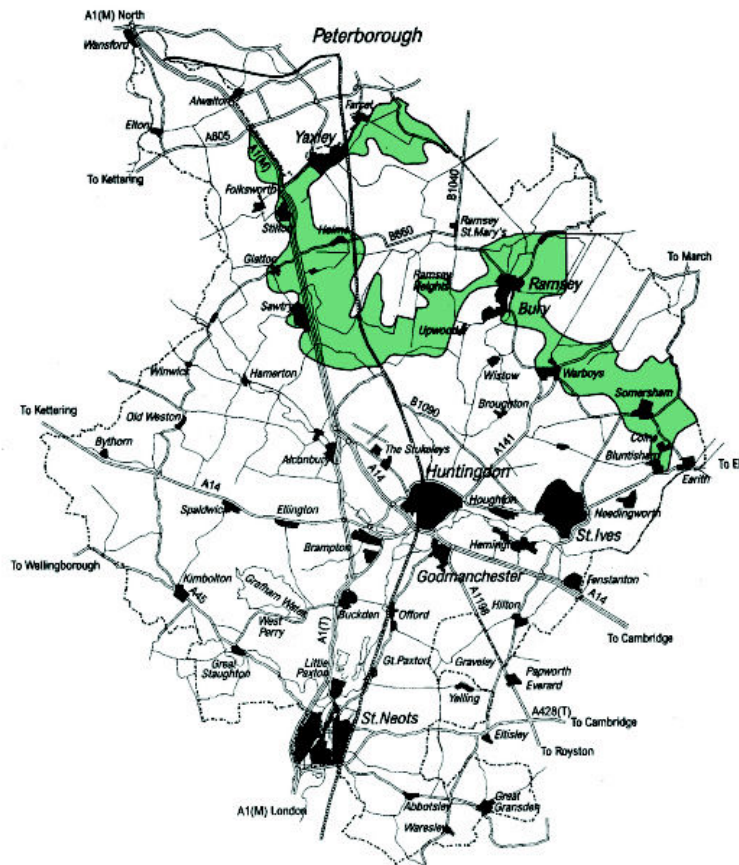
Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

3.7 The Fens have a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group although a group at the lower end of this scale of development will be more appropriate (e.g. 13-15 turbines). Although such a development could be accommodated within the context of the flat landform and expansive open landscape, it could impinge on the sense of remoteness and isolation and be out of scale in the context of the woodland and settlements. Locations for a large-scale group of turbines are constrained and should follow the guidelines set out above for small and medium scale groups.

Cumulative development

3.8 There is unlikely to be capacity for more than one large scale group within this character area. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

4 Fen Margin



Single Turbine

4.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The scale of the landscape, gentle topography and land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could also correspond to settlement patterns forming a landmark feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger extended villages. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Consider opportunities for a single turbine to provide a landmark 'gateway' feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger villages such as Yaxley, Somersham, Ramsey and Sawtry. The aim should be to enhance the settlement edge and relationship with the surrounding landscape, and avoiding creation of visual clutter.
- b. Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.
- c. Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries.
- d. Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into rural areas, which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with limited access such as the area east of Sawtry.
- e. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine development to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).
- f. Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.

4 Fen Margin

- g. Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.*
- h. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

4.2 There is scope for the Fen Margins to accommodate a number of single turbines, however care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. The skyline ridge forming the backdrop to the Fens is also sensitive to more than one single turbine development.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

4.3 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the more intimately scaled landscape around Colne and ensuring the development is sited to avoid impacts on valued landscape components, in particular the relationship with the Fens, settlements, and areas identified as having a tranquil and isolated character including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Proposals for a small-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Avoid the more intimately-scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.*
- b. Consider opportunities for a small-scale group of turbines to provide a landmark 'gateway' feature or focal point in relation to the edge of larger villages such as Yaxley, Somersham, Ramsey and Sawtry. The aim should be to enhance the settlement edge and relationship with the surrounding landscape, and avoiding creation of visual clutter.*
- c. Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.*
- d. Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- e. Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access, such as the area east of Sawtry. Note that pylons are not currently a visible feature within the area and could be a very dominant influence cutting across the sloping topography.*
- f. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small-scale turbine group to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).*
- g. Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.*
- h. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- i. Consider the important visual relationship with the adjacent Fens landscape. The skyline view from the Fens is particularly sensitive*
- j. Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.*
- k. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

4.4 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. A small-scale turbine development will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute

the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. The skyline ridge forming the backdrop to the Fens is also sensitive to more than one turbine development. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

4.5 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the more intimately scaled landscape around Colne and ensuring the development is sited to avoid impacts on valued landscape components, in particular the important visual relationship with the Fens, settlements, and areas identified as having a tranquil and isolated character including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting. Proposals for a medium-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Avoid the more intimately-scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.*
- b. *Avoid impinging on the setting of the smaller historic villages such as Conington.*
- c. *Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- d. *Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access, such as the area east of Sawtry. Note that pylons are not currently a visible feature within the area and could be a very dominant influence cutting across the sloping topography.*
- e. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small-scale turbine group to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1).*
- f. *Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.*
- g. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- h. *Avoid siting a development on the Fens ridgeline which forms the backdrop skyline with the Fens*
- i. *Consider strategic opportunities for the creation of Fen Edge woodland.*
- j. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

4.6 The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. A medium-scale turbine development will act as a point of focus or landmark within long open views and set against dramatic skies. Views with more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function and could create a confused viewing experience. However the Great Fen and the surrounding policy area constitute roughly 28% of this landscape character area and the consequent limitations on development here will limit the scope for further medium scale schemes. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

4.7 This landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group. A large-scale group could relate to the landscape scale and gently sloping topography although it would not fit well in relation to the skyline and views from the Fens where it is considered that such a group could appear over dominant in the landscape. It is suggested that the lower end of a large-scale group (e.g.13-15 turbines) would be more appropriate than a larger number of turbines. Locations for a large-scale group are constrained and the following guidance should be taken into account:

4 Fen Margin

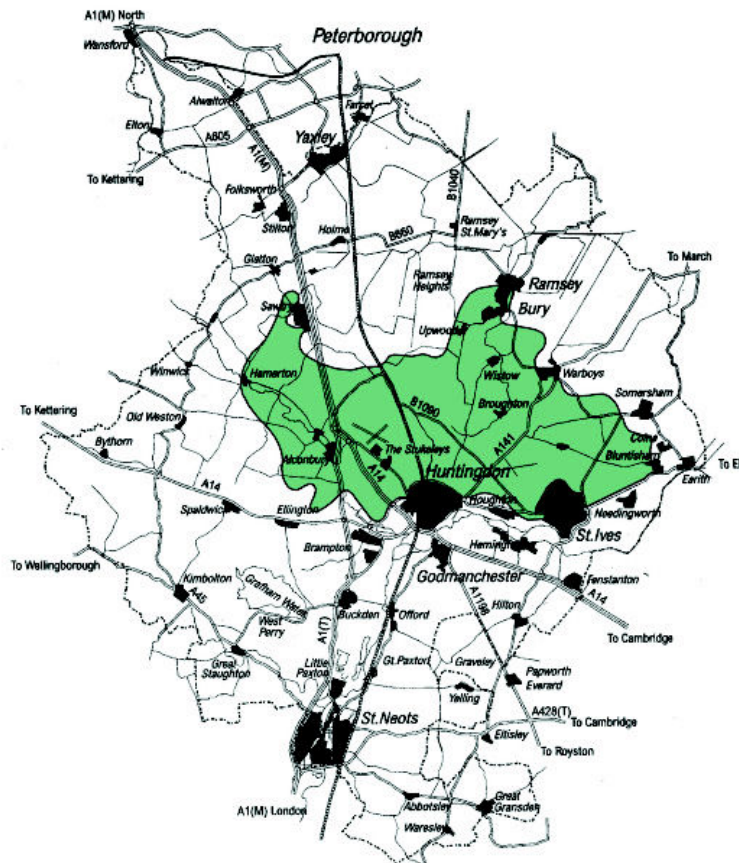
Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

- a. *Where capacity is identified a turbine group at the lower end of the scale (i.e. 13-15 turbines) will be more appropriate.*
- b. *Avoid the more intimately scaled wooded/orchard landscape around Colne.*
- c. *Relate to the land cover pattern in particular the woodland edges and hedgerow field boundaries with consistent, repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- d. *Avoid introducing turbines and additional structures into those parts of the area which are generally characterised by a sense of tranquillity and isolation with an absence of built structures and limited access. Note that pylons are not a feature of this area and would be a very visible intrusion in views from the Fens.*
- e. *Ensure that the development does not conflict with settlements - a development of this size will be out of scale and over dominating in relation to the villages.*
- f. *Relate to existing development, for example the occasional large farm buildings or industrial areas.*
- g. *Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components including the woodlands and historic features.*
- h. *Consider the visual relationship of a large-scale group of turbines with the adjacent Fens landscape.*
- i. *Avoid siting a development on the Fens ridgeline which forms the backdrop skyline with the Fens.*
- j. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 4.8** Given the size of the area and importance of protecting the setting of settlements, the sensitive relationship with the Fens and conserving isolated tranquil areas (including the Great Fen and its landscape and visual setting) it is unlikely that more than one large-scale development could be accommodated. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

5 Central Claylands



Single Turbine

5.1 The landscape of the Central Claylands has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The large-scale, open landform and simple arable dominated land cover pattern would allow a single turbine to fit well, forming a landmark feature or focal point. There is also scope for a single turbine to relate to existing built structures and development. In considering the location of a single turbine the following guidance should be taken into account:

- a. Consider the greater sensitivities of the more enclosed wooded landscape to the north west and the intimate orchard-dominated landscape to the east around Bluntisham.
- b. Avoid rural areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that development does not result in visual confusion and clutter and respect existing landmarks such as views to church spires.
- c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example utility buildings or industrial areas or buildings associated with disused airfields. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14, A141).
- d. Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlement such as those at St Ives and Huntingdon. In this way a single turbine could take on a functional role as well as providing a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge (see guidance on urban peripheries in Chapter 12).
- e. Relate to the landform with turbines sited on the extensive open plateau areas (where this does not conflict with other uses e.g. active airfield use).

5 Central Claylands

- f. *Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, particularly areas currently open, but where there are identified opportunities for woodland creation seek to link existing ancient woodland sites in the north west part of the character area.*
- g. *Respect the scale and settings of the intact historic villages and historic landscape features such as the medieval moats.*
- h. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

5.2 There is scope for the Central Claylands to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. An exception is the location of turbines along communications corridors where it may be acceptable to have a regular spacing of single turbines relating to existing large-scale infrastructure.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

5.3 The Central Claylands landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The guidance relating to the siting and design of a small-scale group of turbines is essentially the same as that for a single turbine, and the following matters should be taken into account:

- a. *Consider the greater sensitivities of the more enclosed wooded landscape to the north west and the intimate orchard dominated landscape to the east around Bluntisham.*
- b. *Avoid rural areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that development does not result in visual confusion and clutter and respect existing landmarks such as views to church spires.*
- c. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example utility buildings or industrial areas or buildings associated with disused airfields. There may also be an opportunity to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14, A141).*
- d. *Consider opportunities for siting in relation extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements such as those at St Ives and Huntingdon. In this way a small-scale group could take on a functional role as well as providing a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge (see guidance on urban peripheries in Chapter 12).*
- e. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the large-scale field pattern, with turbines sited in a simple linear or grid arrangement with consistent and repetitive spacing between individual turbines.*
- f. *Relate to the landform with turbines sited on the extensive open plateau areas (where this does not conflict with other uses e.g. active airfield use).*
- g. *Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, particularly areas currently open, but where there are identified opportunities for woodland creation seek to link existing ancient woodland sites in the north west part of the character area.*
- h. *Respect the scale and settings of the intact historic villages and historic landscape features such as the Medieval moats.*
- i. *Avoid introducing additional built structures into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*

- j. Consider impacts on views in relation to the lower lying Fens and Fen Margins.*
- k. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 5.4** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

- 5.5** The Central Claylands landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. Locations for a medium-scale group of turbines should follow the guidelines set out above for a small-scale group although a medium scale group is unlikely to be suitable as a new landmark or gateway on the urban edge.

Cumulative development

- 5.6** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience. Decisions will need to be made on a case-by-case basis.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

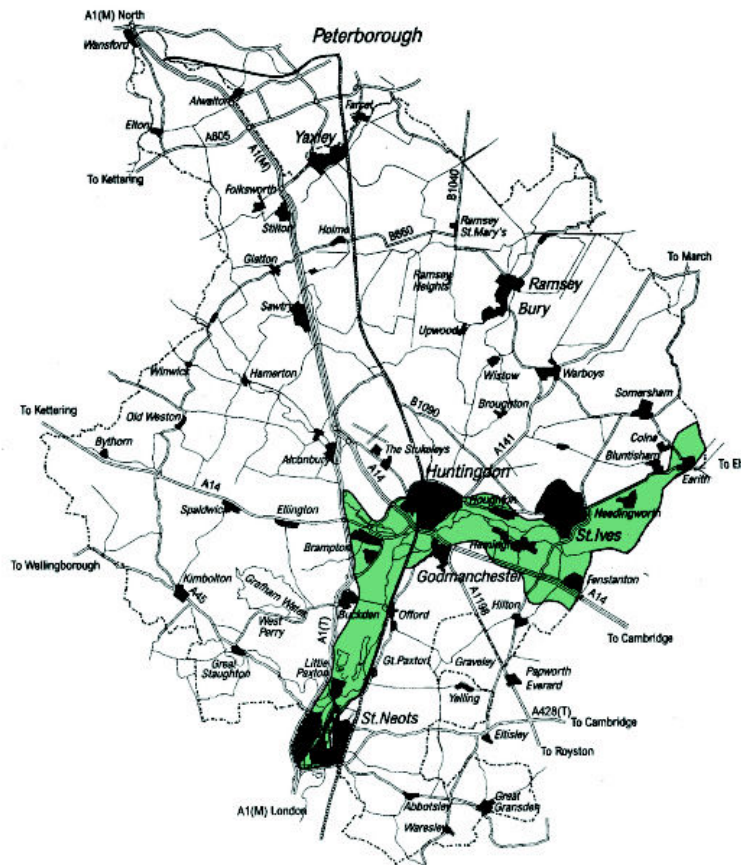
- 5.7** The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature, a large-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern if efficiently arranged and could relate particularly well to the more open, level plateau areas. The guidance set out for small and medium scale groups applies, although in the case of urban extensions it is considered that more than 12 turbines will usually be too dominant in relation to the size of the market towns.

Cumulative development

- 5.8** The Central Claylands do have capacity to accommodate more than one large scale turbine group, although locations will be relatively constrained particularly in relation to settlements and impacts on long views, where the open exposed character could result in intervisibility between developments.

6 Ouse Valley

6 Ouse Valley



Single Turbine

6.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. A single turbine would fit well in relation to the more open areas of the flat valley floor and in conjunction with existing built features, for example amenity/ recreational uses or communication corridors. Locations for a single turbine are relatively constrained, particularly with regard to potential effects on nature conservation values. The following guidance should be taken into account:

- a. *Respect the nature conservation interests associated with the wetlands along the valley floor.*
- b. *Retain the sense of tranquillity and relative isolation.*
- c. *Maintain the recreational value of the Ouse Valley landscape.*
- d. *Avoid areas which retain a distinctive valley landscape such as the summer grazing meadows. It is likely that only the more open arable or amenity areas will provide appropriate locations.*
- e. *Consider opportunities for locating a turbine in association with existing infrastructure such as the railway or main roads (A1 and A14). There may be an opportunity for turbine development in relation to existing recreational infrastructure such as a visitor centre or marina.*
- f. *Respect the setting of the small historic villages of the Ouse Valley e.g. Needingworth, the Hemingfords, Holywell.*
- g. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 6.2** Whilst there is scope for the Ouse Valley to accommodate more than one single turbine possible locations are constrained. This is a landscape that has an important role in providing an 'escape' for people living in the adjacent towns and is valued for its tranquillity and scenic quality; turbine development should not affect the perception of these qualities. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

- 6.3** The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. However, this capacity relates to the lower end of the scale (i. e. 2-3 turbines). The guidance for single turbines applies equally to this scale of development.

Cumulative development

- 6.4** There is very little scope for the Ouse Valley to accommodate more than one small-scale group. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

- h. Avoid introducing solid built structures (e.g. transmission stations) into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*
- i. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

7.2 There is scope for the South East Claylands to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one turbine could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

7.3 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although more obvious and dominant in the landscape, the generally open character of the South East Claylands means that a small-scale group of turbines would not dominate views and could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. The following guidance should be taken into account:

- a. Avoid the more undulating, intact and enclosed landscape to the south (around Waresley).*
- b. Avoid those areas where there is already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
- c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings.*
- d. Respond to the geometric field pattern with turbines sited in a simple linear arrangement with consistent and repetitive spacing between individual turbines.*
- e. Relate to the landform with turbines located along contour lines as opposed to across them.*
- f. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably remnant historic features.*
- g. Respect the scale and setting of the small, intact villages and views to church towers and spires.*
- h. Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley and the 'hidden' tributary valleys that cross the landscape.*
- i. Avoid introducing solid built structures (transmission stations etc) into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*
- j. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

7.4 The simple landform and landcover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

7.5 The northern part of this landscape character area, (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St Neots southeast through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a **high** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although more obvious and dominant in the landscape, the generally open character

7 South East Claylands

of this part of the South East Claylands means that a medium-scale group of turbines would not dominate views and could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. Providing it was appropriately sited, such a development would not have an adverse impact on key landscape values. Locations for a medium-scale group of turbines should follow the guidelines set out above for a small-scale group.

Cumulative development

7.6 The simple landform and landcover pattern provides scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this open landscape medium and long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Large-scale group (13-24 turbines)

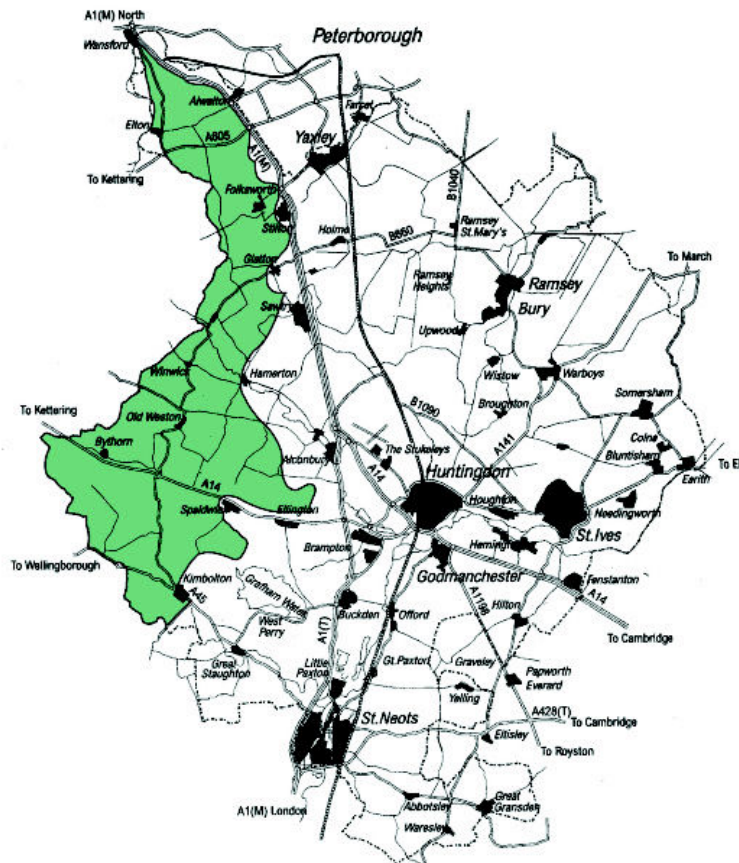
7.7 The northern part of this landscape character area (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St. Neots south east through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a large-scale group of turbines. This scale of development could fit within the open, medium to large-scale landscape. However particular care will be needed in relation to siting and design to ensure that such a development respects key landscape values, particularly the perception of parts of the area as rural with serene and tranquil aspects. The introduction of transmission lines and additional built structures often associated with this type of development will generally not be appropriate within this open landscape which is characterised by an absence of buildings outside the villages. In considering the location of a large-scale group of turbines the following guidance should be taken into account:

- a. *Respect the small-scale and historic character of the intact villages.*
- b. *Avoid areas where there is already a large number of existing vertical structures.*
- c. *Consider the impact on views from adjacent landscapes, particularly the more sensitive landscapes of the Ouse Valley.*
- d. *Respect the subtle variations in topography – appropriate locations generally being on summits or along contours – and relate to the regularity of the field pattern.*
- e. *Respect the sites and settings of valued landscape components.*
- f. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

7.8 More than one development of this scale could change the perception of the landscape's character and could start to create a landscape which is seen to be dominated by turbines. Capacity for cumulative development is low.

8 Northern Wolds



Single Turbine

8.1 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. A single turbine would fit well with the scale of the landscape and land cover patterns on the arable land of the open plateau and ridges. Key sensitivities relate to the more intimate valleys, historic villages and valued elements, particularly with respect to historic features and the distinctive church spires. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Respect the landform and relate turbines to the strong ridges and plateau; avoid locating turbines within the more intimate landscape of the valleys and along valley crests where they will be out of scale with the landscape and settlements such as at Kimbolton.*
- b. *Avoid siting turbines on areas of pasture with ridge and furrow.*
- c. *Respect the site and settings of the historic villages which characterise the Northern Wolds.*
- d. *Consider the views to and setting of the distinctive church spires which form a landmark feature, and ensure turbine development does not result in visual clutter in relation to these key views. A single turbine could form a separate focal point in its own right.*
- e. *Consider opportunities to site a single turbine in relation to existing farm/utility or industrial buildings (e.g. disused airfields) creating a functional image.*

8 Northern Wolds

- f. *Avoid the introduction of new pylon lines into the Northern Wolds. The area is currently characterised by the absence of disruptive features and pylon lines would be difficult to accommodate in relation to the distinctive ridge and valley topography.*
- g. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

8.2 While there is scope for the Northern Wolds to accommodate a number of single turbines, care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. This is a landscape highly valued in the district for its 'unspoilt' quality and harmonious character; turbine development should not affect the perception of this special character. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

8.3 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and land cover pattern. Key sensitivities relate to the more intimate valleys, historic villages and valued elements, particularly with respect to historic features and the distinctive church spires. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

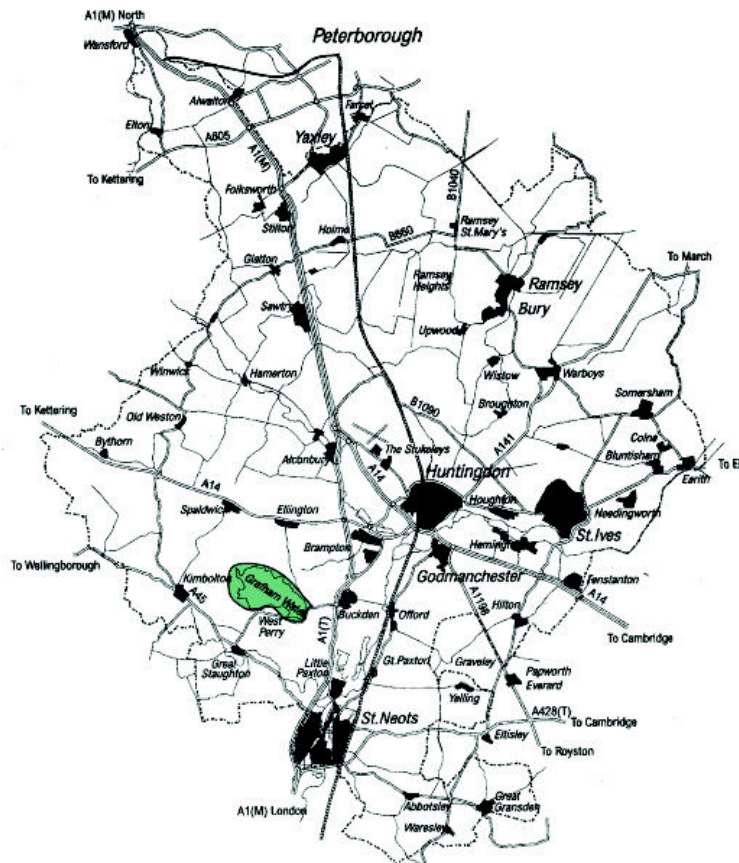
- a. *Respect existing landmark features such as key views to church spires.*
- b. *Respect the landform and relate turbines to the strong ridges and plateau; avoid locating turbines within the more intimate landscape of the valleys and along valley crests where they will be out of scale with the landscape and settlements such as Kimbolton.*
- c. *Avoid siting turbines on areas of pasture with ridge and furrow.*
- d. *Respect the site and setting of the historic villages which characterise the Northern Wolds.*
- e. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas (such as disused airfields).*
- f. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- g. *Consider the impact on views of the horizon from the Central Claylands, Southern Wolds, Fen Margins and Fens.*
- h. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- i. *Avoid the introduction of new pylon lines into the Northern Wolds. The area is currently characterised by the absence of disruptive features and pylon lines would be difficult to accommodate in relation to the distinctive ridge and valley topography.*
- j. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

8.4 There is very little scope for the Northern Wolds to accommodate more than one small-scale group. This is a landscape highly valued in the district for its 'unspoilt' quality and harmonious character; turbine development should not affect the perception of this special character. Decisions will need to be taken on a case-by-case basis. Hence capacity for cumulative development is low.

Note – Guidance in the original SPD was that this LCA had high capacity for 2-3 turbines but low capacity for 4-12 turbines. This has been revised to moderate capacity for 2-5 turbines which more accurately reflects the detail of the LUC study and the definitions for low and moderate capacity.

9 Grafham Water



Single Turbine

- 9.1** The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The open character and large scale of the landscape would allow a single turbine to be successfully accommodated in the area.
- 9.2** The recreational value of this landscape also means that there is scope for a single turbine to become a focal point and educational feature in conjunction with the visitors' centre or other amenity/functional buildings. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:
- a. Seek to make a positive contribution by providing a focal point in views and signalling the presence of Grafham Water from beyond the site.
 - b. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.
 - c. Relate to existing building structures in the area, e.g. the visitors' centre/ amenity buildings, and consider opportunities for education/interpretation.
 - d. Consider potential impacts on the SSSI (bird population).
 - e. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.

9 Grafham Water

Cumulative development

- 9.3 There is unlikely to be scope for accommodating more than one single turbine around Grafham Water. In such a small character area more than one turbine would be perceived as a small-scale group. More than one single turbine would effectively rule out the possibility of accommodating a small scale group.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

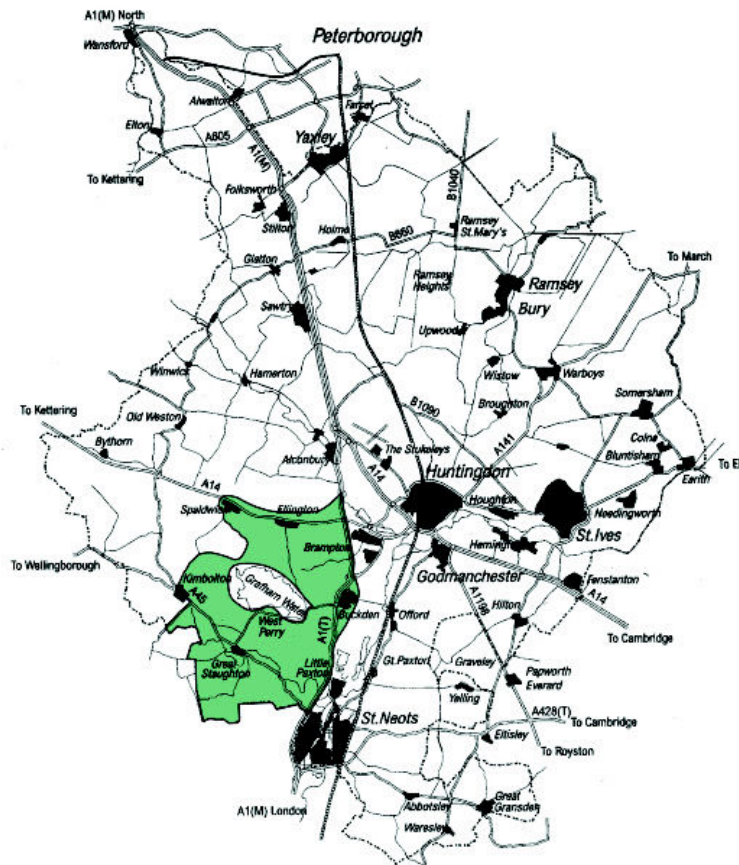
- 9.4 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group of turbines, but only towards the lower end of this range. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape scale. However, the available land area is small and there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected. It is therefore judged that 2-3 turbines would be the maximum number of turbines that could be accommodated. Proposals for a small-scale group of turbines should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Respect existing vertical features that form landmarks such as key views to Grafham church spire and towers.*
- b. *Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
- c. *Consider opportunities for siting turbines adjacent to existing structures such as the visitors' centre or in amenity areas rather than the wider farmed landscape.*
- d. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- e. *Consider potential impacts on the SSSI (bird population).*
- f. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 9.5 The small area of Grafham Water could not accommodate more than one small-scale (2-3 turbines) development.

10 Southern Wolds



Single Turbine

- 10.1** The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The medium scale of the landscape, gentle topography and land cover patterns would allow a single turbine to fit well and it could correspond to land cover and settlement patterns forming a landmark feature or focal point.
- 10.2** However, care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:
- a. *Seek to make a positive contribution by providing a focal point within medium to long-range open views, mirroring the landmark function of church towers and spires.*
 - b. *Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
 - c. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a single turbine to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14).*
 - d. *Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements. In this way a single turbine could function as a landmark or gateway.*
 - e. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns.*

10 Southern Wolds

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- f. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).*
- g. Respect the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded skyline.*
- h. Consider the visual relationship of a single turbine with the Ouse Valley.*
- i. Avoid introducing additional solid built structures such as sub-stations into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*
- j. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

10.3 There is scope for the Southern Wolds to accommodate a number of single turbines, but care will need to be taken in their location and relationship to each other. Single turbines within this landscape will act as a point of focus or landmark. Views of more than one turbine development could dilute the perceived landmark function of a turbine and create a potentially confusing viewing experience. In particular the central ridge that divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook should remain a predominantly rural wooded skyline and should not be cluttered with numerous tall vertical structures.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

10.4 The landscape has a **high** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a small-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, there are a number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to retain the strong wooded skyline afforded by the central ridge between the two valleys. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a small-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

- a. Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
- b. Respect existing landmark vertical features such as key views to church spires and towers.*
- c. Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas. There may also be an opportunity for a small scale turbine development to relate to infrastructure associated with the main road routes (A1, A14).*
- d. Consider opportunities for siting in relation to extended urban areas on the edge of the larger settlements. In this way a small turbine group (e.g. 2-3 turbines) could function as a landmark or gateway.*
- e. Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- f. Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- g. Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).*
- h. Avoid the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded skyline.*
- i. Avoid impinging on skylines that provide enclosure to the river valleys.*
- j. Consider the visual relationship with the Ouse Valley.*

- k. *Avoid introducing additional solid built structures, such as transmission stations, into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/utility buildings.*
- l. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 10.5** The landform and land cover pattern provides scope for more than one small-scale turbine group within this landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

Medium-scale group (6-12 turbines)

- 10.6** The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a medium-scale group. Although a more obvious and dominant feature in the landscape, a medium-scale development could respond well to the landscape structure and pattern. However, suitable locations will be limited by the number of key sensitive elements that will need to be respected, notably the need to retain the strong wooded skyline afforded by the central ridge between the two valleys. Particular care will need to be taken in siting turbines and to avoid creating visual confusion and clutter where existing vertical elements are already dominant. The location of a medium-scale group should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Avoid those areas where there are already a large number of vertical elements (e.g. pylons and communication structures) to ensure that the development does not result in visual confusion and clutter.*
- b. *Respect existing landmark vertical features such as key views to church spires and towers.*
- c. *Relate to existing building clusters in the landscape, for example the occasional large farm buildings, utility buildings or industrial areas.*
- d. *Relate to the land cover pattern, in particular the woodland edges and geometric field patterns with a consistent and repetitive spacing between turbines.*
- e. *Consider a linear arrangement along contours as opposed to crossing contours.*
- f. *Respect the sites and settings of key valued landscape features, notably the extensive areas of woodland (SSSI).*
- g. *Avoid the more sensitive ridge which divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook – this ridge should remain a predominantly rural, wooded feature.*
- h. *Avoid impinging on skylines that provide enclosure to the river valleys.*
- i. *Avoid disrupting long views across the area and the sensitive views into and out of the Ouse Valley.*
- j. *Avoid introducing additional solid built structures, such as transmission stations, into rural areas, which are generally characterised by the absence of buildings. Additional structures would be better accommodated in relation to existing farm/ utility buildings.*
- k. *Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

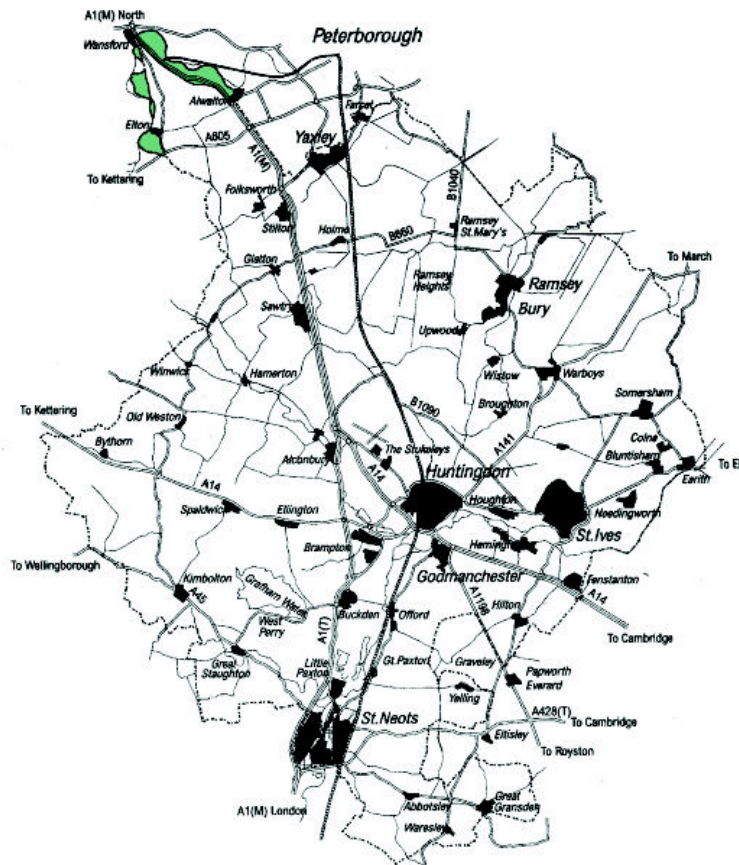
- 10.7** Scope for more than one medium-scale turbine group within this landscape is limited due to the presence of key sensitivities within the landscape. It is essential that there is consistency in form and siting of developments respecting the consistent character of the landscape. In this landscape some long-range views are often possible and views of more than one type of turbine development could create a potentially confusing viewing experience.

10 Southern Wolds

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Note – Guidance in the original SPD was that this landscape had high capacity for a group of 4-12 turbines but low capacity for a group of 13-24 turbines. This was reviewed due to the change in turbine group sizes and the abrupt change in capacity. The assessment has been revised to high capacity for a group of 2-5 turbines and moderate capacity for a group of 6-12 turbines. This reflects the sensitivities identified in the landscape and the definitions for high and moderate capacity.

11 Nene Valley



Single Turbine

11.1 The landscape has a **moderate** capacity to accommodate a single turbine. The intimate nature and small scale of the landscape and presence of a large number of highly valued landscape features, notably the distinctive limestone villages, historic landscapes and important nature conservation interests suggests that locations for siting a single turbine will be limited to the few open arable areas or in association with existing infrastructure along the A1 corridor. The location of a single turbine should take into account the following guidance:

- a. *Respect the nature conservation interests associated with the wetlands along the valley floor.*
- b. *Respect the sites and settings of historic landscape features including the historic parkland and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.*
- c. *Retain the sense of tranquillity and relative isolation.*
- d. *Maintain the recreational value of the Nene Valley landscape.*
- e. *Avoid areas which retain a distinctive valley landscape such as the water meadows. It is likely that only the more open arable land will provide an appropriate location.*
- f. *Consider opportunities for locating a turbine in association with existing infrastructure along the A1 corridor.*

11 Nene Valley

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

- g. Respect the setting of the distinctive limestone villages of the Nene Valley e.g. Stibbington, Water Newton, Elton.*
- h. Seek opportunities to achieve wider landscape management objectives identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment in association with any proposed development.*

Cumulative development

- 11.2** The very small geographical extent of the Nene Valley in Huntingdonshire suggests that there would not be scope to accommodate more than one single turbine development.

Small-scale group (2-5 turbines)

- 11.3** The landscape has a **low** capacity to accommodate a small-scale group of turbines for the reasons noted above. However, there may be an opportunity to locate a very small development (e.g. 2 turbines) in association with infrastructure along the A1 corridor. There is no capacity for cumulative development. The guidance in relation to a single turbine should be taken into account.

12 Urban peripheries

Introduction

- 12.1** This chapter provides 'generic' guidance on potential landscape capacity and mitigation requirements in relation to wind turbine development bordering urban areas (e.g. in association with urban extensions).
- 12.2** As well as the issues associated with the landscape adjoining such sites, various other visual considerations may affect the capacity to accommodate development of this type and scale. This guidance sets out these additional factors and should be taken into account when planning wind turbines near urban areas.
- 12.3** Land Use Consultants identified three sets of criteria for gauging the capacity of urban-related sites, which were developed from those used to assess the landscape character areas:

Townscape character:

- Landscape setting
- Character of the existing urban edge
- Landform and scale
- Size and form of settlement
- Urban structure
- Role and function

Visual sensitivity:

- Key landmarks
- Settlement skyline
- Key views
- Location of sensitive viewers

Values:

- Conservation areas
- Quality and condition of the urban edge
- Natural and historic values
- Special cultural associations
- Intrinsic values

- 12.4** Guidance reflecting these criteria is set out below; it is supported by a 'checklist' of questions contained in Annex A of LUC's report.
- 12.5** In addition there are three over-arching points that should be borne in mind at the urban periphery:
- a. *In general turbines should only be located in landscape character areas that have been identified as suitable for development (on the scale proposed) elsewhere in this guidance.*
 - b. *There may be opportunities for locating wind turbines in urban extensions of mixed-use development, or in association with existing or new industrial areas.*
 - c. *Simple, large scale landforms are likely to be best suited to turbine development. Narrow valleys or areas of intimate landform are unlikely to be suitable.*

Townscape Character

- 12.6** The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance **in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls:**

12 Urban peripheries

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

- a. *Wind energy developments should respond to the scale of the built form on the urban edge. For example, where the scale of built features on the urban edge is large, wind turbines may relate well to the built form.*
- b. *The form of the urban edge (linear, organic etc.) may influence the layout of turbines. However, the landscape pattern will also be important. For example in the fens the rigid field pattern may be a stronger determinate of turbine form than an organic settlement edge.*
- c. *Ensure any boundary treatment (e.g. fencing) or infrastructure accompanying the wind turbine development relates to townscape character and respects local styles and materials.*
- d. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not dominate or overwhelm the urban area – smaller areas are likely to be able to accommodate smaller scale, and fewer, structures.*
- e. *Where historic buildings form a settlement edge, that edge is unlikely to be suitable for turbine development.*
- f. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not have an adverse effect on the visual or physical relationship of the urban area with the surrounding landform.*
- g. *The turbine/ group of turbines should not have an adverse effect on the form or function of 'nodes', 'historic gateways', 'memorable areas' or landscape 'buffers' as identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape assessment.*
- h. *Consider opportunities for a turbine(s) to strengthen urban morphology, through the creation of new nodes, gateways or landmarks.*
- i. *Consider opportunities for a turbine(s) to create a new role for the urban edge.*
- j. *Ensure development does not have an adverse effect upon the function of the area in relation to the town, for example in terms of its recreational function, nature conservation function or open space function.*

Visual Sensitivity

12.7 The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls:

- a. *Ensure that wind turbines do not obstruct, intrude into, or detract from existing positive landmarks e.g. spires, towers, mills (refer to key landmarks identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment).*
- b. *Consider opportunities for wind turbines to create a new positive focus in views.*
- c. *Ensure that wind turbines contribute positively to the settlement skyline, particularly as seen from popular viewpoints.*
- d. *Pay particular attention to the 'key views' identified in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment and ensure that turbines do not have a significant detrimental impact upon these views.*
- e. *Consider views from sensitive visual receptors, such as local residents, in siting wind turbines.*
- f. *Only use screen planting where it is appropriate to landscape character. For example, in a large scale open landscape it may be inappropriate to provide screen planting.*
- g. *Consider the use of off-site tree planting to filter views of turbines, where appropriate to the landscape character.*

Values

12.8 The location of a wind turbine (or group of turbines) should take into account the following guidance in addition to that for the landscape character area in which the site falls:

- a. *Ensure that turbine development does not have an adverse impact upon historic settlement cores or the character of conservation areas.*
- b. *Seek opportunities to improve the condition/quality of the landscape/ townscape in which the development will occur. Consider off-site as well as on-site improvements which are in accordance with the recommendations provided in the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape assessment.*

- c. *Ensure wind turbines do not have an adverse impact upon any areas known for their special cultural or literary associations.*
- d. *Ensure wind turbines do not have an adverse impact upon any intrinsic values such as nature conservation, heritage or recreational interests.*

13 Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

13 Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m

- 13.1** Although prepared for larger turbines the sensitivity assessment in the LUC study and the guidance and criteria to be considered when siting turbines are generally applicable to smaller turbines. A primary objective of the SPD is to guide potential developments to sites where landscape and visual effects (including cumulative effects) are acceptable. Turbines less than 100m height will have varying landscape and visual effects, as commercial scale turbines do, depending on height, cluster size, location and a variety of other factors discussed below. As with commercial scale turbines, smaller turbines must respect the setting of heritage assets⁽¹⁷⁾.
- 13.2** The Council has prepared a Guidance Note for Wind Turbine Developments which includes advice on projects involving turbines of less than 100 metres height to blade tip. It can be viewed via the Council's [website](#).
- 13.3** In addition to the guidance for landscape character areas (chapters 3-11) and for urban peripheries (chapter 12) the location of a single turbine less than 100m in height should take into account the location of any other single turbines or turbine groups in the area. The guidance on issues to be considered for cumulative development of single turbines within sections 3-11 and visual sensitivity in chapter 12 are of particular relevance.
- 13.4** Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) has recently produced helpful guidance on the siting and design of small scale wind turbines⁽¹⁸⁾. Although some of that guidance is specific to the landscape of Scotland much of the general advice is relevant to the landscape of Huntingdonshire and is outlined below.
- 13.5** Unlike taller turbines, turbines of less than 100m in height come in a variety of styles, designs and colours, generally with faster rotation speeds. The choice of turbine is a key factor in the ability of any particular landscape to accommodate a small turbine without significant adverse effects. It may be appropriate to reflect the style, rotational speed or the location of existing turbines to avoid complex visual mixes of turbine types in any location. Applicants should show that they have considered a number of different turbine options at the pre-planning stage.
- 13.6** The following paragraphs set out the siting and design issues that are of particular importance to small scale turbines:

Size and Scale:

- 13.7** Smaller turbines are often located close to built features (such as farms, walls, houses or settlements) and vegetation features like hedges or copses which provide scale indicators in the landscape. It is therefore particularly important to ensure that turbines relate to the scale of adjacent landscape features.
- 13.8** Even small turbines have the potential to dominate small scale topography. Care should be taken not to introduce turbines which would have an overbearing presence on complex or intricate landforms.

Relationship with settlements:

- 13.9** The following factors need to be considered when small turbines are located close to settlements:
- It is important to consider the height of the turbine in relation to nearby buildings or structures. The turbine should not have an overbearing presence or dominate adjacent buildings;

17 Land at Moorhays Farm, Elm Lane, Charlton Musgrove, Wincanton, APP/R3325/A/11/2162443.

18 Siting and Design of Small Scale Wind Turbines of between 15 and 50 metres in height (SNH March 2012)

Siting and design issues for turbines less than 100m 13

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- Where a turbine has no direct visual relationship to a building group it is important for its setting to have some logic. Consideration of its relationship to existing settlement pattern is required to give some rationale to its location;
- Greater care will be needed in settled areas designated for their ecological, landscape or historical value, such as the Great Fen (see section 2.15 and Figure 2.1 'Landscape Character Areas and the Great Fen Landscape and Visual Setting') and conservation areas;
- The relationship between small-scale turbines and the setting of and approaches to settlements is important. Care should be taken not to let turbines dominate views of the settlement from main approaches; and
- Views from within the settlement to important sites or distinctive landscape features should also be considered when siting and designing new small scale proposals.

Heritage assets:

13.10 As with larger turbines the assessment of the impact on heritage assets should be undertaken separately as part of a cultural heritage assessment. Views to and from heritage assets, both within settlements and in the wider landscape will be an important consideration in the siting of smaller turbines.

Landform:

13.11 Smaller turbines have more potential to use landform to restrict their visual impact than larger commercial models. This should be explored, particularly when there are potential adverse impacts on views from sensitive receptors, such as settlements or heritage assets, which could be mitigated through screening. Advantage should be taken of the combined screening properties of topography and vegetation

Ancillary infrastructure:

13.12 Attention to the initial siting and design of any ancillary development will help to minimise impacts and reduce visual clutter.

14 Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

14 Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

14.1 The criteria that have been applied when assessing landscape sensitivity to wind energy development are described below in two groups, 'physical qualities' and 'perceptual qualities'. Only indicators of sensitivity likely to be relevant to the landscape of Huntingdonshire have been included.

Physical Qualities

Scale and Enclosure

14.2 Large scale open landscapes are likely to be less sensitive to wind turbine development than small scale intimate landscapes with a strong sense of enclosure. Turbines are more likely to appear out of scale and dominate landscapes with smaller and/ or irregular field sizes and landscapes with frequent human scale features.

Table 2 Indicators of sensitivity – Scale and Enclosure

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Large scale open, elevated landscape | Medium-large scale landscape with limited sense of enclosure | Medium scale landscape, may contain a variety of field sizes, some sense of enclosure | Small-medium scale landscape field sizes mostly smaller, sense of enclosure | Intimate small scale landscape, small irregular fields, strong sense of enclosure |

Landform and Topography

14.3 A smooth, convex or flat landform is likely to be less sensitive to wind turbine development than a landscape with a dramatic rugged landform, distinct landform features or pronounced undulations because turbines are less likely to detract from visually important landforms, appear confusing or unsettling (due to turbines being at varying heights or on the crest of valleys).

Table 3 Indicators of sensitivity – Landform and Topography

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| Smooth, convex or flat landscape, extensive lowland, elevated plateau | Simple, gently undulating landform, few distinct landform features | Distinct landform, convex hills, plateau incised by valleys | Distinct or irregular landform features, noticeable changes in level | Distinct or irregular landform, sharp/ marked changes in level |

Land Cover Pattern

14.4 Simple, regular landscapes with extensive areas of uniform ground cover are likely to be less sensitive to wind energy development than landscapes with more complex or irregular land cover.

Table 4 Indicators of sensitivity – Land Cover Pattern

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|---------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Uniform groundcover | Large-scale fields, little variety in land cover | Medium sized fields, some variations in land cover | Irregular smaller scale fields, variety in land cover | Irregular small scale fields, complex and varied land cover |

Landscape Sensitivity Criteria 14

Settlement Pattern and Density

14.5 More sparsely settled areas are likely to be less sensitive than more densely settled areas or areas with a high proportion of historic villages as there will be opportunities to site turbines so that they do not dominate distinctive settlements.

Table 5 Indicators of sensitivity – Settlement Pattern and Density

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Sparse settlement | Widely dispersed settlement | Dispersed settlement; modern housing | Frequent villages, some historic, limited sprawl or modern development | Frequent historic villages, historic settlement pattern apparent |

Landmarks and Visible Built Structures

14.6 Landscapes that contain large scale infrastructure, major communications routes and large-scale developments are less sensitive to wind turbine development although development needs to be carefully sited to avoid visual clutter. Historic landmarks such as important views to distinctive church spires and towers increase sensitivity, especially where they occur frequently.

Table 6 Indicators of sensitivity – Landmarks and Visible Built Structures

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Few or no historic landmark features, landscape dominated by large scale development/ infrastructure or major communication routes | Few historic landmark features, large scale development/ infrastructure or major communication routes present but not dominant | Infrequent historic landmark features, some large development/ infrastructure, or major communication routes | Some historic landmark features, little influenced by large development/ infrastructure, or major communication routes | Frequent historic landmark features, lack of large scale development or infrastructure |

Skyline

14.7 Prominent and distinctive skylines, or skylines with important landmark features that are identified in the landscape character assessment, are likely to be more sensitive to wind turbine development because turbines may detract from these skylines as features in the landscape, or draw attention away from existing landform or landmark features on skylines.

Table 7 Indicators of sensitivity – Skyline

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| Large-scale flat or plateau landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are no important landmark features on the skyline | Large-scale landscape where skylines are not prominent and/or there are very few landmark features on the skyline – other skylines in adjacent LCAs are more prominent | Landscape with some prominent skylines, but these are not particularly distinctive. There may be some landmark features on the skyline | Landscape with prominent skylines that may form an important backdrop to views from settlements or important viewpoints, and/ or with many landmark features on the skyline | Landscape comprising prominent or distinctive skylines and/ or with particularly important landmark features on the skyline |

14 Landscape Sensitivity Criteria

Visual Connections with Adjacent Landscapes

14.8 Where the landscape character assessment has identified that views to and from adjacent landscapes are important the sensitivity to wind turbine development may be increased as landscape impacts may extend to adjacent landscape character areas.

Table 8 Indicators of sensitivity – Visual Connections with Adjacent Landscapes

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Self-contained, very limited connections with adjacent LCAs | Occasional views from adjacent LCAs | Intervisibility with adjacent LCAs | Extensive views from adjacent LCAs | Extensive views from adjacent LCAs, these views are a key characteristic of one or more adjacent LCAs |

Perceptual Qualities

14.9 In the LUC study these are covered in the Landscape Value section although there are no individual sensitivity assessments.

Human Response

14.10 Landscapes whose scenic qualities are highly valued within the district are likely to be more sensitive to wind turbine development than landscapes of lower scenic quality or where there has been a loss of character due to agricultural intensification.

Table 9 Indicators of sensitivity – Human Response

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Landscape is considered to have low scenic quality such as an industrial area or despoiled land and is not highly valued | Landscape has low-medium scenic quality, valued locally but has been subject to agricultural intensification | Landscape has a medium scenic quality valued locally for its rural character | Landscape has a medium-high scenic quality, valued for its rural character and/or recreational opportunities | Landscape has a high scenic quality, valued for its recreational opportunities, tranquillity, varied topography, and/or unspoilt character |

Remoteness and Tranquillity

14.11 Relatively remote or tranquil landscapes, due to freedom from human activity and disturbance and having a perceived naturalness or a strong feel of traditional rurality, tend to be more sensitive to wind turbine development because wind turbine development will introduce new and uncharacteristic features which may detract from the sense of tranquillity and or remoteness/ naturalness. Landscapes that contain many signs of modern development are generally less sensitive.

Table 10 Indicators of sensitivity – Remoteness and Tranquillity

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Landscape with much human activity and development, significantly affected | Landscape with human activity and dispersed modern development, Some | Landscape with some modern development and human activity but | Landscape with little modern human influence and development, rural | Tranquil landscape with little modern human influence and development, sense |

Landscape Sensitivity Criteria 14

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

| Least Sensitive | | | | Most Sensitive |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| by major communications routes | impact from major communications routes | retaining some rural and serene aspects | and serene aspects are most apparent | of quiet and isolation are preminent |

15 Policy sources

15 Policy sources

- 15.1** The development plan is currently made up of the East of England Plan, saved policies from the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003, saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and Alteration 2002 except those superseded by the Core Strategy, the Core Strategy 2009, and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan 2011. Also in use but not adopted as part of the Development Plan is the Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010.
- 15.2** The council has recently embarked on the process of producing a single Local Plan for Huntingdonshire that will replace all current parts of the Development Plan except the East of England Plan. Government has indicated its intention to revoke the East of England Plan along with all other RSS and has started a process of strategic environmental assessment in order to achieve this objective.
- 15.3** The guidance in this SPD supplements the policies contained in a number of documents. The key sources and policies are as follows:

The Adopted Development Plan Policies:

- East of England Plan 2008, policy ENG2: Renewable Energy Targets;
- Core Strategy 2009, policy CS 1: Sustainable Development in Huntingdonshire

Emerging Development Plan Policies:

- Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010, policy C 3: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy.
- Draft Development Management Policies, policy DM 21: Renewable and low carbon energy

Other relevant sources of Planning Policy and Guidance include:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)
- Companion Guide to PPS22 (ODPM, 2004)

Appendix 1: Glossary

Ancient woodland

An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.*

Cumulative effects

Cumulative effects are the summation and or additional effects that result from changes caused by a development in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions.**

Designated heritage asset

A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.*

Diversity

Where a variety of qualities and characteristics occur.**

Development plan

This includes adopted Local Plans and *neighbourhood development plans*, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act. It is the government's clear policy intention to revoke the regional strategies outside of London, subject to the outcome of the environmental assessments that are currently being undertaken.)*

Heritage asset

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).**

Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.**

Land cover

Combinations of land use and vegetation that cover the land surface.**

Landform

Combinations of slope and elevation that produce the shape and form of the landscape.**

Landscape capacity

The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according the type and nature of change being proposed.**

Landscape character

The distinct and recognisable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.**

Landscape features

A prominent eye-catching element, for example, wooded hilltop or church spire.**

Landscape sensitivity

The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without unacceptable adverse effects on its character.**

Appendix 1: Glossary

Huntingdonshire Local Plan | Proposed SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development

Landscape value

The relative value or importance attached to a landscape; (often as a basis for designation or recognition) which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wildness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.**

Local Plan

The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

Mitigation

Measures including any process, activity, or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse environmental impact or effects of a development project.**

Open space

All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Photomontage

An illustration of a proposed development that has been superimposed on or combined with a photograph from a recorded location.

Receptor

Physical landscape resource, special interest, or viewer group that will experience an effect.**

Renewable and low carbon energy

Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).*

Scale Indicators

Landscape elements and features of a known or recognisable scale such as houses, trees and vehicles that may be compared to other objects where the scale of height is less familiar, to indicate their true scale.

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.*

Supplementary planning documents

Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.*

Tranquillity

A perceptual description applied to landscapes that are perceived to be relatively more natural, peaceful and quiet when compared to other areas which may be visually developed or noisy.

Visual effect

Change in the appearance of the landscape as a result of development. This can be positive (i.e. beneficial or an improvement) or negative (i.e. adverse or a detraction).**

Visual Sensitivity

The intrinsic sensitivity of visual receptors, such as residents, to visual change.

* Definitions derived from the National Planning Policy Framework

** Definitions derived from *Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment* 2nd Edition (2002) Landscape Institute/ Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment

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APPENDIX B

Draft Revised SPD: “Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development” - Revised Statement of Consultation.

A draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled “Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development” was issued by Huntingdonshire District Council on 16th November 2012. The initial Statement of Consultation is now revised in the light of the consultations received.

The document was put out to full public consultation from 16th November 2012 for a seven week period until Friday 4th January 2013. It is intended as a replacement for the current SPD “Wind Power” which was adopted in 2006. Copies were made available at the Council Offices at Pathfinder House, and at Libraries throughout the district, and notice of the consultation was circulated to all parish councils and an extensive list of renewable energy companies, interested business organisations, local interest groups, consultants, pressure groups and other bodies, as well as private individuals with a known interest. A press release was issued to local newspapers.

The main channel of consultation was via the Council’s consultation portal at <http://consult.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/portal> but responses were also taken via email and in writing. All these responses can now be viewed on the consultation portal – including responses that were allowed even though they were made after the formal consultation period had ended.

Over 360 responses were received and this level of response is doubtless due to the rapid spread of wind turbine developments of all scales throughout the district since the original SPD was adopted in 2006. During that period there have been three high profile local Inquiries, with a further one due to start at the end of 2013. Local action groups opposed to some of the larger schemes have further contributed to the rise in public awareness of the issues surrounding wind farms. Many of the consultation responses have come from members of such groups and there has been an inevitable concentration on specific issues highlighted by their representations – with responses often duplicating lists of issues and proposals. Nevertheless the overall range of the consultation responses represents a wide spectrum of views, with submissions from energy companies and environmental consultants often arguing for a more liberal interpretation of policy, contrary to the more restrictive suggestions of action groups and individuals.

This revised Statement of Consultation will be made available prior to the adoption of the SPD. It includes details of:

- a) The persons and organisations that have **responded** during the consultation process. These are listed in Appendix 1.
- b) A summary of the main issues raised in representations received.
- c) How those issues have been addressed in the revised supplementary planning document, and what amendments, if any, are proposed.

NB It must be noted that HDC have commissioned a position statement on the “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.” The current draft form of this study will be finalised when new planning guidance (following from Ministerial Statement on “Local Planning and Onshore Wind” dated 6th June) has been published. It will then be subject to full public consultation and be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

Broad Issues arising from the Consultation Process

Many of the consultation responses covered more than one issue, and sometimes their content does not fit neatly into a specific topic. In these cases the responses are noted under more than one issue summary. Nevertheless, with the level of responses received, it was felt that an analysis on the basis of the main issues that were raised by consultees was the only sensible method of reporting on the consultation process.

The numbers listed after each issue refer to the ID number given in the consultation portal.

There is a summary of the issues raised by the responses, then in the “comment” section there is a detailed description of any amendments that are deemed necessary, or a “no changes needed” judgement.

1. Responses requiring no comment

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - General Issues

5-7/9/10/14/21/25/26/29-31/34-37/38/48/51-53/56/65/66/70/76/77/83/84/90/
135/137/149/157/178/190/191/223/225-228/234/267/271/273/297/298/
302/305/308/312/330/333/337/346/353/359/361/362

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - Specific Support

11-13/15/17/18/20/22/23/27/28/33/243/245

Many of the comments were very general in nature, often anecdotal and referring to no specific part of the draft SPD, and containing no actual proposal or amendment. Some comments in this category expressed general approval, and others expressed support / agreement relating to specific points.

Comment: No changes needed.

2. General health Issues, especially potential noise impacts

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -

32/65/112/118-25/133/137/138/188/229/230/336

Some parties were concerned about potential effects on general health by Wind Turbine Developments [WTDs], particularly relating to their potential noise effects.

Comment: These issues must be considered separately from landscape and visual matters. National guidance is already available on the Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms [ref ETSU-R-97], and planning applications for wind turbine developments will consider noise, shadow flicker and general health impacts on a case by case basis, and as deemed appropriate by the relevant guidance. Planning conditions can be used to help monitor and mitigate against noise impacts.

No changes needed.

3. Residential Amenity impacts and the recommendation of a minimum separation distance between turbines and particular properties, and/or between turbines and settlements.

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
42/67/68/69/86/95/115/137/160/166/186/188/229/230/
232/236/240/258/261/315/316/318/326/327/331/336/356/357

Many responses were concerned with potential visual and noise impacts that WTDs might have on dwellings and settlements and have put forward amendments to this draft SPD to establish minimum separation distances between turbines and residential properties, and also in some cases between turbines and settlements, particularly those with designated Conservation Areas. These concerns were prompted mainly by potential visual impacts, but also potential noise effects.

Comment: There is no Government support for instituting the idea of a separation distance in English planning policy. There is no generally agreed separation distance necessary to prevent overbearing or overwhelming visual intrusion from commercial scale wind turbines. Although such impacts are often considered to occur within 800m of a property Inspectors have found overbearing or overwhelming impacts at greater distances but they have also allowed schemes at closer distances. This SPD will not establish a separation distance, but rather will continue to support the principle that each case will be considered on its merits.

Residential visual amenity assessment is a necessary part of the Environmental Impact Assessment information considered during the planning process, but it is an impact on private amenity and should be considered separately from Landscape Sensitivity assessment and guidance.

Since the consultation on the Draft SPD the District Council has commissioned a position statement on “The Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Wind Turbines.” A section (paras 4.22-4.37) of this draft study puts forward guidance thresholds and criteria which will help assess impacts on residential properties and settlements – but it must be emphasised that at present the position statement is guidance rather than policy.

This draft SPD is not the appropriate document to consider noise impacts. As has been stated elsewhere in this report there is national guidance on “Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms” [ref ETSU-R-97] and this issue will be considered as a separate matter within the planning process.

No changes needed to the draft SPD with regard to this particular issue.

NB It must be noted that HDC have commissioned a position statement on the “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.” The current draft form of this study will be finalised when new planning guidance (following from Ministerial Statement on “Local Planning and Onshore Wind” dated 6th June) has been published. It will then be subject to full public consultation and be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

4. Quality and veracity of photomontages supplied with wind farm applications

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 75/97/129/142/171/188/231/315/347

A number of comments were received to the effect that the current best practice methodology for producing photomontages (“Visual Representation of Wind Farms – Good Practice Guidance” Scottish Natural Heritage, 2006), was flawed and resulted in unrealistic representations of wind farms. Some comments recommended that current best practice should be replaced by recommendations recently produced by The Highland Council [“Visualisation Standards for Wind Energy Developments” Highland Council, 2010].

Comment: Huntingdonshire District Council is fully aware of the continuing debate about photomontage techniques and it is noted that SNH are currently consulting on this (see “Visual Representation of Wind Farms” – Consultation Draft May 2013). “Whatever the outcome of this process, technical guidance on this complex issue should not be covered in a document which relates to Landscape Sensitivity, and the draft revised SPD will not cover these issues, nor recommend any particular technical methodology.

Nevertheless, with the construction of increasing numbers of wind turbine developments HDC officers will take the opportunity to compare photomontage evidence presented as part of a planning application with views of the completed development. But any conclusions drawn from this process will not be included in a revised SPD.

No changes needed.

5. Cross boundary cooperation and the encouragement of a wider strategic approach to renewable energy issues.

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 3/71/96/166/185/186/236/299/301/303/306/309

Some individuals and local councils sought more cooperation between LPAs within an area or region, favouring a broader strategic approach to renewable energy issues.

Comment: Whether this is desirable or not, or whether it could be achieved under the current planning system where regional plans have been revoked, it is certainly not within the remit of a Supplementary Planning Document based on assessments of Landscape Sensitivity. However, it must be noted that LPAs do consult with neighbouring LPAs on development which may have some cross boundary impact, especially those deemed to require EIA or LVIA.

No changes needed.

6. Grid connection

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 5/6/91/117/126/262/315/317/335/357

Several comments were received advising HDC to use the draft revised SPD to stipulate that any connection from wind farm to national grid must be made via underground cables, rather than poles, pylons, and overhead cables.

Comment: Whilst it is not possible under planning law for HDC to stipulate such a requirement, the recently issued “Wind Turbine Developments – A Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents” (revised July 2013) will be amended to include the following –

- a) A requirement that any planning application for a wind turbine development must include full details of the proposed grid connection. This is in line with the guidance contained in the PPS22 Companion Guide, Technical Annex, para 99.
- b) A statement that HDC prefers and expects that in order to minimise adverse environmental effects, grid connections will be made via underground cables.

No changes needed.

7. Turbine height and landscape capacity

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
39/40/89/90/93/94/106/109/132/136/139/147/148/151/
158/162/164/167/169/170/173/177/179-184/186/194/195/
215/216/217/223/236/241/256/257/261/265/290/292/299/
315/316/319/324-326/331/332/335/340-343/345/347/355-357

A large number of comments were received proposing amendments to the assessment of capacity of each Landscape Character Area [LCA] to wind turbine developments. Most thought that capacity should be graduated according to the height of the proposed turbines, and that guidance on capacity should be provided for a range of turbine heights and group sizes.

Comment: It is accepted that there is an obvious relation between turbine height and potential landscape and visual impact, landscape sensitivity and landscape capacity. However the draft SPD [and the existing SPD] clearly states that it is primarily concerned with analysing the varying landscape sensitivity throughout the district to commercial scale wind energy developments with turbine heights of 120 +/- 20m [see draft revised SPD “Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development“ para 1.16 and 1.18].

This is what the original LUC study assumed and recent commercial scale applications still comprise turbines whose size sits within that envelope – i.e. the conclusions of the LUC study area still absolutely relevant to the current situation.

For smaller turbines the draft revised SPD has not produced detailed guidance on the sensitivity and capacity of the district’s landscapes. This would have required an additional study equivalent to the original LUC one. In preference to this approach the draft revised SPD has added a new chapter [Chapter 13 “Siting and Design Issues for Turbines less than 100m”] containing general guidance and confirming in para 13.1 that the guidance and criteria to be considered when siting commercial scale turbines is generally applicable to smaller turbines as well.

Developments with turbines less than 100m will be considered using the guidance in Chapter 13 of the draft revised SPD and the relevant guidance and criteria for each LCA provided elsewhere in the document. Proposals will be considered on a case by case basis, and each application will be assessed on its merits. The caveats contained in paras 1.5 and 1.19 of the document apply equally to commercial scale development proposals and schemes with smaller turbines. The generic guidance now included in the draft revised SPD obviates the need for more detailed guidance on sensitivity and capacity issues related to smaller turbines within each LCA.

HDC has recently commissioned a **position statement on “The Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Wind Turbines.”** This draft report is concerned with the cumulative impacts of all operational and consented schemes, and those applications as yet undetermined.

It will assess the impacts of more than one size of turbine, and of differing cluster sizes, and will analyse the remaining capacity in each Landscape Character Area and the district, with reference to guidance in the existing and draft revised SPD's. It is intended as a tool to help assess the current cumulative impacts, and to guide the assessment of those effects resulting from future proposed wind turbine developments.

No changes needed to the draft SPD with regard to this particular issue.

NB It must be noted that HDC have commissioned a position statement on the “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.” The current draft form of this study will be finalised when new planning guidance (following from Ministerial Statement on “Local Planning and Onshore Wind” dated 6th June) has been published. It will then be subject to full public consultation and be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

8. Wind turbine efficiency and deliberate restrictions on output

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 4/54/91/117/126/228/320/351

Some comments were received on the comparative efficiency of wind turbines as a means of generating electricity, and the manipulation of output to maximise profit.

Comment: These issues, in particular the assessment of the generating efficiency, are not matters for planning policy, and are certainly outside the remit of this SPD. The SPD will not comment on the topic, nor on the need or otherwise for renewable or low carbon energy generation. See NPPF para 98.

No changes needed.

9. Grafham Water LCA and ornithological Issues

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 17/26/49/50/61/239/244

Some consultees remarked that Grafham Water was entirely unsuitable for any wind turbine development due to the presumed adverse impact on bird populations, migration routes and daily bird movements.

Comment: Although this issue is not within the remit of a study based on landscape sensitivity and capacity – and so the draft revised SPD will not judge this issue – the relevant nature conservation organisations (Natural England, RSPB, and the Wildlife Trust) are all consulted on the wildlife and ecological implications of wind turbine developments, and their comments will be a material consideration when a planning application is considered.

No changes needed.

10. Miscellaneous issues proposed for inclusion within the draft revised SPD

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
4/46/49/50/54/61/79/80/91/96/110/117/126/222/228/230/
239/244/268/294/300/306/309/320/321/334/336/359

Proposals were received that a variety of topics should be considered and/or assessed by the revised SPD.

Comment: these topics included –

- a) Cultural Heritage Impacts.
- b) Use of Financial Bonds in case of health or other unforeseen effects.
- c) Impacts on Tourism and the local economy.
- d) Assessment of whether EIA is required by WTDs – see also item 20 on this issue.
- e) Provision of a comprehensive guide to all issues and policy relevant to WTDs – see also item 12 on related matters.

All of the above are important issues and some of them will be considered at various stages throughout the Development Management process – but none of them is strictly relevant to the consideration of Landscape Sensitivity to WTD, and they should not be included in this SPD.

No changes needed.

11. Cumulative impacts

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -

11/60/86/92/101-104/144/145/174/175/198/199/205/212/
213/217/225/226/235/250/251/277/278/285-287/304/315/317/
319/324-326/329/331/334/336/338-341/344/345/347/355

- a) Many responses considered that the guidance on cumulative impacts contained in the draft revised SPD was not specific enough and proposed that in certain cases a separation distance of 15 kilometres between developments comprising commercial scale turbines should be applied.
- b) Consultees also often remarked that the lack of any mention of sequential cumulative effects is a serious omission.
- c) A smaller group of responses thought that the guidance on cumulative capacity contained in table 2 of the draft revised SPD had been reinterpreted when compared to the existing SPD, and that this had been done without any evidence base.

Comment:

- d) The idea of a 15km separation distance was used in the report “Placing Renewables in the East of England” produced for EERA in 2008 by Ove Arup. Part of that report was a very broad brush study which used certain assumptions to make a calculation of the potential generating capacity that onshore wind energy projects might provide in the East of England. It is clearly stated in the report (para 1.3) that -
“Whilst the information presented here is appropriate for a strategic regional study, it is not a sufficient basis for decisions about individual renewable energy proposals in the region and it must not be used as such. Each application for renewable energy development in the region must be considered on its merits, including site-specific issues that are not appropriate for discussion in a regional study such as this.” **In the light of this unambiguous statement the draft revised SPD will not include any recommendation for a separation distance between WTDs.**
- e) Cumulative visual effects can be divided into three categories – simultaneous, successive or sequential – depending whether the viewer is stationary, turning round or moving along a linear route. The fact that the draft revised SPD does not consider these different categories in detail does not mean that the varying types of cumulative effect will not be assessed when an application for a WTD is considered. It is a consequence of the potential complexity of the cumulative assessment process and serves to emphasise the importance of considering each case on its merits. Like all the guidance

in the SPD, that on cumulative capacity [paras 2.18 – 2.25] is guidance only – a **starting point for decision making**, as stated in para 1.19.

Nevertheless, the section on cumulative capacity is written with an implicit assumption that the cumulative visual effects that are being analysed are **simultaneous** cumulative visual effects.

It is only at para 2.24 that the term **successive** views is introduced – and then the wording implies that earlier paras are considering a different kind of view. For the sake of clarity and completeness it is proposed to amend the draft revised SPD as follows –

- (i) **Add to para 2.22, first sentence...**“Consideration will need to be given in all circumstances to the visual relationship between one turbine or turbine group and another **when these can be viewed simultaneously.**”
 - (ii) **Add to para 2.24, first sentence ...** “Cumulative assessments also need to consider the effect on the landscape area of successive **and/or sequential** views of single turbines or groups of turbines.”
- f) Table 2 in the draft revised SPD was intended to be a useful, tabular version of the text from the existing SPD that related to the guidance on cumulative capacity in different LCAs. The tabular version perhaps has a more prescriptive character than the earlier text, and this was considered (by some consultees) to be contrary to the over-riding caveat that each application must be considered on its own merits. **The draft SPD will be amended by removing paras 2.18 and 2.25, Table 2 and associated footnote 1, thus returning to the existing situation where the guidance on cumulative impacts is contained in the different LCA chapters.**

NB It must be noted that the forthcoming HDC position statement on “The Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire” also discusses these issues.

12. Wider Planning Policy Issues

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 57/259/274/275/282/299/316/320/348

There were several proposals concerning broad policy matters.

- a) Some responses thought that there should be stronger reference to the NPPF, in particular para 14 of that document.
- b) Some wanted stronger references to the Development Plan, others to emerging DPD policies.
- c) Several consultees wanted a more detailed explanation of the role of SPDs, whilst some thought there should be further reference National Policy Statement EN-1 with regard to the benefits of and need for renewable energy projects and how they relate to other adverse impacts.
- d) Other comments proposed that references to climate change should be omitted from the SPD and that text should be amended to state HDC opposition to wind turbine developments.
- e) Several responses thought that guidance on these issues should be framed for the whole of the District, and not separated into guidance for each of the component LCAs.

Comment: Actions to address these points will be –

- f) A new paragraph inserted after 1.12 of the SPD referring to NPPF para 14 and the numbering amended accordingly. This to read:
'At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development [footnote: NPPF paragraph 14]. The primacy of the development plan remains, so development proposals that accord with the plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, if the plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals should be approved unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or policies in the NPPF indicate that developments should be restricted.'
- g) A separate reference to the Development Plan is not necessary as 1.1 clearly states the nature of SPD and contains a link to section 15 that deals with the Development Plan. Ideally a more detailed reference to DPD policies would be included. However this would date the SPD very quickly as the policies that it would be supplemental to are currently contained in the Development Management DPD: Proposed Submission 2010 document that is not going to be taken any further as part of the Development Plan. Policies will be included in the emerging Local Plan to 2036, however the exact detail of these is not known as they will be subject to further public consultation. In these circumstances it will only be possible to have reference in the policies to the SPD.
- h) A short explanation of the role of SPDs will be **added** after the first sentence of para 1.1, viz ***"The role of an SPD is to provide guidance on the application of existing Policies in the Adopted Development Plan. The SPD does not form part of the development plan nor is it intended to provide policies beyond those within the development plan"***
- i) There will be a footnote added to para 2.9 with reference to EN-1, viz ***"In respect of landscape impacts, with reference to National Policy Statement EN-1 (5.9.15) it should be noted that significant adverse impacts do not necessarily render a proposal unacceptable in planning terms if it can be demonstrated that such significant adverse effects would be outweighed by the benefits (including need) for the project."***
- j) The proposal that references to climate change should be omitted from the SPD and that text should be amended to state HDC opposition to wind turbine developments is rejected. It is a requirement of the 2008 Planning Act that the Development Plan contain policies that seek to tackle to the effects of Climate Change through adaptation and mitigation. It is therefore entirely reasonable that an SPD that deals with a form of renewable energy and supports such policies of the Development Plan should include the identified text in para 1.7. The suggested replacement text must be rejected.
No changes needed.
- k) PPS22 Companion Guide recommends an approach to these issues based on landscape character assessment and Hunts DC followed this guidance when adopting the Wind Power SPD in 2006 and the associated Landscape and Townscape Assessment in 2007. Guidance that was only based on district-wide criteria would not take account of (or seek to protect) the distinctiveness of the different constituent parts of the Huntingdonshire landscape. **No changes needed.**

13. Removing the “large” category from the proposed reclassification of group sizes.

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 336/338/367

HDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel [Environmental Well-Being], and some individual members, considered that the large scale grouping of 24 turbines is too large a development for the district.

Comment: The existing SPD “Wind Power” 2006 classified a large group as one of over 25 turbines [see para 2.3 of that document]. The LUC Study [2005] and the Wind Power SPD concluded that nowhere in the district was suitable for turbine groups of more than 25 – they would be likely to result in a significant adverse change in landscape character and /or affect key landscape values. In the light of this conclusion, and other studies and assessments carried out in southern and eastern England, the classification of turbine group sizes has been revised [see draft revised SPD para 2.3 – 2.8] and the large scale group is now defined as between 13-24 turbines. There is no justification or evidence base to warrant further changes to the group sizes by removing the proposed large scale group [13-24 turbines] category. It must be noted that the inclusion of this category in the draft revised SPD does not indicate support or otherwise for applications of this scale – it merely brings them within the remit of this guidance. **No changes needed.**

14. Presentation Issues

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
24/72/87/90/105/108/134/163/176/180/182/
206/219/269/272/276/283/293/348/349/357

Responses were made regarding various matters of presentation. These included –

- a) The poor quality of Figure 1.1. and its key.
- b) The uncertainty of the purposes of the sketch illustrations, pictures 3.1/3.2/4.1/5.1/5.2/6.1/8.1/9.1/10.1/11.1/12.1
- c) The map of the LCA at the start of Chapter 7 is inadequate to show the B1046 road which is specifically mentioned in the text.
- d) Typographical errors in the document.

Comment: The following changes will be made to the draft SPD.

- e) **Figure 1.1 and the associated key will be replaced with improved quality images; additionally the key for Figure 2.1 will be expanded to include all LCAs.**
- f) Some of the original illustrations were omitted prior to drawing up the draft revised SPD, but it is apparent from the consultation responses that the presence of those remaining illustrations adds nothing to the understanding and clarity of the guidance. **All the illustrations will be omitted.**
- g) Although it would be impossible to clearly show the B1046 on the existing map, additional explanation will be added to the text to clarify the exact route of that road. **Add to para 7.5: “The northern part of this landscape character area, (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St. Neots southeast through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a high capacity**”

Add to para 7.7.: “The northern part of the landscape character area (approximately north of the B1046 which runs from St. Neots south east through Abbotsley and Great Gransden) has a moderate capacity “

h) The following minor errors will be amended –

- **Para 1.13 omit “policies listed”, replace with “detailed”.**
- **Para 2.8 will be amended to – “The largest approved/operational onshore scheme (not including those schemes with later extensions) in Eastern England”**
- **Para 2.8 will be amended to – “ ...the 2008 study by Ove Arup for the East of England Regional Assembly ⁽¹⁰⁾ which undertook ...”**
- **Paras 2.15 and 2.16 will be amended to : “... Figure 2.1 which shows the different Landscape Character Areas, The Great Fen boundary, and the boundary of its Landscape and Visual setting.”**
- **Para 7.6 first line: change “one small-scale turbine group“ to “one medium-scale turbine group”**
- **Para 13.1, first sentence, omit “single.”**
- **Para 13.1, last sentence, “small turbines” should be changed to “smaller turbines”**
- **Para 13.8, 3rd bullet point will be amended to “.....Greater care will be needed in settled areas designated for their ecological, landscape or historical value, such as the Great Fen (see section 2.15 and figure 2.1) and Conservation Areas.**

15. Identification of Historic Villages

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
107/111/150/220/263/269/315/326/329/339-41/343/345/347/355

Consultees were concerned that the mention of “historic villages” in several of the site specific guidance criteria for the LCAs was not precise enough, and wanted these villages identified. Often it was suggested that those villages with Conservation Areas should be the ones intended by the criteria, and that this should be made clear by listing those villages in the Draft revised SPD.

Comment: Several of the villages and settlements mentioned by name in the SPD can be considered as “historic”, even though they do not have a Conservation Area, e.g. Conington, mentioned in para 4.1 for the Fen Margin LCA.

In the Northern Wolds, the village of Buckworth, though not mentioned in the SPD text, is an archetypal Northern Wolds historic settlement with a prominent landmark church spire standing out on the horizon, and the village clustered on the higher parts of the valley sides. However there is no Conservation Area.

Impacts on Cultural Heritage Assets are usually considered separately from landscape and visual effects, yet there is an acknowledged overlap between the two, particularly when the setting of Heritage Assets is being considered. Limiting the category of “historic villages” to just those with designated Conservation Areas will unduly restrict the protection to historic villages

and settlements that the SPD guidance can give via its status as a material consideration in any planning application. This proposed change is not justified.

No changes needed.

16. Up to date Review Needed

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
74/78/81/85/88/92/127/128/130/143/155/156/167/168/186-
189/192/199/236/252/254/299/328/348

Many consultees proposed that the revision of the Wind Power SPD (2006) should be accompanied by a review of the existing and consented Wind Turbine Developments in the district, and that this review would give an indication of the “accuracy or validity” of the existing SPD.

Comment: HDC has recently commissioned a **position statement with regard to “The Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of Wind Turbines.”** This will focus on the cumulative impacts of all operational and consented schemes, and undetermined applications which are still pending. It will also offer guidance on the assessment of future proposals. It will assess the impacts of more than one size of turbine, and of differing cluster sizes, and will analyse the remaining capacity in each Landscape Character Area and the district, with reference to guidance in the existing and draft revised SPD’s .

However the position statement will not be a reflection of the “accuracy or validity” of the existing SPD, indeed it is difficult to see how such an assessment could be applied to a “Guidance” document. The existing SPD is valid in the sense that it has been adopted by the Council after going through the required processes, and whether it is accurate or not in its judgements of landscape sensitivity and/or capacity can only really be tested by the ultimate arbiter of planning decisions – the appeal system and the Planning Inspectorate.

No changes are needed to the draft revised SPD with regard to this issue.

NB It must be noted that HDC have commissioned a position statement on the “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire.” The current draft form of this study will be finalised when new planning guidance (following from Ministerial Statement on “Local Planning and Onshore Wind” dated 6th June) has been published. It will then be subject to full public consultation and be presented to Cabinet for adoption.

17. The Guidance is too restrictive

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
62/64/207-210/235/248/251/266/271/279/281/284-287

Some responses thought the guidance contained in the draft SPD was too restrictive, and that there were some scenarios that were not considered, or that in some cases the draft SPD contained conflicting guidance and assessment criteria – also see item 18 below.

Comment: The draft SPD is guidance (para 1.1) and “a starting–point for decision making (para 1.19). It does not, nor could it ever, cover all potential wind turbine development scenarios in all potential locations. It confirms that guidance contained in the draft revised SPD “should not be interpreted as a definitive statement that a particular landscape is suitable for a particular development. Every site is unique, and any proposal involving wind turbines must be informed by a detailed site specific analysis of landscape constraints and impacts.” (draft SPD,

para 1.5). **In order to re-enforce this emphasis on the uniqueness of each proposal an additional sentence will be added to para 1.5, “Each proposal will be assessed on its own merits.”**

18. Criteria to be considered when assessing landscape sensitivity

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
62-64/113/136/140/153/165/201/207/209/210/361

Consultees raised a number of issues concerning landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development and the criteria used in its assessment –

- a) Some responses questioned the relevance of the “Torridge Study” – a recent study by LUC of landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development carried out in 2011 for Torridge District Council, Devon.
- b) Some comments remarked on the seeming inconsistency of the criteria detailed in Chapter 14.
- c) Consultees were sometimes unsure whether the assessment of landscape sensitivity applied just to the immediate locality of a proposed development, or to the wider landscape and landscape character area.

Comment:

- d) Criteria for assessing landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development are based on the attributes of the landscape that are most likely to be affected by wind turbine development. These attributes are generic – things like settlement pattern, skyline, topography – and are common to all landscapes whether they are in Devon or Cambridgeshire. The “Torridge Study” is referred to in the draft SPD para 2.14 footnote 13, and part of its methodology forms the basis for Chapter 14. It has been used because it represents a refinement of the assessment methodology that formed part of the original LUC Huntingdonshire Study – and, importantly, it is a more readily understandable explanation of part of the assessment process.
No changes needed.
- e) The criteria detailed in Chapter 14 of the draft SPD will not necessarily be consistent with each other, and their relative importance in a sensitivity assessment will vary with the landscape under consideration and the type and scale of development proposed.
No changes needed.
- f) The assessment of landscape sensitivity can take place at all geographical scales. At the scale of a particular landscape character area (or on an even larger scale, such as a Natural England designated National Character Area), there could be a broad brush assessment of sensitivity to a particular type of development, but within that area there will probably be variations of sensitivity associated with smaller scale variations in landscape character. Each assessment is valid as long as the parameters that relate to it are made plain.
No changes needed.

19. Further explanation of some topics needed

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -

Some comments suggested that more information and explanation was needed with regard to certain paragraphs in the draft SPD. In particular the following -

- a) The reference to “evolving assessment” in paragraph 1.2
- b) The reference to “further survey and assessment” in para 2.7
- c) The reference to “valley crests” in paras 8.1 (a), 8.3 (b), and related issues concerning the “ridge” dividing the Kym and Ellington Brook valleys which features in the Southern Wolds chapter of the draft SPD, paras 10.2 (g), 10.3, 10.4 (h), and 10.6 (g).
- d) The reference to the SNH guidance in Chapter 13.

Comment:

- e) The reference to “evolving assessment” in para 1.2 refers to the trends in landscape sensitivity (and capacity) studies that have been undertaken since the LUC study was done in 2005 and the original Wind Power SPD was adopted in 2006. These are explained in greater detail in paras 2.3 – 2.6 of the draft SPD. There has been no specific assessment further to the LUC Study. **In the interests of clarity it is proposed to amend para 1.2 (second bullet) to read “The development of the methodological approach to assessing the landscape sensitivity to wind turbine development that has taken place since 2005”.**
- f) The reference to “further survey and assessment” in the draft SPD para 2.7 refers to the minor amendments and clarifications that have been made with regard to the new group sizes detailed in the draft SPD para 2.6. These are relevant to paras 6.3 and 9.4 in the draft SPD, and Chapter 8 on the Northern Wolds where there were various inconsistencies between the text of the LUC study, the table 14.1 in the LUC study, the text in the original SPD, and table 2.1 in the original SPD. One of the aims of the draft SPD was to clarify and reduce these inconsistencies, whilst remaining “true” to the arguments of the LUC study – and in so doing to produce a more useful and coherent SPD. **To clarify this, para 2.7 in the draft SPD will be amended to read “ Within each of these groups there may be minor qualifications. These will be drawn out from the details of the original LUC study as assessed using professional judgement of suitably qualified landscape personnel, with the aim of making this revised SPD a more usable and coherent document.”**
- g) Some responses noted the lack of definition for the term “valley crests” and the uncertainty and discussion this had engendered at the recent Inquiry for the original Bicton windfarm proposal. The term is used in the chapter on the Northern Wolds LCA, paras 8.1(a) and 8.3(b) in both the existing and draft SPDs. From the wording of paras 8.1(a) and 8.3(b) it is apparent that the thrust of the guidance is to protect the “more intimate landscape of the valleys” and the settlements located there.
I agree with the appeal decision which concluded that the word (crest) “should be understood in its normal sense as the top part of something that slopes or rises upwards. Thus a slope would have a distinct horizon, the position of the crest possibly changing depending on the position of the viewer.” see Bicton appeal decision para 25.

Attempts by various consultees to provide a concise definition usually involved invoking other equally undefined terms such as “valley sides,” and using simple diagrams which would be out of place in a supplementary planning document. The variable nature of most of the key components (such as landform, vegetation cover, scale, sensitivity etc) mean that it is impossible to create a workable criterion on this issue that would cover all the possible permutations. The only recourse is the existing one of providing

guidance on the various issues that might apply in each LCA, when considering each application on its merits.

No change needed.

- h) Most of the consultees who commented on Chapter 13 thought that the extracts from the SNH guidance were useful, and often suggested that other extracts be included. However although the SNH document is referred to, there is significant overlap between its guidance and that already contained in the draft SPD. Accordingly specific references to skylines, ridges etc will not be included as these are covered already. Nevertheless the suggestion re “small scale topography” would be a useful and relevant addition, and **a new paragraph will be added after 13.7 (but still under the heading “Size and Scale”). This to read - “Even small turbines have the potential to dominate small scale topography. Care should be taken not to introduce turbines which would have an overbearing presence on complex or intricate landforms.”**

20. Concerns that Chapter 13 of the draft revised SPD classifies 100m height turbines as “small,” and assumes that all turbines less than 100m height have similar impacts, and other issues with regard to such turbines.

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 90/109/135/151/164/169/192/223/265

- a) Some consultees considered that Chapter 13 “Siting and Design Issues for Turbines less than 100m” implied that all such turbines are classified as “small” when compared with commercial scale turbines of over 100m in height to blade tip – and that consequently their landscape and visual effects were also classified as being of a similar scale.
- b) Some responses sought clarification of the regulations surrounding Environmental Impact Assessments and what scale of turbine development might require an EIA. There was a suggestion that all turbines over 80m should require an EIA submitted with the planning application.
- c) Other responses suggested that there should be more detailed guidance for small scale wind turbine developments.

Comment:

- d) There was an unfortunate typographical error in para 13.1 of the draft revised SPD. The last line of this para should read “...**smaller turbines**...” and not “...small turbine...” as the consultation version stated. This will be amended. The LUC study, the original Wind Power SPD, and the draft revised SPD all focus primarily on commercial scale turbines with a height of 120m +/- 20m. Turbines below this scale are “smaller” – though not “small.” Because HDC receives many applications for turbines below 100m height it was deemed sensible and logical to include relevant guidance in this document. At no place in this chapter is there any suggestion that all turbines of 100m height and lower have similar impacts – indeed the draft revised SPD states repeatedly that each case must be treated on its merits, and gives site specific guidance indicating that impacts will vary with scale and location of the proposal. In order to reinforce these points, and for avoidance of doubt, para 13.1 will be amended to include an additional sentence immediately before the last sentence of that para – “...**are acceptable. Turbines less than 100m height will have varying landscape and visual effects, as commercial**”

scale turbines do, depending on height, cluster size, location and a variety of other factors discussed below. As with...

- e) EIA requirements follow from an EU directive which is encompassed in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. HDC must comply with these regulations. A full EIA is an extremely wide ranging assessment covering many issues that may not all be relevant to every qualifying project. However when a Scoping Opinion is requested by a developer, HDC can require certain information even if it deems that a full EIA is not necessary. In the case of wind turbine developments it is common practice to require a fully detailed Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (and other assessments eg Ornithology, Cultural Heritage) even if an EIA is not required. **No changes needed.**
- f) Guidance for small scale turbine developments is discussed in Chapter 13 (with other references), the HDC note “Wind Turbine Developments – a Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents,” and there is also relevant information in the draft position statement “Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines.” Each case must be assessed on its merits, but these documents discuss the relevant issues which must be considered. It would be impossible for any guidance to cover all the permutations of turbine size, cluster size, location etc. This issue based approach is the most realistic and practical. **No changes needed.**

21. Comments on Specific Guidance Criteria for Various Character Areas

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 318/338/353/354/366

- a) Some comments (often associated with the Stop Bicton Wind Farm Action Group) suggested that the site specific guidance for the Northern Wolds LCA should be amended at para 8.3(g) so that Southern Wolds LCA was added.
- b) HDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel requested that Ouse Valley LCA guidance para 6.1(e) be reconsidered.

Comment :

- c) Para 8.3(g) recommends that when siting a potential small-scale wind turbine development of 2-5 turbines care should be taken to “consider the impact on views of the horizon from the Central Claylands, Fen Margin and Fens.”
The Northern Wolds LCA shares long boundaries with the Central Claylands and Fen Margin LCAs. Additionally it has a strong visual connection with the Fens LCA, with the Northern Wolds often forming the skyline of long distance views from the Fens even though their boundaries are not shared – hence the rationale behind 8.3(g).
But the Northern Wolds LCA also shares a long boundary with the Southern Wolds, and this link is referred to in the LUC study - paras 11.1 and 11.2 last bullet point. Relevant issues include –
 - i. These two wolds LCAs have important physical features in common too, namely the valley of the river Kym and the ridge of higher ground that overlooks this valley. Both

these features run on a roughly north west / south east axis extending from the county boundary west of Tilbrook to the Ouse Valley.

- ii. The ridge is more wooded in the Southern Wolds LCA and is an important element of the site specific guidance criteria for that LCA.
- iii. The key issues of the Northern Wolds chapter of the Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPD include the “protection of key views towards the distinctive skyline of ridge tops, church towers, and woodland.

For these reasons it is consistent with existing guidance to **amend para 8.3(g) to read “Consider the impact on views of the horizon from the Central Claylands, Southern Wolds, Fen Margins, and Fens.”**

- d) The draft revised SPD states that the Ouse Valley LCA has a high capacity for a single turbine, although locations would be “relatively constrained, particularly with regard to potential effects on nature conservation values.” Other relevant aspects of the guidance include retaining “the sense of tranquillity and relative isolation” and avoiding the “areas which retain a distinctive valley landscape.” In the light of these potential constraints, and given the stated capacity for a single turbine, it is entirely sensible that the guidance recommends consideration of locations “in association with existing infrastructure,” so that the higher sensitivity locations within the LCA which are so important in maintaining the key characteristics of tranquillity and high ecological value are avoided.

No changes needed.

22. Rejection of the Premises of the Draft Revised SPD

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
4/19/43/44/45/54/221/237/242/246/270/320/322/323/350/351/360

A number of consultees, including some individual council members, rejected the implicit assumption of the Draft Revised SPD that suitable locations throughout the district might be able to accommodate turbine development of an appropriate scale. Several consultees thought that only the Fens and adjacent low lying areas had the landscape qualities to accommodate commercial scale turbines, and that the visual impacts of such developments were unacceptable in the remainder of the district. Significant changes were proposed to the SPD.

Comment: The introduction to the Draft Revised SPD (paras 1.2 and 1.6) makes it clear that the purpose of the revision to the existing Wind Power SPD was not to rewrite its conclusions; to do so would have required another extensive study and this was deemed wholly unnecessary as the draft revised SPD was felt to be broadly in line with national policy (NPPF, National Policy Statements and PPS22 Companion Guide), contained appropriate guidance that could be used in Development Management, and reflected the issues and judgements made at relevant appeals.

Having Supplementary Planning Guidance which is not compliant with national policy is not a realistic option for a local planning authority, as would become quickly apparent when the inevitable appeals were decided.

No changes needed.

23. Great Fen Project

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers - 47/99/111/141/150/196/356

Some responses noted the “policy protection” for the Great Fen area highlighted at paras 2.15 and chapters 3 and 4. Clarification was requested as to why similar protection was not being recommended for other areas of high landscape, nature conservation, or biodiversity value.

Comment: The NPPF (Section 11 “Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment”) specifically lists nationally designated areas, such as National Parks and AONBs, where great weight should be given to “conserving landscape and scenic beauty.” It lists categories of site designated for their nature conservation and/or biodiversity value, (Ramsar sites, SSSIs etc) where planning permission should be refused unless certain conditions are met and sets out the general principle in NPPF para 113 that *“Local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.”*

Huntingdonshire has no nationally designated landscape areas, but it does possess some significant and designated areas of outstanding nature conservation and biodiversity value. The Great Fen project is the largest and most significant of these, and its status has been recognised in emerging local plan policies and supporting text (see draft policy LP7: Strategic Green Infrastructure Enhancement, and supporting text 4.75. NB the original footnote 14 to para 2.15 will need updating to reflect current emerging policy). Other areas with nature conservation and biodiversity interest are referred to in the emerging local plan, but none apart from the Great Fen have the “policy protection” against wind turbine development. It must be noted however that local plan policies would not preclude proposals for wind turbines in or near the Great Fen, only that the policy would be an important material consideration when determining the application. Similarly other designated areas (SSSIs etc), which might be affected by a proposal, would also be a material consideration but the weight given them would be less than that given to the Great Fen, given its specific inclusion in the emerging local plan – though of course each case must be assessed on its merits.

No changes needed, apart from updating of footnote 14, para 2.15.

24. Factual Errors and Misunderstandings in Some Consultee Responses

HDC Planning Consultation Portal ID Numbers -
58/82/89/131/132/146/194/195/255/315/316/325/326/329/339-342/345

Some responses contained particular factual errors, some of which were common to several responses. These repeated errors were –

- a) Assuming the locally designated “Area of Best Landscape” has current status – this designation was abolished following the publication of PPS7 in 2004.
- b) Assuming that other LPAs have policies which fix a minimum distance between turbines and dwellings / settlements – there are no such policies. There may be recommendations or draft recommendations. Milton Keynes DC recently “lost” a Judicial Review on such an issue, though the case was complicated by other related matters. South Cambs DC do not have such a “minimum distance rule.” The government position is still one of opposition to the introduction of any “minimum distance rule.”

- c) Assuming that designating an LCA as having a high capacity for a particular scale of turbine development automatically gives permission for such developments in any part of the LCA - this is a misunderstanding of the SPD guidance, which can militate against particular applications wherever they may be proposed, eg the application for the original wind farm proposal at Bicton, near Kimbolton where the SPD guidance was an important part of the Inspector's decision to dismiss an appeal after HDC had refused planning permission.
- d) Assuming that all new commercial scale applications will be for turbines greater than 127m height – the most recent applications (at Molesworth and Bicton) are for turbine heights of 126m and 125m respectively.
- e) Assuming that the terminology classifying group cluster sizes applies across all height bands, ie implying that a group of six 40m turbines is a medium scale group, but a group of three 125m turbines is only a small scale group – the draft revised SPD Chapter 1 makes clear that it applies primarily to turbines of 120m +/- 20m, and the terminology of cluster sizes is consistent within that height band. At no point is it claimed that the terminology should be used across differing height bands, and apart from Chapter 13 other height bands are not considered.

APPENDIX 1: List of those responding to the public consultation.

| Full Name | Company / Organisation |
|--------------------------|--|
| | |
| | Lightfoot Design |
| | Pegasus Planning Group |
| | Renewable Energy Systems Ltd |
| | HDC Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-being) |
| | Nene Valley Gliding Club |
| | TCI Renewables Ltd |
| | |
| Andrew Brown | |
| Anna and Michael Horrell | |
| Ann Enticknap | St Ives Town Council |
| Beatrice Brandon | |

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Caroline McArthur | |
| Chris and Vicky Wood | |
| Chris Kemp | |
| Chrissie Short | |
| Christopher J Ayrton | |
| Cllr Jonathan Gray | |
| Cllr Mrs Banerjee | |
| Cllr Peter Reeve | |
| Cllr Robin Howe | |
| Cllr Ian Bates | |
| David Brown | |
| David Orr | |
| Denise Johnson | |
| Gareth Martin | Fenland District Council |
| Geoff Burn | |
| Geoffrey Pawling | |
| Henry Malt | |
| Jon Croke | |
| Klokkaris | |
| Lynda and David Grindley | |
| Margaret Malt | |
| Marie Stacey | Hallmark Power Ltd |
| Martin and Diane Patterson | |
| Miss Emma Naylor | Peterborough City Council |
| Miss Nicola Bell | RWE Npower Renewables Ltd (RWE NRL) |
| Miss Sian Williams | The Wildlife Trust BCN |
| Mr Alan Marnes | |
| Mr Allan Parsons | |
| Mr and Mrs Abel | |
| Mr Andrew Pooley | |
| Mr Bev Gray | CFAG |
| Mr Charles Paull | Tilbrook Parish Council |
| Mr David Abbott | Highways Agency |
| Mr Gareth Ridewood | CPRE Cambridgeshire |
| Mr George Isaacs | |
| Mr Ian Dickson | |
| Mr Jack Kenny | |
| Mr James Muelchi | |
| Mr John Chase | Buckden Parish Council |
| Mr John Gimblett | |
| Mr Jonathan Chitty | |
| Mr K Fowler | |
| Mr Larry Fitch | Abbotsley Parish Council |
| Mr Lionel Thatcher | Kimbolton & Stonely Parish Council |
| Mr Maurice Dixon | |
| Mr Nathan Hawkes | |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Mr Richard Flynn | |
| Mr Rimmer | |
| Mr Rob Watson | |
| Mr Ronald Jones | |
| Mr Roy Reeves | Warboys Parish Council |
| Mrs Anne Beszant | |
| Mrs Fiona Anderson | Hamerton & Steeple Gidding Parish Council |
| Mrs Joy Allington | |
| Mrs Lorna Lane-Ley | |
| Mrs Margaret Telford | |
| Mrs Marjorie Tattersall | |
| Mrs Odette Eldred | |
| Mrs Pat Barker | Brington and Molesworth Parish Council |
| Mrs Pat Dillon | Toseland Parish Council |
| Mrs Penelope Bryant | Somersham Parish Council |
| Mrs Sarah Wilson | Godmanchester TC |
| Mrs S Maher | |
| Mrs Victoria Wood | Stop Molesworth Wind Farm Action Group |
| Mr Thomas Cosgrove | Broadview Energy |
| Mr Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge | English Heritage |
| Mr Watters | |
| Ms Amy Howard | |
| Ms Zoe Woods | |
| Offord Cluny & Darcy Parish Council | Offord Cluny & Offord Darcy Parish Council |
| Pam Wardle | Catworth Parish Council |
| Pat Huff | |
| Planning Liaison Anglian Central | The Environment Agency |
| Revd Philip Foster | |
| Richard Murphy | Stop Bicton Wind Farm |
| Richard West | |
| Rob Colmer | |
| Rodney Nelson | |
| Rowland Wood | |
| Sarah Malt | |
| Silvia Earl | |
| Stephen Brandon | |
| Susan Bickley | |
| Susan Hayward | |
| | |

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APPENDIX C

Report to:

Huntingdonshire District Council

**Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impact of
Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire**

A Position Statement

prepared by

The Landscape Partnership

Final Draft May 2103

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3. Review of constraints and existing wind turbines schemes in Huntingdonshire
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5. Guidance to applicants for undertaking Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts

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- Figure 07 Prominent and Conspicuous Zones
Figure 08 Prominent and Conspicuous Zones and Constraints

1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by The Landscape Partnership on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council, who commissioned a study in February 2013 to consider the cumulative impacts of wind turbines and the future capacity of the landscape to accommodate further wind turbines in the District. The study and report is a position statement to inform the officers and members of Huntingdonshire District Council. It evaluates the current cumulative situation and also proposes some guidance on potential criteria for the assessment of cumulative landscape and visual impacts arising from wind turbine proposals.
- 1.2 Cumulative effects have been defined in a generic sense as, *'impacts that result from incremental changes caused by other past, present or reasonably foreseeable actions together.'*¹
- 1.3 In terms of wind turbine development cumulative impacts have been defined as, *'the additional changes caused by a proposed development in conjunction with other similar developments or as the combined effect of a set of developments, taken together. In practice the terms 'effects' and 'impacts' are used interchangeably.'*²
- 1.4 It should be recognised that cumulative landscape and visual effects are just two aspects of a full range of issues that should be considered in relation to guiding a strategy for wind energy in Huntingdonshire and for any proposal for wind turbine development. The revised SPD should form the basis for assessing landscape sensitivity. The approach to a number of other issues is set out in Huntingdonshire District Council's 'Wind Turbine Developments – A Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents'. (Revised version June 2013)

Background

- 1.5 The current Huntingdonshire District Council SPD relating to wind turbines in the landscape is "Supplementary Planning Document: Wind Power" [Feb 2006]. This study was based on the landscape character units identified in an original assessment of Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) in the District that was carried out by LDA in 2002 [adopted in 2007]. The existing SPD Wind Power [2006] is also underpinned by the study "Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire" prepared by Land Use Consultants in 2005. The capacities shown for each of the LCAs in the 2006 SPD were based on a situation where there were no existing wind

¹ Hyder (1999) *'Guidelines for the Assessment of indirect and cumulative impacts as well as impact interactions'*

² Scottish Natural Heritage (2012) *Assessing the Cumulative Effect of Onshore Wind Energy Developments*

turbine developments in HDC and therefore represented a projection based on best information and guidance available at the time.

- 1.6 Revisions are proposed to the 2006 SPD in the light of: changes in the planning system including the introduction of the NPPF, the new Local Plan and changes in the methodologies for assessing turbines. The Draft Revised SPD 'Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development' (2012) offers guidance on siting and the potential capacity of each of the Landscape Character Areas to accommodate various scales of Wind Turbine Development: from a single turbine to a large scale group. The Draft SPD also indicates the cumulative landscape capacity within each landscape character area for each group size. The Draft Revised SPD "Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development" has been subject to public consultation and is due for consideration in its post consultation state by Council Members in July 2013
- 1.7 The bulk of the text within the Draft Revised SPD concentrates on the capacity for turbines between 100m and 140m in height. However, additional general guidance is provided for the siting of turbines below 100m within Chapter 14 of the draft revised version. Further discussion about the cumulative aspects in the Draft SPD, are provided in Section 2 below.

Requirements for this study

- 1.8 Huntingdonshire District Council has identified an urgent need to provide a position statement which details the cumulative impacts of all operational and consented Wind Turbine Developments (WTDs) of all scales and turbine sizes, and an assessment of the remaining capacity within the LCA's and the District as a whole for WTDs. This independent position statement should focus on the cumulative landscape and visual impacts and in particular the remaining landscape capacity in each LCA and the district. The position statement should be compliant with the NPPF and relevant local policy.
- 1.9 The report will study the current cumulative effects of wind turbines in the district, and offer guidance to officers, members, developers and the general public on the capacity of local landscapes to accommodate further wind turbine development. Its analysis will be used in the consideration of potential cumulative impacts resulting from new wind energy proposals. The evidence it presents will support Huntingdonshire District Council's emerging local plan policies and the draft revised SPD "Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development" and together with the "Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents" and the 2005 LUC Study "Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire," it forms a suite of documents that inform these policies.

1.10 The study was identified to cover the following aspects:

- a) A review of existing renewable policy and the SPD by HDC together with the proposed Draft SPD : Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development with regard to guidance on capacity and cumulative impacts
- b) The identification and plotting in GIS of all single turbine and wind farm developments in the District grouped into the following categories :
 - o operational
 - o consented but not built
 - o planning application or appeal stage
- c) The identification and plotting in GIS of all single turbine or wind farm developments within 10km distance from the district boundary.
- d) On site 'ground truthing' of the local context in Huntingdonshire and the current landscape and visual impacts of wind turbines and wind farms with particular reference to the sensitivity and capacity criteria in the existing and Draft Revised SPD.
- e) Review of selected recent appeal decisions in England where cumulative landscape and visual impact has been a consideration in allowing or dismissing appeals to provide some benchmarking criteria.
- f) Review of selected SPD's guidance from other LPA's for cumulative effect of wind turbines.
- g) Recommendations for assessing capacity and for considering current and future applications in HDC with regard to the cumulative landscape and visual impact.

1.11 The study provides a strategic overview of the current situation at a point in time. It also sets out a number of criteria which should be used as a guide to identifying and assessing cumulative effects. The recommendations are not to be interpreted as absolute in all respects. For each application there will still be a requirement for developers to undertake a detailed site based assessment of cumulative impacts including for any other consented wind turbine proposals and any others still 'in planning' at the time. Guidance for undertaking these studies is found at Section 5 of this report.

1.12 The findings of this report are not intended to replace the requirements of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact

Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended). Detailed consideration of a site may identify factors specific to that site which will need to be balanced alongside issues identified in this document.

2 POLICY AND GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

2.1 The report has considered government guidance and other studies including those carried out by and for local authorities on the cumulative impacts of wind turbines undertaken within England, Scotland and Wales. Selected Inspector decisions from public inquiries, where cumulative impacts have formed one of the main determining factors have also been included. Whilst each of these studies and inspectors' decisions must relate to the specific aspects of the landscape and views in which they are set, they do nevertheless provide 'benchmarking' on accepted approaches to considering cumulative impacts and the type of landscape and distances which are currently being considered to be acceptable or unacceptable. Creating a national picture of general principles can then be applied and related to the situation in Huntingdonshire to create a picture that is appropriate to the District.

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

2.2 The key paragraphs in the NPPF relevant to the cumulative effect of WTD are 97 and 98 as set out below:

97 To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, local planning authorities should recognise the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable or low carbon sources. They should:

- *have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources;*
- *design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts;*
- *consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure the development of such sources;*

98. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should:

- *not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy and also recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and*
- *approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should also expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.*

National Policy Statements for Energy EN1 and EN3 (both July 2011)

- 2.3 Para 97 also refers to EN1 and EN3 as being relevant considerations. National Policy Statements EN1 and EN3 were primarily produced to advise on large energy infrastructure projects (> 50MW). However, the NPPF advises that local planning authorities should follow the approach in these documents and for this reason they are still relevant. However EN1 and EN3 do not include any specific guidance on cumulative landscape and visual effects. However EN1 does state at para 5.9.19, *It may be helpful for applicants to draw attention, in the supporting evidence to their applications, to any examples of existing permitted infrastructure they are aware of with a similar magnitude of impact on sensitive receptors. This may assist the IPC in judging the weight it should give to the assessed visual impacts of the proposed development.* This would seem to support the use of other schemes where there may be cumulative impact issues to 'benchmark' any cumulative landscape and visual impact.

PPS22 Renewable Energy – A Companion Guide (2004)

- 2.4 The PPS 22 Companion Guide remains an extant document. The companion guide provides practical advice as to how the policies originally set out in PPS22 could be implemented, and the retention of the companion guide indicates that this advice is still pertinent. Section 4 states in regard to key issues in planning for renewables at the local (District) level ,

'4.5 Local planning authorities have an important role to play in the implementation of appropriate renewable energy schemes. Both as policy-makers and as more direct agents of change, they have the opportunity to engage with local communities and to achieve real progress towards national and regional targets.

4.6 Key issues in planning for renewables at the local level include:

- the introduction of the spatial planning approach within the new system provides an important opportunity for integrating renewable energy generation into the wider local planning framework;*
- local planning authorities should prepare criteria-based policies that focus on key local issues, within the framework set out by national planning policy and the Regional Spatial Strategy, or Spatial Development Strategy in London. Policies may relate to standalone schemes or the development of integrated renewables within developments;*
- supplementary planning documents can be useful in illustrating how particular types of technology, or passive solar design principles, can be applied in the particular local context;*

- 2.5 Section 5 of the Companion Guide provides guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual impact issues relating to individual development proposals, and also cumulative effects as set out in Section 5 below.

“Placing Renewables in the East of England” – Report produced for EERA by Ove Arup (Feb 2008)

- 2.6 The East of England Plan also known as the Regional Spatial Strategy was revoked in 2012. However, parts of the evidence base have still been identified as of relevance. The regional renewable energy study ‘Placing Renewables in the East of England’ (Arup) considered the potential of the Eastern Region to accommodate (among other technologies) WTD. It was based on a regional strategic and largely desk based approach that identified the landscape capacity based on the National Character Area (NCA) scale of unit. The study found that both NCA 46 (The Fens) and NCA 88 (The Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands) had a ‘low-medium/medium’ sensitivity to wind turbines at a height of 100-140m. The findings of this assessment were due to the relatively large scale and simple nature of the two NCA landscapes assessed as a whole. However, there are some marked local variations within the claylands in particular that would indicate more variable sensitivity at a local scale.
- 2.7 With regard to cumulative impacts an estimate of the theoretical ‘maximum’ capacity of the NCA’s was undertaken. This identified that major visual effects could occur at up to 10km distance (based on research by The University of Newcastle upon Tyne). However, with modifying factors including tree screening in the region it was considered that tolerance of severe-major effects up to 5km may be acceptable in cases where there are fewer receptors, such as sparsely populated and less sensitive landscapes. In these locations a separation distance of 10km between wind farms was therefore examined to assess capacity. Where there were a greater number of receptors or a higher sensitivity landscape, greater separation distances of 15km between wind farms was considered to avoid notable cumulative impact on receptors and overwhelming the scale of the landscape involved.

Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments - Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH March 2012)

- 2.8 SNH have produced an updated version of their earlier 2006 document on cumulative effects and this covers the effect on landscape and birds. This study forms one of the most detailed guidance documents in the UK on assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects. The majority of the publication guides local authorities, applicants and consultants on how to carry out cumulative assessment for specific applications. However it also provides guidance on strategic planning. Reference is made to ‘Strategic Locational Guidance for onshore Wind farms in respect of the Natural Heritage Policy statement no. 02/02’ (SNH) which notes the presence of three zones of sensitivity in Scotland.

Zone 1:

Lowest natural heritage sensitivity identifies areas at the broad scale with least sensitivity to wind farms, with the greatest opportunity for development, within which overall a large number of developments could be acceptable in natural heritage terms, so long as they are undertaken sensitively and with due regard to cumulative impact. (15% of land area of Scotland)

Zone 2: Medium natural heritage sensitivity identifies areas with some sensitivities to wind farms. However, by careful choice of location within these areas there is often scope to accommodate development of an appropriate scale, siting and design (again having regard to cumulative effects) in a way which is acceptable in natural heritage terms. (55 % of land area of Scotland)

Zone 3:

High natural heritage sensitivity identifies areas of greatest sensitivity to wind farms, which place the greatest constraint on their development, and where, in general, proposals are unlikely to be acceptable in natural heritage terms. There may however be some sites in this zone where wind farm development of appropriate scale and careful design could be accommodated if potential impacts on the natural heritage are fully explored and guarded against by employing the highest standard in siting and design. (30% of land area of Scotland)

2.9 The 2012 cumulative guidance also states from para 18 that in relation to Strategic Planning,

18. In all cases, the focus is on forward planning: setting out the vision for windfarm development; and determining the thresholds of acceptable change, where the most suitable locations for development are, and what might be an appropriate design and scale.

19. The strategic plans (often underpinned by a landscape capacity study) should consider a range of specific scenarios, in terms of the numbers, scale and distribution of windfarm developments to be accommodated. It should then make use of the resulting cumulative impact assessment to draw conclusions as to which of these scenarios is acceptable.

20. The area included within a strategic cumulative assessment should not be constrained by administrative boundaries. Effective assessments should cover the whole of a region, straddling more than one planning authority, or that of a natural heritage management unit such as a National Park or Firth Partnership area.

21. *Planning authorities are encouraged by Scottish Planning Policy to:*

- *define broad areas of search suitable for large scale (>20MW) wind farms (equal to approximately 10no. 125m turbines)*
- *identify the criteria they should meet through the development of Supplementary Planning Guidance.*

22. *This approach will have enhanced value if it is also associated with a view of the **capacity** of the area for such development and identification of the critical factors which are likely to present an eventual limit to development. We have recently published a review of landscape capacity studies which provides useful advice.*

2.10 The above extracts identify that the identification of thresholds is appropriate together with the fact that there would be an eventual limit to development. The approach to using various scenarios of development has been undertaken by a number of authorities in Scotland and England. However, no firm figures or hard thresholds are provided identifying the likely limit of development. Clearly the landscape capacity and other factors will vary locally.

2.11 Section 3 of the SNH report notes at para 45,

The cumulative impact of windfarm development on landscape and visual amenity is a product of:

- *the distance between individual windfarms (or turbines),*
- *the distance over which they are visible,*
- *the overall character of the landscape and its sensitivity to windfarms,*
- *the siting and design of the windfarms themselves, and*
- *the way in which the landscape is experienced.*

2.12 These factors are all important and there is no reason why these cannot form a consideration in the development of strategic advice at the local scale for Huntingdonshire District Council.

Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impacts Assessment (LI and IEMEA) (April 2013)

2.13 The Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) is now in its third edition. The updated 2013 version includes for the first time a chapter (7) on cumulative landscape and visual effects. It recognises that the study of cumulative effects for WTD has been at the forefront of the development of cumulative assessment in part due to the number and size of the structures involved. The majority of Chapter 7 in the GLVIA is focused on the process of guidance for carrying out a cumulative assessment for a specific proposal. This is logical as the primary purpose of the GLVIA is to guide those carrying out EIAs. Part of the

process includes identification of which other schemes to include in a cumulative assessment. The GLVIA indicates that this should usually be those that are existing, consented or at planning application/appeal stage. Only in exceptional circumstances should it include those not yet submitted as a planning application and in such circumstances this is more likely to apply to nationally significant infrastructure projects (i.e. > 50MW for wind turbines).

2.14 Para 7.17 of the GLVIA sets out a range of types of cumulative effects including the following which are considered to be of particular relevance to WTD:

- An extension to an existing scheme or a new development that intensifies the landscape and visual effects in addition of other existing schemes
- Filling an area with the same or different types of development over time such that it substantially alters the landscape resource, views or visual amenity
- Incremental change such that the combined landscape or visual effect becomes significant even though the individual schemes in their own right may not be – this may e.g. apply to a number of smaller turbines within an area

2.15 In relation to the extent of a study area the GLVIA suggests (para 7.21 and 7.30) that this maybe reflected through the use of LCAs as a unit to assess the effects and/or through combined Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV). The GLVIA also encourages a practical and pragmatic approach to cumulative study areas to ensure that the assessment is focused on identifying the extent of 'significant' cumulative effects rather than recording any level of effect regardless of magnitude.

2.16 The GLVIA also considers cases where there may be wider concerns about cumulative impacts where it states at para 7.41,

'where the cumulative landscape and/or visual effects of the proposal combined with the cumulative baseline lead to a need for the consenting authority to take broader action, such as implementing an overarching mitigation programme or amending planning policies based on their judgement that the effects on receptors have reached or passed an acceptable threshold.'

The above extract would indicate that an approach such as that set out in this study (see Sections 3 and 4 below) have a basis for identifying thresholds and criteria to assess current and future applications where cumulative issues are involved.

Huntingdonshire District Council SPD: Wind Power (Feb 2006)

- 2.17 This document represents the currently adopted SPD on WTD which is now under review as set out below. The study was in turn based on an earlier study of 2005 Wind Turbine Development in Huntingdonshire by LUC.

Wind Turbine Development - A Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents

(revised version June 2013)

- 2.18 This note provides guidance on the factors to include in the assessment leading to planning applications whether as part of an ES or as supporting information for an application that does not require an ES. There is no specific guidance related to cumulative effects in this note.

Huntingdonshire District Council Draft Revised SPD: Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development (2012)

- 2.19 The Draft Revised SPD sets out the intended approach of the District to wind energy. With regard to cumulative effects the capacity for each LCA to accommodate 'more than one' WTD is assessed within the details for each LCA. A limit of turbine numbers or group sizes is based on the relative landscape sensitivity of the LCA's.

Other Local Authority SPDs and related studies

- 2.20 The process of considering cumulative landscape and visual effects from WTD has also been considered by a number of local authorities who have conducted their own studies and a number have produced SPDs. While each geographical location and local authority is distinct, reference to comparable studies can be a useful means for benchmarking the approaches taken elsewhere to inform the choice of criteria used in this study. Appendix 1 provides a brief summary of reference studies considered.

Appeal Decision principles

- 2.21 A number of appeal decisions involving cumulative landscape and visual impacts have been reviewed. Each case should always be considered on its own merits and site specific circumstances. However, Appendix 2 includes a summary of relevant points from the various Inspectors findings and identifies some principles relating to cumulative issues from each appeal.

3. REVIEW OF CONSTRAINTS AND EXISTING WIND TURBINE SCHEMES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

3.1 The assessment of cumulative issues involves an appreciation of a number of factors. This study has identified a number of constraints relevant to WTD and represented and analysed this data using GIS. A number of the following topics are illustrated by accompanying Figures 01-04. Each of the drawings also plot the Huntingdonshire District LCA boundaries and also show a 10km buffer from the District boundary. The relative capacity of each LCA for wind turbine developments of specific group numbers has been more fully assessed in the original LUC study, the current SPD and the Draft Revised SPD Review.

Topography and watercourses

3.2 Figure 01 illustrates the underlying pattern of landform and watercourses within Huntingdonshire set against the defined LCA's. At a national scale the District is primarily located with NCA 88 (Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Claylands) with a proportion to the north east located within NCA 46 (The Fens). The Huntingdonshire LCAs are a refinement of the NCAs and provide a district scale focus that is applicable to the assessment of suitability for WTD. The main ridgelines in the district have been shown on Fig 01 together with an indication of the distances between ridges. The pattern of landform and drainage in each of the Huntingdonshire LCAs is summarised below:

- **The Fens:** The LCA is located to the north east of the district and is essentially a flat landscape with heights ranging by no more than 1 or 2 metres above or below sea level. There is a complex network of drains, dykes and lodes many following the reclaimed geometric field pattern. The area and associated higher land to the west drains into either, the River Nene Old Course, Yaxley Lode or the Fenton Lode/Twenty Foot Drain on route to the Wash.
- **The Fen Margin:** The LCA follows the western and southern edge of the Fens. Landform is gently sloping and typically between 2-10m AOD. There are localised areas that reach up to c. 20 metres e.g. Warboys Heath. The drainage includes a number of tributary streams that run off the claylands into the Fens to the east.
- **The Central Claylands:** The LCA is a large gently undulating plateau typically 30-40m AOD and reaching up to just over 50m to the north west. The area historically hosted a number of airfields. There are some gentle tributary valleys with associated streams in which a number of small villages are located e.g. Abbots Ripton and Broughton. The area mainly drains to the north east with some other areas draining to the south east towards the Ouse and Alconbury Brook to the south West also to the Ouse.
- **The Ouse Valley:** The LCA comprises the valley of the main river within the District. The valley sides comprise moderate to gentle side slopes with a number of associated

secondary tributary valleys. The valley is c. 5-6km wide between the flanking areas of higher ground. The central flood plain and valley floor is c. 2km wide and meanders north and then east through the area. The LCA also includes a series of water bodies associated with former mineral extraction in the valley floor.

- **South East Claylands:** The LCA forms the north west extension of a more extensive undulating area of clay plateau that continues into South Cambridgeshire District to the east. The landform slopes down to the Ouse Valley to the north and west and the land drains via a number tributary streams in shallow valleys. The LCA has similar characteristics to much of The Central Claylands.
- **The Northern Wolds:** This LCA includes land in the north western part of the District. It includes areas of relatively higher ground between 40-70m AOD. There are also a number of more marked ridges and valleys generally running in a north west /south east orientation. The ridges are separated by a number of valleys with streams including the headwaters of Alconbury Brook and Ellington Brook. The intervals between the ridges vary from between 5.5km to as little as 2km where the landform creates a greater sense of enclosure and rolling undulations.
- **The Graham Water:** The LCA is a small area focused on the reservoir and surrounding fringes. The landform encloses the reservoir that hosted the Diddlington Brook before it was dammed. The area is relatively self-contained from wider views.
- **The Southern Wolds:** The LCA wraps around Graham Water and extends to the A14 in the north and A1 to the east. The LCA includes a number of plateau areas and undulations but these are not typically as marked as in the Northern Wolds. The River Kym is the main watercourse that flows through Kimbolton eastwards to the Ouse in a broad valley c. 4km wide. Other secondary tributaries flow to the Ellington Brook to the north.
- **The Nene Valley:** This LCA is a very small LCA that forms the southern valley slopes and flood plain of the much larger Nene Valley that meandering through Northamptonshire to Peterborough and eventually to the Wash. The District boundary follows the course of the river from Elton to Alwalton. There are a few tributary streams that flow off the Northern Wolds to the Nene.

Biodiversity Designations

- 3.3 Figure 02 shows the national designations for bio-diversity including NNR's, RAMSAR, SSSI, SPA's, SAC's and Ancient Woodland. None of the designations have been 'buffered'. Consultation on any specific proposals may highlight constraints depending on the wildlife interest and designations affected. This could have a fairly modest impacts e.g. 50-100m offsets while in the case or RAMSAR sites this may have a greater impact e.g. if there were an it affected flight path so protected bird species. In addition the Great Fen Project and has been included together with the identified wider setting area. This area occupies a large part

of The Fens and smaller parts of both the Fen Margin LCA and Central Claylands LCAs. It is anticipated that turbine proposals would not be acceptable in the Great Fen Project Area and its Landscape and Visual Setting. Local Plan policy LP7 (Strategic Green Infrastructure Enhancement) and supporting text para 4.75 confirm the presumption against wind turbine development in these areas.

Heritage

- 3.4 Figure 03 illustrates a number of the main heritage designations. These include Registered Parks and Gardens (e.g. Elton Hall), Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas (which include numerous villages and some larger areas along the River Ouse and at Ramsey) and the Grade 1 and II* listed buildings which represent those assets of greatest heritage value. These two classes of listed building are likely to include the majority of the village churches and other major landmark buildings in the landscape as identified at para 2.12 in the Draft Revised SPD. Grade II listed buildings are also considered to be of national value but are not shown on the Figure due to the numbers involved. Grade II buildings should also be assessed as part of any proposal. Buffers have not been shown around these heritage assets as individual assessment would be required to determine the nature of any direct effects, or effects on the setting of the assets that may affect their significance as heritage assets.

Settlement

- 3.5 The pattern of settlement in the district includes a number of market towns, villages and individual properties. Proximity of settlement and in particular residential locations from WTD is an important constraint. In this study it is considered that a 'dominant effect' could occur up to 1km from a WTD where the turbines are between 100-129m to blade tip. The 1km distance indicates the likely outer extent of where a WTD could have an effect on residential amenity resulting in, *'an unpleasantly overwhelming and unavoidable presence in main views from a house or garden, (where) there is every likelihood that the property concerned would come to be widely regarded as an unattractive and thus unsatisfactory (but not necessarily uninhabitable) place to live.'*³ Clearly the specific circumstances e.g. localised screening or orientation could reduce this distance. A 2km offset identifies the distance where there are still likely to be significant impacts on visual amenity and the property could be in the 'prominent zone' of visual effect. These distances for the dominant and prominent zones for different heights turbine are shown in Table 8.

³ Enifer Downs (APP/X2220/A/08/2071880)

Existing Turbines within Huntingdonshire

3.6 The current situation within Huntingdonshire has been assessed in terms of:

- Schemes either constructed or consented but not yet built
- Schemes 'in planning' – based on an application having been submitted or at appeal

The turbines are shown on Figure 04. Figure 01 also shows the pattern of WTD in the District and illustrates the position of many of the turbines on the local ridges within the District. Figures 01 and 04 also show the turbines outside the Huntingdonshire within a 10km offset of the HDC boundary (excluding those In Planning). The turbines outside HDC have been plotted based on information from RESTA the Department of Energy and Climate Change (<http://restats.decc.gov.uk/app/pub/map/map/>).

3.7 The schemes included in the constructed and / consented but not built status are identified in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Constructed and Consented schemes in Huntingdonshire as at 1.5.13

| Site Name | Planning application ref | No. turbines | Proposed Tip Ht (To nearest m) |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Ashfield, Meadow Rd, Gransden | 1201268FUL | 1 | 20 |
| Birds Nest, Parkhall Road, Somersham | 1200225FUL | 1 | 20 |
| Brook Farm, Ellington | 1000887FUL | 1 | 25 |
| Church Farm, Ramsy Mereside | 1200669FUL | 1 | 46 |
| Denton Lodge, The Old North Road, Denton | 0702290FUL | 1 | 15 |
| Float Fish Farm, Milk and Water Drove, Farcet | 0901252FUL | 1 | 18 |
| Glebe Farm, Spaldwick | 1002042FUL | 1 | 25 |
| Hamerton Zoo Park, Hamerton | 1200670FUL | 2 | 46 |
| Lakeside Lodge, Pidley | 0803141FUL | 1 | 19 |
| Wooley Hill, Ellington | 1001741FUL | 4 | 130 |
| Foxholes Farm, Leighton Bromswold | 1201829FUL | 1 | 34 |
| The Retreat, Wistow | 1201985FUL | 1 | 21 |
| Red Tile Wind Farm | 0302827FUL | 12 | 100 |
| Mereside Farm, Ramsey Mereside | 0101772FUL | 1 | 34 |
| Cotton Farm, Graveley Road, Offord Darcy | 0802296FUL | 8 | 125 |
| Mill House, Old Weston | 120148FUL | 1 | 15 |
| St Marys Road, Ramsey | 0400031FUL | 1 | 125 |
| Three Fishes Farm, Warboys | 1201034FUL | 3 | 18 |
| Tick Fen Farm, Warboys | 1300084FUL | 1 | 74 |
| Tick Fen Farm, Warboys | 1000119FUL | 1 | 25 |
| Tick Fen Farm, Warboys | 1101601FUL | 1 | 46 |
| Tilbrook Grange, Tilbrook | 1101420FUL | 1 | 25 |
| Wood Green Animal Shelter | 1101886FUL | 1 | 102 |

3.8 The schemes that are currently still 'in planning' or at appeal stage include the following schemes listed in Table 2. It should be noted that there may be other schemes 'In Planning' outside Huntingdonshire but these are not included in the list or analysis in GIS on Figures 04, 07 and 08.

Table 2: Schemes in Planning or appeal stage in Huntingdonshire as at 1.5.13

| Site Name | Planning application ref | No. turbines | Proposed Tip Ht (To nearest m) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|
| East Lodge Farm | 1200688FUL | 1 | 27 |
| Land South West of RAF Molesworth | 1200967FUL | 6 | 126 |
| Land at St Mary's Road, Ramsey | 1101865FUL | 4 | 127 |
| Galley Hill Farm, Hemingford Grey | 1201244FUL | 1 | 45 |
| Haddon Lodge Farm | 1201841FUL | 1 | 67 |
| Littlebury Farm, Hemingford Abbots | 1200313FUL | 1 | 42 |
| Common Barn, Rectory Lane, Southoe | 1200803FUL | 3 | 125 |
| Catworth Lodge, Tilbrook | 1300264FUL | 1 | 46 |
| West of Bicton Industrial Estate | 1300512FUL | 3 | 125 |

3.9 A review of the distribution of operational and consented wind turbine developments in Huntingdonshire identifies that the majority of the existing schemes are located either within the Fens and Fen Margin LCAs (e.g. Red Tile and Ramsey) to the north east of the district, in the southern part of the district in the South East Claylands (e.g. Cotton Farm and Wood Green) or on the higher ground of the Northern Wolds (e.g. Woolley Hill and Hamerton). The major proposed schemes would lead to further intensification of turbines in the Southern and Northern Wolds close to the A1 (Common Barn), A14 (Molesworth) and B645 (Bicton).

3.10 An analysis of the influence of operational and consented turbines has been carried out by illustrating two criteria, namely the 'Prominent Zone' and 'Conspicuous Zones'. For a turbine at a height of 100-129m to blade tip these distances are considered to be at 2km and 5km respectively. The distances increase or decrease with taller or smaller turbines, as shown in Table 3 below. The reduction in distances do not reflect a straight forward pro-rata reduction based on height alone since smaller turbines are relatively more detracting in the landscape

by virtue of the faster rotation speeds of a cycle of the turbine blade. The distances used below have been calibrated in the field using existing turbines.

Table 3 Distances representing Prominent and Conspicuous zones

| Height of turbine | <30m | 30-69m | 70-99m | 100-129m | 130- c.150m |
|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Prominent Zone | =/<750m | =/<1.5km | =<1.75km | < 2km | =/<2.5km |
| Conspicuous Zone | 750m-1.5km | 1-5-3km | 1.75 -4km | 2-5km | 2.5- 6km |

- 3.11 The rationale for these two distances is that they provide a reasonable basis for representing the likely extent of 'significant' (in EIA terms) landscape and visual effects that would result from wind turbines of each height in the Huntingdonshire landscape. These two categories/thresholds (i.e "prominent" and "conspicuous") have also been used by a range of comparable studies in England and Scotland over the last 10 years.
- 3.12 It is recognised that the actual landscape and visual effects would be locally limited by factors including landform, vegetation cover and built development. Furthermore, some factors e.g. landform would be more consistent in flatter LCAs such as the Fens but would vary in other LCAs where there is more variation in landform pattern e.g. Northern Wolds. In some cases areas of intervening high ground may provide localised partial or complete screening of turbines from some viewpoint locations. Conversely turbines on more prominent ridges may be more widely visible from other ridges or along and across valleys. Clearly the influence of any specific proposal needs to be assessed on a case by case basis. However, the use of Prominent and Conspicuous offsets provides a useful starting point to assess the likely range of influence of a proposal and therefore to also identify locations where significant effects may begin to overlap from more than one scheme. This would thus help identify locations where potential issues of cumulative landscape or visual impact might occur and should be carefully examined as part of any specific application or proposal. This effective "separation" distance of 10km (for a 100-129m turbine) is also comparable to the approach used in the Placing Renewables in the Eastern Region study (Arup) discussed in Section 2 above.
- 3.13 Based on the built and /or consented schemes the percentage cover of the LCAs within the Prominent and Conspicuous zones for all turbines in Huntingdonshire (as listed in Table 1

above) is shown in Table 4 below. The extent of the two zones is also illustrated graphically by Figure 05.

Table 4 Zones as % of Landscape Character Areas (excluding In Planning) – to nearest %

| Landscape Character Area (LCA) | Total Area(km²) | Prominent Zone (%) | Conspicuous Zone (%) | Total (%) Prominent & Conspicuous Zones |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| The Fens | 125 | 33 | 39 | 72 |
| Fen Margin | 117 | 11 | 39 | 50 |
| Central Claylands | 186 | 8 | 30 | 38 |
| Ouse Valley | 79 | 2 | 63 | 65 |
| South East Claylands | 116 | 25 | 41 | 66 |
| Northern Wolds | 188 | 12 | 35 | 47 |
| Grafham Water | 11 | 0 | 84 | 84 |
| Southern Wolds | 82 | 12 | 31 | 43 |
| Nene Valley | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 913 | | | |

3.14 From Table 4 it can be seen that the LCAs with the highest proportion affected by the prominent zones are The Fens (33%) and the South East Claylands (25%). The coverage in The Fens is also partially due to the proximity of other schemes in the adjacent Fenland District e.g. Glassmoor. The influence in the conspicuous zone (NB calculated as the 'donut' shape excluding the inner prominent zone) is more widely distributed, a number of LCAs having a surprisingly high percentage e.g. Grafham Water and the Ouse Valley. This is a result of schemes in neighbouring LCAs and in the case of the Ouse Valley from schemes located on the adjacent higher ground in neighbouring LCAs. However, the figure for Grafham Water should be tempered by the relatively small size of the area and the fact that there is likely to be a degree of screening by landform to the north. Other areas experiencing a relative high coverage (>35%) are The Fens, Fen Margin, South East Claylands and Northern Wolds. The Central Claylands has coverage of 30% despite not having any turbines in the areas. This is again due to the influence from schemes close by but in adjacent LCAs. However it must be noted that there are also further potential "landscape constraints" in the Central Claylands LCA – examples being the "orchard dominated landscape" in the east, and the "existing ancient woodland sites" in the north west, both mentioned in the SPD (Chapter 5).

- 3.15 Figure 06 (which combines some of the constraints illustrated in Figures 02-03 with the Prominent and Conspicuous Zones) provides an indication as to where there may be areas of remaining capacity for WTD in the Huntingdonshire. It should be remembered that there will be other site specific constraints to consider e.g. the presence of settlement together with a range of other issues as set out in the Huntingdonshire District Council’s “Wind Turbine Developments – A Guidance Note for Applicants and Agents.” (revised version June 2013)
- 3.16 By including all the schemes still in planning or at appeal (within Huntingdonshire) in the spatial analysis the areas within the Prominent and Conspicuous zones will increase. Should all current applications be approved or allowed at appeal the situation is shown in Table 5 below and also in Figure 07.

Table 5 - Zones as % of Landscape Character Areas (including In Planning) – to nearest %

| Landscape Character Area (LCA) | Total Area (km²) | Prominent Zone (%) | Conspicuous Zone (%) | Total (%) Prominent & Conspicuous Zones |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| The Fens | 125 | 34 | 39 | 73 |
| Fen Margin | 117 | 13 | 40 | 53 |
| Central Claylands | 186 | 8 | 30 | 38 |
| Ouse Valley | 79 | 12 | 64 | 76 |
| South East Claylands | 116 | 26 | 41 | 68 |
| Northern Wolds | 188 | 31 | 44 | 76 |
| Grafham Water | 11 | 21 | 79 | 100 |
| Southern Wolds | 82 | 30 | 58 | 87 |
| Nene Valley | 7 | 0 | 18 | 18 |
| TOTAL | 913 | | | |

- 3.17 Based on the above findings it can be seen that the LCA’s with the highest proportion of the prominent zone are The Fens (34%), Northern Wolds (31%), Southern Wolds (30%) and South East Claylands (26%). The influence of the conspicuous zone is more widely distributed; with the two LCAs most affected being the Ouse Valley and Grafham Water as a result of schemes in adjacent LCAs. It is important to note that this scenario is based on all schemes being approved. The reality will vary in time and as any new schemes are brought forward.
- 3.18 The combination of a number of the constraints together with the prominent and conspicuous zones is shown in Figure 08. This provides an indication as to where there may be areas of

remaining capacity if all the schemes were approved or allowed. The situation will vary over time and should be subject to an assessment at the point of each application. The current cumulative situation should also be read alongside the capacity ranges for each LCA as set out in the Draft Revised SPD for each grouping of turbines.

4 CRITERIA TO GUIDE THE ASSESSMENT OF CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL EFFECTS

- 4.1 A number of criteria are set out below to guide the acceptability of WTD in cumulative landscape and visual terms. Non-compliance with the cumulative landscape and visual criteria should not necessarily preclude turbine development. However, they will form an important part of the assessment of the capacity of the landscape to accept the proposed development. All the environmental factors should be carefully evaluated and then balanced by the decision maker against the requirements to contribute to national targets for renewable energy generation and the benefits of reducing carbon consumption. The guidelines should also always be considered in conjunction with a detailed study of the site and its surroundings, particularly in terms of landform, vegetation and structures that may provide visual mitigation of the cumulative landscape and visual impacts.

CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE IMPACTS

- 4.2 The Scottish Natural Heritage Document, 'Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments' (2012) identifies at para 48 and 49 that cumulative landscape effects can impact on either the physical fabric or character of the landscape, or any special values attached to it.

Cumulative effects on the physical fabric of the landscape arise when two or more developments affect landscape components such as woodland, dykes, rural roads or hedgerows. Although this may not significantly affect the landscape character, the cumulative effect on these components may be significant – for example, where the last remnants of former shelterbelts are completely removed by two or more developments.

Cumulative effects on landscape character arise when two or more developments introduce new features into the landscape. In this way, they can change the landscape character to such an extent that they create a different landscape character type, in a similar way to large scale afforestation. That change need not be adverse; some derelict or degraded landscapes may be enhanced as a result of such a change in landscape character.

Windfarms may also have a cumulative effect on the character of landscapes that are recognised to be of special value. These landscapes may be recognised as being rare, unusual, highly distinctive or the best or most representative example in a given area. This recognition may take the form of national or local designations (for example,

National Scenic Areas or Special Landscape Areas), citations in development plans, community plans or other documents, or be less formally recognised, such as Search Areas for Wild Land.

- 4.3 While there can be landscape effects on the physical fabric it is less likely to be significant in cumulative terms due the separation distances between most turbine proposals. Most significant cumulative landscape effects will be on landscape character. Chapter 14 of the Draft Revised SPD identifies a number of factors that should be considered in relation to the cumulative effect of wind turbine developments. The cumulative effect relates to the combined impact of separate wind turbine developments on a landscape. Factors to be considered in relation to Huntingdonshire District include the effects on the following: Scale and enclosure, landform and topography, settlement pattern, landmarks and visible built structures, skyline and visual connections with adjacent landscapes. They can also include the more perceptual qualities that include a measure of value and tranquillity. A number of turbine schemes including those of differing size and number could have an adverse cumulative effect on the underlying characteristics of the landscape area.
- 4.4 Huntingdonshire now has wind turbine developments that currently impact on the character of its landscapes and this effect will increase as other consented schemes are built e.g. at Woolley Hill near Ellington. Section 3 above provides an analysis of the extent of the LCAs affected by turbines within the Prominent and Conspicuous Zones. The Draft Revised SPD also provides an indication of the capacity for further wind turbines at the 100-140m range with regard to each LCA.
- 4.5 Landscapes that are identified in the Draft Revised SPD as being relatively more sensitive to the changes brought about by wind turbine development (including differing group sizes) have less capacity to accept new wind turbine development without an adverse effect on the key characteristics of the landscape. The capacity in any area for additional turbines will depend on the existing situation in terms of built and consented schemes, the number and location of the turbines proposed and the key characteristics of the landscape. The greater landscape effects will usually be within the Prominent Zone with other significant effects also likely within the Conspicuous Zone. In a more sensitive landscape effects beyond the Conspicuous Zone may also be significant where WTD would form part of a repeated pattern throughout an LCA and which could become a key characteristic. The approach taken in this study is to recommend that more sensitive landscapes/LCAs should have a smaller part of their total land area within the influence of WTD. This approach is to identify criteria to safeguard and protect the LCAs from an excessive level of WTD. This will allow scope for WTD in each LCA but provide an indicative threshold to restrict this to an appropriate level for each LCA based on its sensitivity and capacity. Indicative thresholds of capacity are proposed below

in Table 6 to allow for some further wind turbine development in the district but also to protect the underlying key characteristics of the landscape character types.

- 4.6 The principle of retaining a proportion of each LCA outside of the conspicuous zone would ensure that there are areas where the influence of WTD is less marked as a major feature in the landscape and not a key characteristic. This approach should apply to all landscapes including those with relatively higher capacity. For example in the Fens the large scale, flat landscape and geometric field pattern can be seen as relatively suitable for WTD. However, the openness, large skies and sense of remoteness and tranquillity is also valued and it is considered appropriate to have areas that retain these characteristics relatively unaffected. This principle has been used in other studies such as South Pennine Study (Julie Martin Associates - 2010) and Fenland Wind Turbine Development Guidance (TLP 2009). The approach also provides a relatively straight forward tool in GIS to calculate and compare coverage or current versus potential coverage. Another advantage of this approach is that if a scheme is located close to the boundary of a neighbouring LCA with a lower threshold then this will have a noticeable effect on the capacity for the neighbouring LCA to accommodate further turbines. This approach allows for cross LCA boundary impacts which can be a particular feature of WTD. This is the case for the Ouse Valley which already has experienced an effect from three other schemes outside its LCA boundaries. Furthermore, if no "undeveloped" areas are retained then landscape character over a whole LCA will be changed, and wind turbine development could become a defining characteristic of the LCA. This is contrary to one of the main objectives of the SPD which seeks to guide development to locations which will avoid effects on this character changing scale.

Table 6 - Proposed Thresholds of Capacity for each Landscape Character Type

NB "Current" numbers relate to constructed and consented schemes only

| LCA | Total Area(km ²) | Current Prominent Zone (%) | Proposed Prominent Capacity threshold (%) | Conspicuous Zone (%) | Proposed Conspicuous Capacity threshold (%) | Current combined Prominent and Conspicuous Zone % | Total Proposed Prominent and conspicuous threshold (%) |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---|----------------------|---|---|--|
| The Fens | 125 | 33 | 25 | 39 | 50 | 72 | 75 |
| Fen Margin | 117 | 11 | 15 | 39 | 45 | 50 | 60 |
| Central Claylands | 186 | 8 | 30 | 30 | 45 | 38 | 75 |
| Ouse Valley | 79 | 2 | 5 | 63 | 50 | 65 | 60 |
| South East Claylands | 116 | 25 | 25 | 41 | 50 | 66 | 75 |
| Northern Wolds | 188 | 12 | 10 | 35 | 40 | 47 | 50 |
| Grafham Water | 11 | 0 | 5 | 84 | 50 | 84 | 55 |
| Southern Wolds | 82 | 12 | 25 | 31 | 50 | 43 | 75 |
| Nene Valley | 7 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 25 | 0 | 30 |
| TOTAL | 913 | | | | | | |

4.7 Table 6 above shows that the Fens LCA is already in excess of it's the proposed threshold of 25% being in the Prominent Zone. This is in part the influence of the Great Fen Project in effectively creating an additional constraint in the north west of the Fens and Fen Margin LCAs. This would indicate that that the optimum way that new turbine development could be accommodated within The Fens LCA without significant cumulative landscape impacts (subject to other material constraints) would be locating new turbines close to existing turbine developments where the character has already been impacted upon. The Prominent Zone threshold has also been crossed in Northern Wolds which has a lower % threshold on account of the relatively higher landscape sensitivity. Within the South East Claylands the Prominent threshold has just been reached. The Conspicuous Zone thresholds have to date only been crossed in the Ouse Valley and Grafham Water as a result of WTCD in adjacent LCAs.

However, the existing coverage of the Conspicuous Zone is getting close to the proposed thresholds in the Fen Margin, South East Claylands and Northern Wolds.

- 4.8 The above approach also identifies areas where there is still capacity in landscape character terms for further development. The LCA with the most potential is the Central Claylands where there are no turbines schemes currently consented. In addition the SPD identifies the scope for up to more than one scheme at medium and large scale groupings in this LCA. There is capacity also for a medium scale group in the Southern Wolds, though there are currently schemes "in planning" that would affect this LCA.

Suggested thresholds and criteria

- 4.9 The percentage figures given in this section should not be seen as absolute thresholds that preclude development. However, they provide a guide as to when the cumulative landscape effects would be crossing a line where the underlying key characteristics would begin to be unbalanced due to the cumulative influence of WTD. There will usually be areas of land within each LCA where localised screening and vegetation cover may also play a role. However from more open viewpoints the influence of WTD would be more readily identified in the landscape.
- 4.10 **The Fens** LCA should not exceed 25% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 75% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. There are already areas where WTD already exerts some significant cumulative effects e.g. north and east of Ramsey. This is compounded by the variety of turbine heights, models, rotation speeds and group sizes. This threshold allows for the absence of turbines within the Great Fen Project Area and its identified setting.
- 4.11 **The Fen Margin** LCA should not exceed 15% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 60% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. The lower threshold compared to The Fens reflects the transitory and contrasting character of the LCA. The LCA has a narrow form and the rising ground is visually more sensitive than the adjacent Fens with some local 'hills' (e.g. Fox Hole Hill, near Warboys) being landmarks. In addition the presence of the Great Fen Project Area and its Landscape and Visual Setting within the LCA the area reduces its capacity.
- 4.12 **The Central Claylands** LCA should not exceed 30% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 75% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. This LCA is identified as having the highest relative capacity in the District by the Draft Revised SPD. There are currently no turbine schemes in the LCA and the SPD indicates scope for WTD. However, there are a number of constraints including the wooded character of the sub area to the north west, orchards to the east and a number of listed buildings and small settlements that would need to be given due consideration and suitable protection.

- 4.13 **The Ouse Valley** LCA should not exceed 5% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 60% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. The LCA is of particular importance for recreation and biodiversity with a number of designated biodiversity habitats and conservation areas. The narrow sinuous and low lying nature of the LCA also means that it will be affected by turbine developments in adjacent LCAs. In view of the operational and consented schemes in the adjacent LCAs there may be limited opportunity for WTD in this LCA.
- 4.14 The **South East Claylands** LCA should not exceed 25% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 75% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. The LCA is already host for Cotton Farm wind farm and a single turbine at Wood Green. More sensitive parts of the LCA include the more undulating and wooded part of the area notably to the south.
- 4.15 The **Northern Wolds** LCA should not exceed 10% of its area being within 'Prominent' zone or 50% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. This LCA is identified in the Draft Revised SPD as a highly valued landscape. It is considered to be more sensitive due to its unspoilt character and the undulating landform of ridge and valley, (see Figure 01) which would potentially be undermined by inappropriate WTD. The lower prominent % threshold is provided to ensure the key characteristics of the area are retained. The natural pattern of ridges is a key characteristic of the LCA and care should be taken to avoid cumulative WTD that either follows a ridgeline or is visible on adjacent ridges or locations where there are higher levels of intervisibility.
- 4.16 **Grafham Water** LCA should not exceed 5% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 55% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. The area is focused around Grafham Water which occupies the majority of the surface area and hence restricts opportunities for turbines. The Draft Revised SPD indicates that there is limited scope for WTD in this LCA. Furthermore, development of other schemes in the adjacent Southern Wolds may potentially preclude any turbines in the LCA.
- 4.17 The **Southern Wolds** LCA should not exceed 25% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone) or 75% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. Parts of the LCA have been identified as more sensitive to cumulative development including the central ridge that divides the valleys of the Kym and Ellington Brook. Significant cumulative effects could occur from a number of single turbines, groups or combinations of sizes particularly where there is intervisibility on adjacent ridges.

- 4.18 **Nene Valley** LCA should not exceed 5% of its area being within the 'Prominent' zone or 30% of its area being within the 'Conspicuous' zone. This is a very narrow LCA of high sensitivity close to the River Nene and there is very limited scope for WTD in this area.

Alternative approaches to criteria for assessing Cumulate Landscape Effects

- 4.19 Consideration was also given to the use of different offsets (to those shown in Table 3 above) for Prominent and Conspicuous zones applied to each of the LCAs to highlight their relative sensitivity. This would have involved potentially greater offsets for more sensitive LCAs. While this approach has some merit it would result in more complex modelling in GIS on crossing LCA boundaries and the potential for inaccuracies in the GIS analysis. It may also be the case that while one LCA may be more sensitive, site specific features on the ground (e.g. woodland) may locally contain the impact on the landscape in the more sensitive LCAs. In addition there might also be a more gradual change of character at the LCA boundary rather than a clear cut change so that the change in sensitivity may also be more gradual. In any event the varying % thresholds should accommodate the variations in sensitivity at a strategic scale.
- 4.20 Another more technically accurate approach would be to plot the Zones of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV's) of all built, consisted and in planning schemes. This would identify areas where schemes are e.g. 'hidden' by landform. However, this approach would be subject to obtaining the data on all schemes which would be more difficult. It may also require additional and complex GIS mapping to show the localised screening effects. Furthermore, some smaller schemes may not have a computer based ZVT available. For these practical reasons it is not recommended to follow this approach.
- 4.21 A further option is to provide a simple distance between turbine proposals. A10km separation zone was used in the "**Placing Renewables in the East of England**" Arup study done for EERA (referred to in Section 2 above) with a 15km separation suggested for more sensitive locations. This greater distance may readily apply to the Northern Wolds which is indicated to be more sensitive. However this method takes no account of the current locations of existing operational and consented schemes which may already be inconsistent with this approach. Likewise the Arup study was based on a NCA scale approach and did not include the more local variations in the landscape as identified in the HDC LCAs. For these reasons the approach is not recommended.

CUMULATIVE VISUAL EFFECTS

Assessing Turbine Visibility

4.22 PPS22 Companion guide highlights the importance of identifying the Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), otherwise known as a Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV), for a turbine development. A Zone of Theoretical Visibility is the area from which a turbine of a given height could be seen on a very clear day, based on the landform of the area. Dependent on the approach taken the ZTV can also allow for major intervening features such as settlement, built forms and major woodland. However localised screening is not typically included. The guidance on ZTVs in the 'Visual Representation of Windfarms: Good Practice Guidance' (Scottish Natural Heritage-2006) recommends the following Zones of Theoretical Visibility extents for different sizes of turbines:

- Turbine up to 50m – ZTV 15km
- Turbine 51-70m – ZTV 20km
- Turbine 71-85m – ZTV 25km
- Turbine 86-100m – ZTV 30km
- Turbine 101-130m – ZTV 35km

4.23 Although turbines are theoretically visible over these distances, their visual impact is likely to decrease with distance from the turbine location. The Scottish Executive's document PAN45: Renewable Energy Technologies, although now superseded indicated a range of distances from turbine development and descriptions of the diminishing magnitude of the visual impact. This guidance is not specific about the heights of turbines that this applies to, which can be significant given the variation in ZTVs illustrated above. However, through use of the guidance in PAN45 and our own field evaluation work, an assessment has been made of the typical magnitude of visual impact of existing turbines within Huntingdonshire District. This has resulted in an additional category of visual impact i.e. dominant being included compared to PAN45. The category relates to closer distances to reflect situations where a turbine is in very close proximity and may have an overpowering effect on the viewer e.g. from a public right of way or residential location. The following Table 7, indicates the typical likely visual impacts used in this study for the 100-129m turbine height band at different distances from the turbine development.

Table 7 - Categories of Magnitude for Cumulative Visual Impact of Turbines

| Distance from turbines | Magnitude of impact | Description |
|------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Within 1km | Dominant | Turbines form the principle element of the view and may overpower the viewer |
| 1-2km | Prominent | Turbines form a very large element of the view, commanding and controlling the view |
| 2-5km | Conspicuous | Turbines form a large element of the view, standing out from the surroundings and forming |

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|--|
| | | an unmistakable feature within the panorama. |
| 5-15km | Apparent | Turbines form a medium element of the view, noticeable in panoramas, clearly visible and catching the eye. |
| 15-30km | Inconspicuous | Turbines form a small element of the view, that is visible but not distinct or obvious on first glance or in overcast conditions |
| Over 30km | Negligible | Turbines form a very small element of the view, barely visible in clear conditions |

4.24 It should be noted that these definitions apply where there are open or partial views of a wind turbine development. These bandings are intended to indicate the approximate point at which the visual effect of a turbine moves from one category to the next. They should therefore not be interpreted too rigidly and there will often be a transition. Equally there may be locations where due to the orientation of the viewer or nature of the view e.g. a framed view that the turbines may appear more visible than distance may otherwise indicate. Factors such as weather conditions will influence the relative visibility at any given time. In addition a level of professional judgement will be required to reflect the individual circumstances of each site.

4.25 In order to allow for alternative sizes of turbine – both larger and smaller, the bandings of visual impact have been varied as shown in Table 8 below. The distances have been calibrated in the field by visiting a number of existing wind turbine developments within Huntingdonshire and adjacent authorities within a 10km buffer from the District boundary. The schemes have been examined from a number of public viewpoints at varying distances from the developments and their impacts assessed against the descriptions identified above. As set out in Section 3 above the distances are not based on a direct pro-rata comparison with height. This is due to the relatively greater visual effect of faster rotation speeds of shorter blades on smaller turbines. Also at the lower end of turbine height, most notably <30m, the screening and relative scale of other features in the landscape e.g. trees and woodland may reduce the extent of visual effects.

Table 8 - Visual Impacts of Turbines Extrapolated for Different Turbine Heights
(rounded to closest 100m at < 1km and then to nearest 500m)

| Magnitude of impact | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Height of turbine | <30m | 30-69m | 70-99m | 100-129m | 130-c.150m |
| Dominant | <400m | <600m | <800m | <1km | <1.2km |
| Prominent | <750m | <1.5km | <1.75km | < 2km | <2.5km |
| Conspicuous | 750m- 1.5km | 1-5-3km | 1.75 -4km | 2-5km | 2.5- 6km |
| Apparent | 1.5km-3km | 3-8km | 4 -12km | 5-15km | 6-18km |
| Inconspicuous | 3-5km | 8-16km | 12-24km | 15-30km | 18-37km |
| Negligible | Over 5km | Over 16km | Over 24km | Over 30km | Over 37km |

4.26 The SNH report "Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments" (SNH) 2012 identifies 3 types of cumulative visual impact. These are:

- Combined/simultaneous impact - occurs where the observer is able to see two or more developments from one viewpoint, without moving his or her head, which is considered to be equal to a 90 degree arc of view. This includes for the main focus of view (central 50 degree arc) and peripheral vision in the same view.
- Successive/repetitive impact - occurs where the observer is able to see two or more windfarms from one viewpoint but has to move his or her head to do so, considered to be a 180-360 degree arc of view
- Sequential impact - occurs when the observer has to move to another viewpoint to see other developments or a different view of the same development e.g. traveling along a road

4.27 Figures 05-06 illustrate the current situation in Huntingdonshire in terms of cumulative impact. The coloured circles illustrate the Prominent and Conspicuous Zones of visibility for existing and consented turbine developments. Where these circles begin to overlap there is likely to be a significant cumulative visual impact for certain locations.

4.28 Where the Prominent Zones of visibility overlap (e.g. at 4km separation between two 100m to blade tip turbines), they are both likely to be easily read in the same view from many locations. As such they are likely to demonstrate a significant cumulative impact from a number of locations and are less likely to be considered acceptable in visual terms. One exception may be if they form a relatively modest extension to an existing turbine development and are read in the same group. This is less likely to be acceptable if the

additional turbines are of a different height, spacing or design. Where the Conspicuous Zones of visibility overlap (e.g. at 10km separation between two 100m to blade tip turbines) this may also result in some significant cumulative visual impact. These impacts could have the potential for combined or successive impacts.

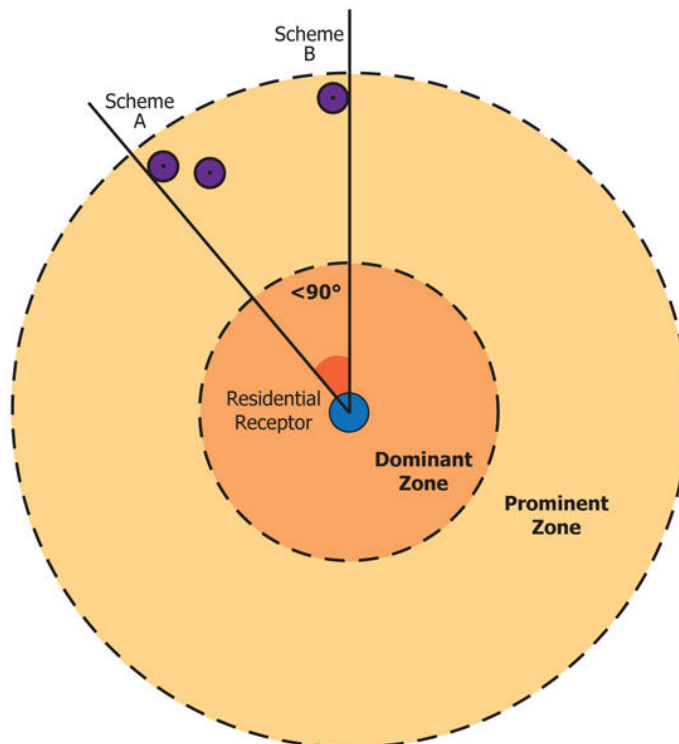
- 4.29 In order to minimise Combined/Simultaneous impacts and Successive/Repetitive impacts it is considered desirable to limit the extent of turbine visibility within the field of view. This will help to prevent residential properties and settlements becoming unduly affected by the cumulative impact of wind turbines and avoid the potential effect of living within or near a windfarm landscape. As a result criteria have been recommended to help assess the impacts on sensitive receptors at fixed points, most notably residential properties.
- 4.30 In terms of sequential cumulative visual impact this may apply for a number of types of receptors. Users of the main roads in the District, a number of which run north-south (A1M) and east-west (A14) through Huntingdonshire and the main line railway already experience an effect from a number of turbine sites. On these journeys there may be some notable magnitude effects. Despite the speed of travel these receptors may be considered to be of moderate sensitivity as they represent the way in which many people appreciate the landscape. Users of strategic recreational routes, other rights of way, and recreation facilities with a focus on the landscape, are likely to have a high sensitivity to change due to the slower mode of travel and greater focus on expectations from the experience. This would also be the case for users of minor roads enjoying the countryside, a proportion of whom will be pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians with an interest in the landscape.

Guideline thresholds and criteria

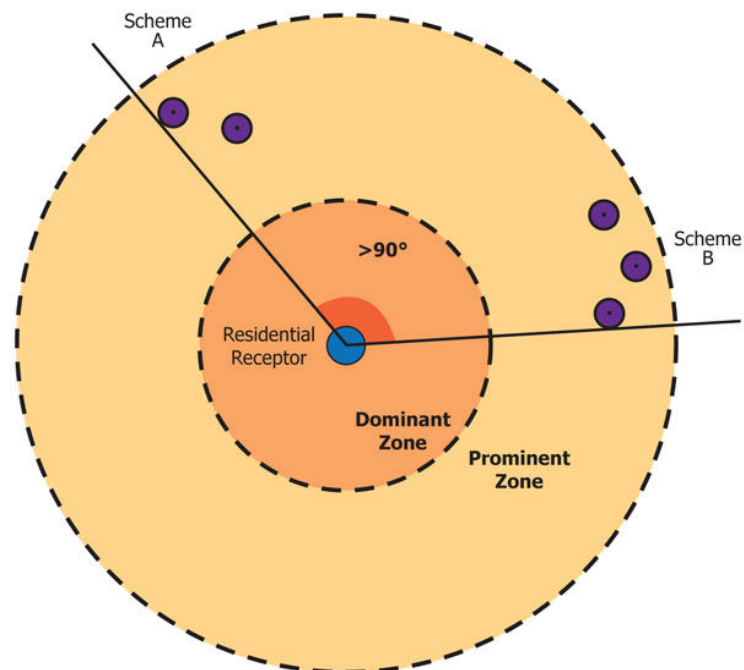
- 4.31 Proposals for wind turbine development where there is an overlap of Prominent Zones are unlikely to be acceptable in cumulative visual terms unless local factors substantially counteract any significant cumulative effects. An exception (and subject to meeting other criteria) may be where a proposed turbine or group are designed as a logical extension of an existing group using turbines of similar size and design.
- 4.32 Proposals for wind turbine development where there is an overlap of Conspicuous Zones cumulative effects will need to be carefully considered with regard the cumulative effect. Any significant impacts should be included in the overall significance of effect and these should be considered in turn by the decision maker in carrying out the planning balance.
- 4.33 Proposals should avoid situations where cumulative effects on residential locations would result in more than 90° of the field of view from any part of a property (including the garden) being occupied by wind turbines within the Prominent Zone of the turbines. The angle should

be measured as the aggregate arc (to outer blades) of all turbines visible from the property and extend to a distance equivalent to the Prominent Zone for each turbine. The calculation should include any single turbines or groups of turbines and the Prominent Zone distance measured from the façade/s of the property facing the turbines, (see Sketches 01 and 02 below). Intervening local screening may mitigate the cumulative effects and these moderating factors should be considered on a case by case basis. Proposed WTD within the Dominant Zones should be subject to more detailed evaluation in respect of the potential effects on residential amenity in addition to any cumulative effects within and beyond the Dominant Zone.

Sketch 01 (Not to Scale)
Within guideline for cumulative visual effect

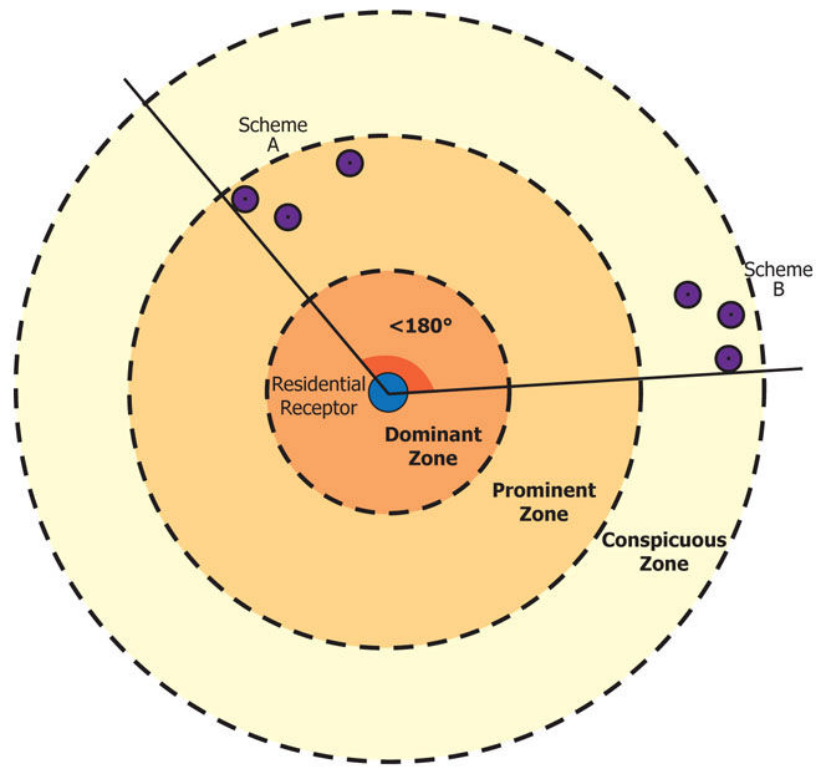


Sketch 02 (Not to Scale)
Outside guideline for cumulative visual effect

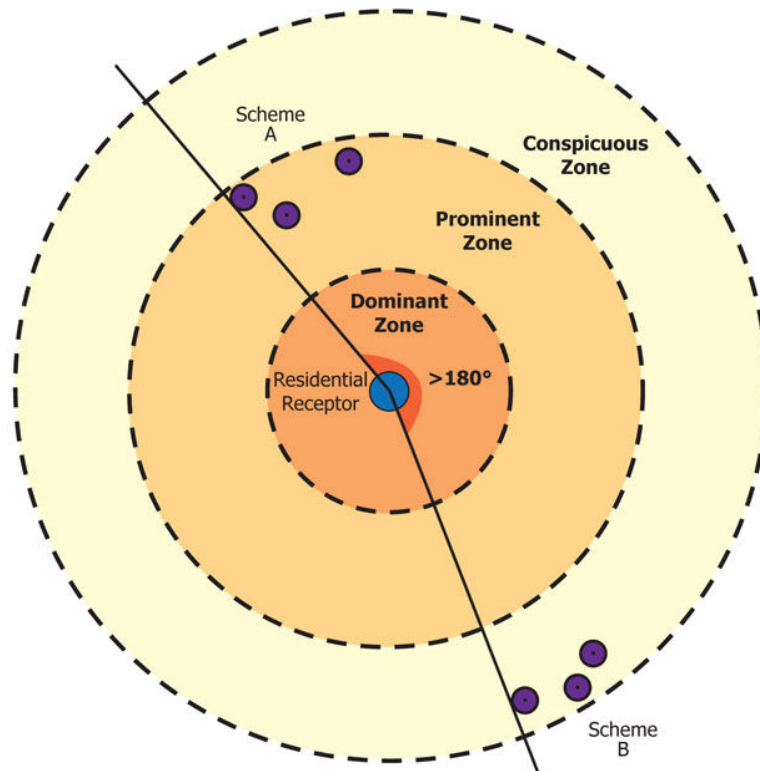


- 4.34 Cumulative effects on residential locations should avoid situations where more than 180° of the field of view from any part of a property (including the garden) is occupied by wind turbines within either the Prominent or the Conspicuous Zone of the turbines. The angle should be measured as the aggregate arc (to outer blades) of all turbines visible from the property and extend to distance equivalent to the Prominent Zone for each turbine. The calculation should include any single turbines or groups of turbines and the zone distance should be measured from the façade/s of the property facing the turbines (see Sketches 03 and 04 below). Intervening local screening may mitigate the cumulative effects and these moderating factors should be considered on a case by case basis. Again proposed WTD within the Dominant Zones should be subject to more detailed evaluation in respect of the potential effects on residential amenity in addition to any cumulative effects within and beyond the Dominant Zone.

Sketch 03 (Not to Scale)
Within guideline for cumulative visual effect



Sketch 04 (Not to Scale)
Outside guideline for cumulative visual effect



- 4.35 Proposals for wind turbine development should be considered in relation to the sequential visibility of turbine development when experienced along all classes of public highways, railway lines and recreational routes. Cumulative visual assessment should be based on factors including the magnitude of the change, sensitivity of viewer, likely extent and duration of the impact and character of the route including screening and impacts on viewpoints along the route. For more guidance and the level of information required see Section 5.

Mitigation of cumulative effects

- 4.36 All turbines within a group should ideally be of the same appearance and size to create visual harmony. This will apply to 'extension' of existing sites or proposals which are visually read as part of an existing group.
- 4.37 Mitigation including landscape proposals, enhancement of existing features of biodiversity interest, and the creation of habitats within the site (as NPPF para 118) should be included as part of any application. This should be within the red line or blue line of applications. Off-site planting should also be considered where practical, in order to mitigate visual impacts over a wider area. This could be achieved via a legal agreement or through a Community Trust. Such proposals should be in keeping with the landscape character and strategy for landscape management and provide a legacy to the local environment during and beyond the life of the scheme.

5 GUIDANCE TO APPLICANTS FOR UNDERTAKING CUMULATIVE LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACTS AND HDC FOR ASSESSING APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The criteria and guidance set out in Section 4 above should initially be applied at the Pre Application, Screening and Scoping Opinion stages, and then in greater detail if the scheme progresses to a full Planning Application and supporting Environmental Statement.
- 5.2 The requirement for, and geographical extent of, a cumulative assessment shall be established at the pre application stage and agreed as part of the scoping process. This should include identification of all the relevant schemes to be considered and the radius for the cumulative assessment to be used. Schemes that are either constructed, approved, or have been formally registered as an application will normally form the basis of schemes to be assessed. For schemes with turbines at 100m+ this may be required to extend to up to 30km radius.
- 5.3 The cumulative landscape and visual assessments will need to be reviewed as part of the decision making process, alongside the full revised SPD and the contents of the planning application and EIA including other parts of the LVIA sections of the ES.
- 5.4 Environmental Statements should provide detailed assessments of cumulative landscape and visual impacts for the particular scheme following the approach as set out in Section 5 of PPS 22 Companion Guide, SNH report 'Assessing the cumulative impact of onshore wind energy developments' (SNH) March 2012, and the latest version (3rd edition) of the "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment," Landscape Institute and IEMA (April 2013). Environmental Statements (usually in their LVIA section) should also consider and address the relevant further information and guidance criteria listed in the Wind Power SPD (or successor documents) for each LCA in the district.
- 5.5 Section 5 of the PPS 22 Companion Guide provides guidance on the assessment of landscape and visual impact issues relating to individual development proposals, and also cumulative effects as set out below.

5.21 Several areas in England are experiencing much interest from renewable energy developers and cumulative effects have become a factor in the determination of applications.

5.22 Cumulative landscape effects and visual effects should be considered separately. The former refers to effects of a proposed development on the landscape fabric, character and quality and so concerns the degree to which renewable energy development becomes a significant or defining characteristic of the landscape. Cumulative visual effects concern the

degree to which renewable energy development becomes a feature in particular views (or sequences of views), and the effect this has upon the people experiencing those views.

5.23 Cumulative effects may arise where two or more of the same type of renewable energy development are visible from the same point, or are visible shortly after each other along the same journey. Hence, it should not be assumed that, just because no other sites are visible from the proposed development site, the proposal will not create any cumulative effects

5.24 Cumulative impact assessments undertaken to date in the UK relate mainly to wind farms, and have generally been concentrated in Scotland and Wales. Bodies such as Scottish Natural Heritage have developed considerable experience in dealing with these issues and have prepared several volumes of good practice guidance for their own and wider use. In England, the following key points (derived from the Scottish guidance) may assist in assessing cumulative effects:

- a base plan of all existing windfarms, consented developments and applications received should be produced, showing all such schemes within a defined radius of the centre of the proposal under consideration;*
- for those existing or proposed windfarms within a defined radius of the proposal under consideration, a plan showing cumulative zones of visual influence (ZVIs) should be prepared. This plan should clearly identify the ZVI of each windfarm, and identify those areas from where one or more windfarms are likely to be seen;*
- the base plan and plan of cumulative ZVIs should reflect local circumstances – for example, the areas covered should take into account the extent to which factors such as the topography and the likely visibility of proposals in prevailing meteorological conditions may vary;*
- the map of cumulative ZVIs should be used to identify appropriate locations for visual impact studies. These will need to include locations for simultaneous visibility assessments, where two or more schemes are visible from a fixed viewpoint without the need for an observer to turn their head, and repetitive visibility assessments, where the observer is able to see two or more schemes but only if they turn around;*
- sequential effects on visibility occur when an observer moves through a landscape and sees two or more schemes. Common routes through a landscape (e.g. major roads; long distance paths or cycle routes) should be identified, as 'journey scenarios' appropriate for assessment;*

- *photomontages should be prepared showing all existing and consented turbines, and those for which planning applications have been submitted, in addition to the proposal under consideration. The viewpoints used should be those identified using the maps of cumulative ZVIs. The photomontages should be annotated to include the dimensions of the existing turbines, the distance from the viewpoint to the different schemes, the arc of view and the format and focal length of the camera used; and,*

- *at the most detailed level, description and assessment of cumulative effects may include the following landscape issues: scale of development in relation to landscape character or designations; sense of distance; existing focal points in the landscape; skylining (where additional development along a skyline appears disproportionately dominant); sense of remoteness or wildness*

APPENDIX 1

Examples of Approaches to Cumulative Effects by Local Authorities

East Durham Limestone and Tees Plan - North East Regional Assembly (Arup 2008)

- A1.1 This uses scenarios of potential development for cumulative landscape impacts. While the scenario approach is supported by SNH in their 2102 guidance it is not favoured as it can be seen as giving a potential amber/green light to the selected scenarios locations. The study also uses some of Fenland DC approach on Cumulative Visual effects such as percentage fields of view occupied by development from settlement and individual properties.

Rugby: Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy - White consultants (2011)

- A1.2 This study also uses the scenario approach to including a range of options of different scales of WTD in different areas within the district to assess the likely effects. While, this may be a useful applied theoretical approach it may seem to indicate more suitable sites and while useful internally may be less helpful in the public realm due to the conclusion drawn and preference inferred as to suitability on certain sites and scenarios. This may disadvantage other potential schemes not included as a selected scenario.

South Pennines – Julie Martin Associates (2010)

- A1.3 This includes some useful principles. It suggests different spacing of wind turbine schemes based on the LCA type and its relative sensitivity. These vary from 6-12km for large schemes or 3-5km if an LCA or site is more appropriate. This reflects the same principal included in the Ove Arup Report "Placing Renewables in the East of England."

Perth and Kinross

- A1.4 Indicates a requirement for a 40km separation between wind turbine developments unless they can be shown to not have significant adverse effects. This appears to be potentially be a rather restrictive an approach unless supported by evidence of the sensitivity of the landscape character areas involved.

Central Beds Draft SPD (2012/13)

- A1.5 This identifies 5km as the distance of likely greatest cumulative effect. It states that the scale of the landscape in Central Bedfordshire would be unlikely to successfully integrate two schemes within 10-15km of each other. This authority shares NCA 88 (Bedfordshire and

Cambridgeshire Claylands) with HDC. It appears that the Draft SPD sets a lower threshold of adverse cumulative harm than HDC.

Fenland DC – Wind Turbine Guidance (2009)

- A1.6 This study was produced for a local authority that was beginning to experience some concerns over cumulative impacts. The report covers a wide range of criteria including some for cumulative landscape and visual effects. The study was subject to public consultation and forms part of the Local Plan evidence base. The study has been tested at Public Inquiry in the context of planning applications for WTD and was afforded 'substantial weight' in the Inspectors report for the Burnt Housed Farm and Floods Ferry appeals (APP /D0515/A/10/2123739 and APP /D0515/A/10/2131194) the latter scheme being dismissed on the basis of cumulative visual effects. The study includes thresholds for acceptable effects on landscape character to assess prominent and conspicuous effects (2km and 5km distances) and thresholds for residential angles of view from cumulative visual effects. This authority shares NCA 46 (The Fens) with HDC.

Aberdeen (2005)

- A1.7 This study uses the 2km and 5km distances to represent the likely prominent and conspicuous zones of visual effect on the area around proposed turbines as set out in SNH's document PAN 45.

South Lanarkshire - Ironside Farrar (2010)

- A1.8 This study describes different types of cumulative impact rather than setting specific limits or thresholds and therefore would focus more on the effects of a specific application.

Angus Wind Farms Assessment - Ironside Farrar (2008)

- A1.9 This study includes reference to 'sacrificial areas' as the location to concentrate turbines. This appears to be an approach that had also be used in other parts of Europe. The suitability of this approach in other areas would depend on the character of the landscape involved and the presence of other constraints including the presence and number of receptors.

Examples of Inspector Decisions

Introduction

- A2.1 All cases should be judged on their own merits and the circumstances that exist specific to each site, so it is sometimes difficult to see complete consistency in these various decisions. However, the following case studies set out aspects of decisions made by inspectors and the Secretary of State that could be helpful in informing principles and criteria for future decision making in relation to cumulative effects. This approach to 'benchmarking' from other comparable schemes is supported by National Policy Statements EN1 and EN3.

Burnthouse Farm and Flood's Ferry Farm

APP/D0515/A/10/2123739 and APP/D0515/A/10/2131194

Inspector's Decision (26 April 2011)

- A2.2 The inspectors report allowed the two appeals one for 3 wind turbines of 100m (to blade tip) at Burnthouse Farm and 9 wind turbines of 110.5m height (to blade tip) at Flood's Ferry Farm. However, the approval of the Flood's Ferry development was over turned by the Secretary of State and he dismissed the appeal. One of the main issues considered was the effect on landscape character and the visual effects on the local receptors, with particular reference to cumulative effects. Despite the identification of significant cumulative and adverse impacts, this was weighed in the balance with the need to meet national targets for renewable energy and the capacity of the Drained Fen landscape within Fenland District as being suitable for wind farms. The main wind turbine developments considered for cumulative effects were: the two wind farm developments of Burnthouse Farm and Flood's Ferry Farm, which at their closest would be approximately 1.3kms apart; the existing wind turbines at Ransonmoor (approximately 2.6kms apart from Flood's Ferry Farm and approximately 4kms apart from Burnthouse Farm); the proposed Boardinghouse Wind Farm (approximately 2.3kms apart from Flood's Ferry Farm and approximately 3.8kms apart from Burnthouse Farm); and the existing Glassmoor Wind Farm (approximately 6.6kms apart from Flood's Ferry Farm and approximately 4.9kms apart from Burnthouse Farm). The key aspects of the decision making are set out below.

- A2.3 The need to establish whether cumulative visual and landscape impacts would be sufficient that they would cause harm to the public interest, as opposed to the EIA approach of determining whether the proposal would cause significant cumulative impact.
- A2.4 Challenge to the assumption that if the proposals result in a big change, that these should be regarded as adverse impacts.
- A2.5 Significant landscape impacts would occur at a local scale level as a result of the cumulative effect of existing and the proposed schemes.
- A2.6 The proposed Flood Ferry Farm wind turbines would be seen successively and sequentially with the wind turbines at Ransonmoor. The proposed wind turbines would be approximately 2.6kms and more away from the wind turbines at Ransonmoor. This was considered sufficient for the inspector to conclude that this would contribute substantially to an environment in which wind turbines would seem to surround and encroach, creating significant adverse cumulative visual impacts.
- A2.7 At a visual receptor location just beyond 2km, the successive or sequential effect of the two wind farms was also considered to create a significant and adverse cumulative impact.
- A2.8 Burnthouse Farm and Flood's Ferry Farm wind turbines should still be regarded as being prominent, despite being set within a wide and open landscape with big skies.
- A2.9 The proximity of the proposed Flood's Ferry Farm wind turbines to the presence of existing and other proposed wind turbines was sufficient to be considered as having materially harmful cumulative visual effects.

Secretary of State's Decision (6 July 2011)

- A2.10 The Secretary of State confirmed that it was relevant to consider whether any cumulative visual and landscape impacts would be sufficient to cause harm to the public interest.
- A2.11 Whilst the proposed developments would have a significant landscape impact at a local level, the Secretary of State concluded that cumulative landscape impact did not constitute a reason for refusing either of the appeals.
- A2.12 The Secretary of State agreed with the Inspector that the Flood's Ferry Farm proposal in combination with other schemes would create an adverse cumulative visual impact over a sizeable area and gave significant weight to the principle material harm this would give rise to on the surrounding area. This weight was such that it caused the Secretary of State to overturn the Inspector's decision and dismiss the Floods Ferry proposal.

General Principles of Application

A2.13 At distances of 1.3kms to 2.6kms between WTDs of c. 100-110m (to blade tip) despite being in a landscape that has some inherent capacity for WTD, cumulative effects are likely to result in unacceptable landscape and visual harm.

Monkwith Wind Farm, Roos, East Yorks

APP/E2001/A/10/2130670

Inspector's Decision (7 January 2011)

- A2.14 The inspector dismissed the appeal on the basis of harm to landscape and visual amenity resulting from the cumulative effects of the proposed development when seen in the context of three other permitted wind farms. The landscape character of the proposed wind turbines in Holderness is typically open comprising relatively large scale agricultural farmland with low hedges and few trees. There are several settlements and isolated farms or dwellings with the closest properties being approximately 700 to 800m from the closest proposed wind turbine. The three approved wind farms included: Burton Pidsea (3 turbines at 135m height to blade tip); Tedder Hill (3 turbines at 111m height to blade tip); and Sunderland Farm, Roos (9 turbines at 126.5m height to blade tip).
- A2.15 The consented Roos (Sunderland Farm) Wind Farm is located centrally between the other two wind farms approximately 2.2kms and 2.3kms, respectively, to the nearest wind turbines and was successfully appealed at the time, following the inspector's decision that the proposals would not result in an unacceptable 'wind farm landscape' but would form an acceptable 'landscape with wind farms'.
- A2.16 Monkwith Wind Farm was proposed to the north-east of these linear arranged wind farms with the nearest wind turbines separated by a distance of approximately: 5.8kms to Burton Pidsea; 2.4kms to Tedder Hill; and 3.7kms to Roos (Sunderland Farm).
- A2.17 The Inspector considered that a significant cumulative effect would occur with the addition of a fourth wind farm in relatively close proximity to the existing three wind farms and would be a greater effect than 'reinforcement' but less than a 'transformative' influence. The decision was also influenced by the incursion of the wind farm sub-type into a landscape character type that is narrow, open and exposed, higher than the adjacent landscape character type and more undulating and that was less affected by previous wind farm applications.
- A2.18 The inspector considered that the addition of the proposed 3 turbines to the approved 15 turbines would, from certain locations, extend the cumulative effects over a significantly larger area. The inspector determined that cumulative visual effects experienced sequentially over time, by moving within the effected landscape, would not necessarily be of any greater

influence to that experienced in one fixed location. It was considered that the relatively close proximity of the four wind farms would create cumulative harm in a confined localised context as well as over a wider area as a repeated visual effect that would dominate the receptor's experience. However in contrast, the inspector considered this not to be a sufficiently high cumulative effect to create an overbearing or overwhelming impact on residential amenity.

General Principles of Application

- A2.19 A small number of wind farms at a distance of 2.2kms to 2.3kms apart set within an open, relatively large scaled agricultural landscape with limited enclosure potentially would be considered as forming a 'landscape with wind farms'. In this context this was not considered to result in unacceptable harm. However, additional wind farms at a similar distance or slightly greater, where this also affects a relatively more sensitive landscape character with limited influence from wind farm development, may be considered as an unacceptable harm. Sequential visual effects can also contribute to the cumulative harm from receptors.

Nun Wood, Beds, Bucks and Northants

[APP/K0235/A/11/2149434](#), [APP/H2835/A/11/2149437](#) & [AAP/Y0435/A/10/2140401](#)

Inspector's Decision (15 November 2011)

- A2.20 Three appeals were considered for a single windfarm development for the erection of 12 wind turbines 125m high (to blade tip) near Bozeat, which straddled three separate districts requiring three separate planning applications. The inspector allowed the appeals and granted permission for the proposed development. The decision was challenged and the Inspectorate decided not to defend the decision. A new appeal is to be heard in June 2013. The main issues from the 2011 appeal related to effects on landscape and visual amenity. Cumulative effects were also addressed particularly in conjunction with the existing wind farm at Petsoe End to the south where the closest wind turbines would be approximately 6kms from the Nun Wood proposal. The inspector considered that there was sufficient visual separation of the two wind farms not to result in a 'wind farm landscape' being created. He identified that at a distance of approximately 3km the visual receptor would be able to recognise a clear and distinct separation. From approximately 6km there would be many wind turbines visible from some locations, and of sufficient number to create significant cumulative visual effects, but not sufficiently harmful to warrant refusal.
- A2.21 The wind turbines were proposed to be located in three different landscape character areas, including: a plateau landscape of rolling and gently sloping landform, medium scale arable and pastoral farmland, enclosed by woodland and hedgerows; high elevated and undulating

landform, open fields and limited woodland cover, but also with some enclosure; and an elevated, undulating, large scaled farmland with some woodland. The range of LCAs was in part a function of the site being at the junction of three separate landscape character studies.

General Principles of Application

- A2.22 A separation of 6kms between two wind farms (both at 125m height) was not seen as creating unacceptable cumulative harm in this context, despite the potential for significant cumulative effects having been identified.
- A2.23 A distance of 6kms apart in a relatively elevated landscape of undulating or rolling farmland with some enclosure, would be sufficiently distant not to create a 'wind farm landscape' from the two schemes.

Spaldington, East Yorks

APP/E2001/A/10/2137617 & APP/E2001/A/10/2139965

Inspector's Decision (29 September 2011)

- A2.24 The conjoined inquiry considered two appeals for two separate refused planning applications for wind farms. Spaldington Airfield scheme incorporating five wind turbines of 126m height (to blade tip) was allowed and planning permission granted, whilst the Spaldington Common (Ivy House Farm) scheme that proposed seven wind turbines of 126.5m height (to blade tip) was dismissed on the basis of unacceptable harm to living conditions, both in terms of visual dominance and noise disturbance. The closest distance of the nearest turbines of the two proposed developments was approximately 2kms.
- A2.25 The main issues were based on the individual and cumulative effects on various factors, including the visual impact from residential properties, landscape character and public views.
- A2.26 The parties agreed to apply the approach taken to visual amenity effects on residential properties used at Enifer Downs inquiry (APP/X2220/A/08/2071880) and also supported by the Secretary of State at Burnthouse Farm / Floods Ferry conjoined inquiry (see above). This is colloquially known as the 'Lavender Test' and considers unacceptable harm on residential amenity which stated '*when turbines are present in such number, size and proximity that they represent an unpleasantly overwhelming and unavoidable presence in main views from a house or garden, there is every likelihood that the property concerned would come to be widely regarded as unattractive and thus unsatisfactory (but not necessarily uninhabitable) place to live. It is not in the public interest to create such living conditions where they did not exist before.*'

- A2.27 Whilst the inspector considered there to be significant harm to views on residential properties that would have occurred as a result of the Common scheme, the cumulative effect of the two schemes (visual degree of separation varying between 2.8 to 3.8kms), was deemed not to create any additional significant and unacceptable impacts on residential amenity. The settlement of Spaldington lies centrally between the two proposed wind farms, with inspector recognising that this could create the impression of being situated within a wind farm. However, on reviewing the evidence, he felt that there were limited circumstances where the two developments would be experienced together.
- A2.28 Other wind farms were considered for cumulative effect in the Environmental Statements for the two schemes, the closest of which were as follows: Sixpenny Wood Wind farm (proposed at the time of the inquiry at approximately 5kms to the nearest Spaldington Common turbine and approximately 6.4kms to the nearest Spaldington Airfield turbine); the operational Loftsome Bridge Wind Farm (approximately 7.5kms to the nearest Spaldington Common turbine and approximately 5.3kms to the nearest Spaldington Airfield turbine); and Rusholme Wind Farm (consented at the time of the inquiry at approximately 8.2kms to the nearest Spaldington Common turbine and approximately 7kms to the nearest Spaldington Airfield turbine). None of these wind farms were referred to by the inspector in relationship to cumulative effects on landscape and visual amenity.
- A2.29 Both developments were proposed in a large scale and low lying almost most flat landscape with no landscape designations.
- A2.30 The inspector considered that the greatest visual effects occurred within 2 to 3kms of either site. The context of the landscape character in which the wind farms were being proposed i.e. a large scaled landscape and expansive skies formed an important consideration in concluding the landscape's ability to accommodate the proposed developments either individually or cumulatively and for the key characteristics of its large scale, openness and flat topography to remain the most dominant features. Consequently, the proposals could be considered as forming a 'landscape with wind turbines' rather than a 'wind farm landscape' and whilst resulting in significant change to the character of the local landscape, would not result in unacceptable harm.
- A2.31 With regard to public visual impact, in coming to his conclusion, the inspector considered occupants of a car and pedestrians to be of equally high sensitivity. However, whilst the cumulative effect was considered to be significant, the proposed developments would not be sufficiently unacceptable as to justify dismissal.

General Principles of Application

- A2.32 A separation of 2kms between wind farms was considered to be acceptable in relation to views from residential properties. However, it is likely that at least in part this was based on local variations including screening and that a different outcome may have occurred with different local circumstances.
- A2.33 Wind farms separated by 5kms or more apart in this landscape character are unlikely to be considered as leading to significant cumulative landscape and visual impacts based on the schemes present at the time of the decision.

Chiplow (Bagthorpe) and Jack's Lane (Stanhoe), Norfolk

APP/V2635/A/11/2154590 & APP/V2635/A/11/2158966

Inspector's Decision (24 May 2012)

- A2.36 Two appeals heard by the inspector were for five wind turbines of 100m (to blade tip) at the Chiplow site and the erection of six wind turbines of 126.5m (to blade tip) at the Jack's Lane site. Both appeals were allowed and planning permission granted.
- A2.37 The main issues related to five aspects which included the individual and cumulative effects on landscape and views.
- A2.38 The inspector referred to the landscape study produced by Land Use Consultants in 2003 that provides guidance on the capacity of the landscape to accommodate wind turbine development and inform choices about the location of such developments. In particular, whilst the study fell short of defining suitable areas, the inspector considered it useful to the decision making process that the study defined the criteria to be employed and the size of turbines that would be appropriate within different character areas.
- A2.39 The Jack's Lane turbines were proposed within a Plateau Farmland landscape character area and the Chiplow turbines in a Rolling Open Farmland landscape character areas. The Plateau Farmland landscape displays a strikingly flat landform, wide open skies and large arable fields, with long distance panoramic views. The Rolling Open Farmland is a medium to large scale landscape with strong sense of openness, with wide open skies and medium to large scaled arable fields over a gently rising and falling landform. Both areas were identified in the LUC study as having a high capacity to accommodate turbine groups of two to twelve, the former having a 'limited scope' to accommodate cumulative wind turbine developments and the latter having 'scope' for cumulative development. The inspector highlighted the tension that exists within the LUC study resulting from its recommendations to have wind turbine groups sufficiently distanced from settlements to prevent 'a feeling of dominance' whilst avoiding

wind turbines in locations where there is a strong sense of remoteness. Nevertheless, the inspector identified the value of providing such strategic studies in guiding development, when there was a clear logical approach applied to landscape capacity and group sizes.

- A2.40 Both parties agreed that there would be cumulative landscape and visual effects. The proposed wind farms would be typically experienced as visually distinct and well separated developments about 2.5kms apart. 2.5kms was also used as the basis of determining the extent to which significant impact on the landscape would occur for individual wind farm impacts. In some longer distance views, the wind farms would potentially be seen closer together, but with limited additional effect to that experienced as a single development. The most significant cumulative effect was identified between the two developments, where both would be experienced together from a small number of viewpoints. However, they would not be seen together in the same visual context and only occupy narrow angles of view. The inspector considered that at no point would the sequential effect give the viewer the sense that the view was dominated by both groups of wind turbines. The separation distance of the two wind farms was sufficient not to be considered to form a 'single windfarm landscape type'

General Principles of Application

- A2.41 The benefit to Inspectors for local planning authorities in preparing strategic studies which define the number, size and location of wind turbines that can be accommodated within any given landscape character type/area and the criteria to be used in assessing effects.
- A2.42 Wind turbines of between 100m to 126.5m to blade tip height set at 2.5kms apart or more within open, flat or gently rolling landscape, with open and expansive outlooks could be considered acceptable. Less than 2.5kms apart, acceptability would significantly depend on local characteristics and features and the extent to which the wind turbines of different schemes would be seen together or sequentially experienced.

Bartmoor Wind Farm, Moorsyde Wind Farm and Toft Hill Wind Farm

[APP/2935/A/08/2078347](#), [APP/2935/A/08/2079520](#) & [APP/2935/A/08/2077474](#)

Inspector's Decision (19 October 2009)

- A2.45 The inquiry considered three appeals for separate wind farm proposals within a similar locality. The Bartmoor development proposed six turbines at a height of 110.5m (to blade tip), the Moorsyde Wind Farm proposed seven wind turbines at a height of 110m (to blade tip), and the Toft Hill development proposed seven wind turbines at a height of 122m (to blade

tip). The appeal for Barmoor was allowed and planning permission granted, whilst Moorsyde Wind Farm and Toft Hill appeals were dismissed.

- A2.46 One of the main issues common to all three appeals was considered to be cumulative landscape and visual effects of the proposed wind farms. The inspector predominantly relied on guidance provided by the Scottish Natural Heritage's 'Cumulative Effect on Windfarms' and the Regional Spatial Strategy policy 41 which identified the South and West Berwick-upon-Tweed Broad Area of Least Constraint (BALC) as having the capacity to accommodate wind energy development of up to 20-25 turbines. This defines the principle of a threshold beyond which the presence of wind farms in a given area become unacceptable. As wind farms start to coalesce as they become located closer to each other, a point is reached when they become 'perceived as a key landscape characteristic'.
- A2.47 In addition to the three proposed wind farm schemes, the existing wind farm at Black Hill and the following permitted wind turbine developments were considered: Drone Hill, Border Precision, Wandylaw and Middlemoor. The further wind farm proposal of West Ancroft was considered, which at the time of the inquiry had been validated as a planning application but yet to be determined. The inspector considered this to be a critical inclusion, with the resulting effect of all four wind farms proposals creating an unacceptable level of harm as cumulative effect on the landscape and would exceed the limit of 20-25 turbines provided as the guided limit for wind turbines for the BALC. The inspector judged that this would also occur with the specific combination of the three wind farms of Barmoor, Moorsyde and West Ancroft. In both cases the inspector considered the proposed combinations would have exceeded a 'threshold of unacceptable change' and created a 'wind farm landscape'.
- A2.48 The inspector also judged that the distance between the wind farms was sufficient in the triple combination of Barmoor, Moorsyde and Toft Hill and within each double combination that the 'threshold of unacceptable change' would not be passed and predominantly could be considered as being a 'landscape with occasional wind farms'. The only exception was the double combination of Moorsyde and West Ancroft, which would be so close as to give the impression of a single wind farm of fifteen turbines and form a sufficient cumulative effect as to have exceeded the 'threshold of unacceptable change'.
- A2.49 Cumulative visual effects would similarly be affected with: the four wind farm combination; the triple combination of Moorsyde, Toft Hill and West Ancroft; and the double combination of Moorsyde and West Ancroft would create an unacceptable change. All other combinations were judged not to create an unacceptable visual effect.

Secretary of State's Decision (20 January 2010)

- A2.50 The Secretary of State supported the inspector's conclusions, other than specific aspects not relating to cumulative landscape and visual effects, and agreed with her recommendations to allow the appeal for Barmoor and dismiss the appeals for Moorsyde and Toft Hill.

Land at Hill Farm, Tallentire

APP/G0908/A/10/2131842

Inspector's Decision (4 February 2011)

- A2.51 The appeal was allowed and permission granted for the erection of 6 wind turbines of 100m height (to blade tip) on a site near Cockermouth. The individual and cumulative effect of the proposed wind turbines on the character and appearance of the area was one of two main issues covered by the Inspector's Decision.
- A2.52 The inquiry highlighted that there had been a number of windfarm developments that were operational and had been consented, particularly in the region around Workington. The effect of these wind farms is accentuated by a constrained area of search, due to the presence of the Lake District National Park and the Solway Coast AONB. This has created a linear arrangement of wind farms running north-eastwards to Carlisle, with the proposed Tallentire wind farm filling a gap between wind farms around Workington and the Wharrels Hill wind farm. However, the inspector considered there was only a perception of over-concentration, which in reality was not sufficiently evident on the ground. He noted that whilst multiple wind farm developments would be visible to a varying degree from many locations, the landscape remained the dominant feature and could still be described as a 'landscape with wind farms' rather than a 'wind farm landscape'.
- A2.53 The distance of separation of the wind farms within a transitional landscape between the limestone highlands and lowland, composed of ridge and valley and of medium to large scale, was sufficient that sequential views did not become unacceptably dominated by wind turbines. The distance between existing and consented wind turbines and the proposed Tallentire wind farm at their closest are as follows: around Workington to the south-west (Flimby 3 wind turbines approximately 7.4kms apart; Siddick, Oldside and Vordian 18 wind turbines approximately 10.5kms apart; and Winscales and Winscales Moor 18 wind turbines approximately 10.5kms apart); to the east (Wharrels Hill 8 wind turbines approximately 4.8kms apart; and High Pow 3 wind turbines 13kms apart); to the north (Hellrigg 4 wind turbines approximately 13kms apart); and offshore to the west (Robin Rigg 60 wind turbines 19.5kms apart).

General Principles of Application

- A2.54 Despite the number of operational and consented wind farms, so long as there is sufficient distance between the wind farms and actual experience on the ground, cumulative effects will not always be unacceptable to landscape character, so long as it can be demonstrated that the other key characteristics of the landscape remain as the dominant features and it does not become a wind farm landscape.

- A2.55 The location and number of wind turbines illustrated on a plan does not necessarily mean there is an over-concentration and that the most important aspect is the experience evidenced in reality.
- A2.56 Distances of 7.4kms, 10.5kms and 13kms in an open, medium to large scale landscape of ridge and valley landform could in this context be acceptable.

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Glossary

*Conservation Area** – Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

Cumulative impact – The combined effect of all developments when taken together, both present and those in the future.

Fall over distance – The height of the turbine to the tip of the blade. Also known as the topple height.

Intervisibility – The extent to which one area can see another and vice versa

*Landscape Capacity*** – The degree to which a particular landscape character type or area is able to accommodate change without unacceptable adverse effects on its character. Capacity is likely to vary according to the type and nature of change being proposed.

*Landscape Character*** – The distinct and recognizable pattern of elements that occurs consistently in a particular type of landscape, and how this is perceived by people. It reflects particular combinations of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement. It creates the particular sense of place of different areas of the landscape.

Landscape Character Area – A unique geographic area with a consistent character and identity, defined by geology, landform, soils, vegetation, landuse, settlement and field pattern.

*Landscape Character Assessment**** – An umbrella term for description, classification and analysis of landscape.

*Landscape Character Type*** – A landscape type will have broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, landuse, settlement and field pattern discernable in maps and field survey records.

*Landscape Quality*** – About the physical state of the landscape and its intactness, from visual, functional and ecological perspectives. It also reflects the state of repair of individual features and elements which make up the character in any one place.

*Landscape Sensitivity*** – The extent to which a landscape can accept change of a particular type and scale without adverse effects on its character.

*Landscape Value*** – The relative value or importance attached to a landscape (often as a basis for designation or recognition), which expresses national or local consensus, because of its quality, special qualities including perceptual aspects such as scenic beauty, tranquillity or wilderness, cultural associations or other conservation issues.

*Listed Building** – A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures (e.g. wells within its curtilage). English Heritage is responsible for designating buildings for listing in England.

Microgeneration – Small scale production of heat and/or electricity from low carbon sources.

*Mitigation*** – Measures, including any process, activity or design to avoid, reduce, remedy or compensate for adverse landscape and visual impacts of a development project.

Planning Advice Note (PAN) – Scottish planning document providing advice on good practice and other relevant information.

*Ramsar Site** – Sites designated under the European Ramsar Convention to protect wetlands that are of international importance, particularly as waterfowl habitats.

*Registered Park and Garden** – A park or garden of special historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II* or II. Designated by English Heritage.

*Renewable Energy** – Renewable energy is energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment, for example from the wind, water flow, tides or the sun.

*Scheduled Monument** – Nationally important monuments usually archaeological remains, that enjoy greater protection against inappropriate development through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Shadow flicker – Under certain combinations of geographical position and time of day, the sun may pass behind the rotors of a wind turbine and cast a shadow over neighbouring properties. When the blades rotate, the shadow flicks on and off.

*Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** – A site identified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) as an area of special interest by reason of any of its flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features

*Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)** - A site designated under the European Community Habitats Directive, to protect internationally important natural habitats and species.

*Special Protection Area (SPA)** – Sites classified under the European Community Directive on Wild Birds to protect internationally important bird species.

*Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** – A Supplementary Planning Document is a Local Development Document that may cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provides further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document.

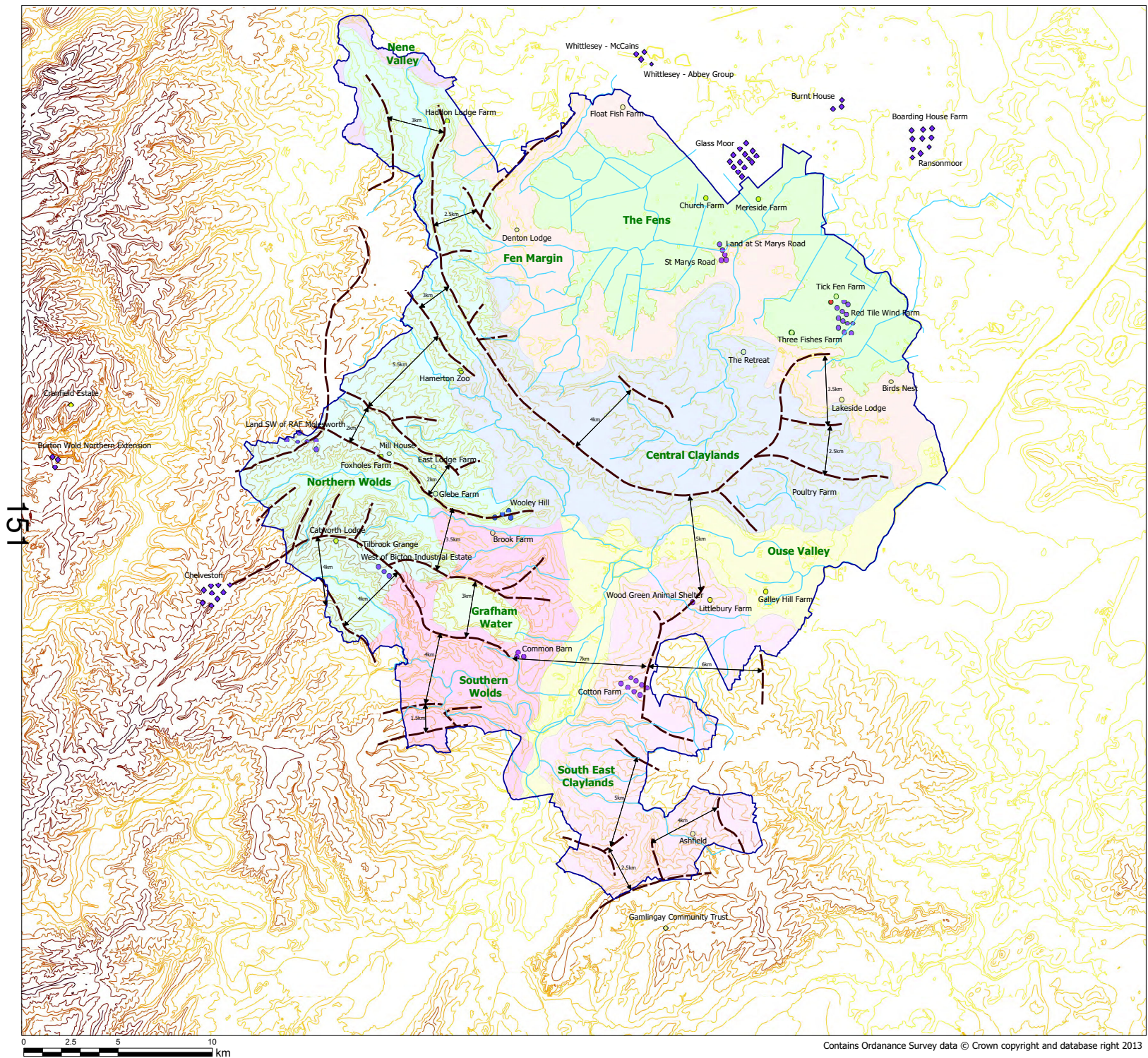
Threshold – A specified level beyond which impacts are likely to be unacceptable.

Typology – The classification of items into groups to allow their assessment.

Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) – Also known as a Zone of Visual Influence (ZVI), Visual Envelope Map (VEM) and Viewshed. This represents the area over which a development can theoretically be seen, based on digital terrain data.

* = as defined in the Glossary of Planning Terms on the Planning Portal website

** = as defined in the Glossary section of Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment 2nd edition, The Landscape Institute and Institute for Environmental Management and Assessment, 2002



Key

- District Boundary
- Watercourses
- Ridgelines
- Character**
- Central Claylands
- Fen Margin
- Grafham Water
- Nene Valley
- Northern Wolds
- Ouse Valley
- South East Claylands
- Southern Wolds
- The Fens

Wind turbines

TurbineHt

- <30m
- 30 - 69m
- 70 - 99m
- 100 - 129m
- 130 - c.150m

Neighbouring Existing & Proposed Turbines

- <30m
- 30 - 69m
- 70 - 99m
- 100 - 129m
- 130 - c.150m

Contours

- 3 - 20m
- 20 - 40m
- 40 - 60m
- 60 - 80m
- 80 - 100m
- 100 - 120m

Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title
Topography, Watercourses and Landscape Charatcer Areas

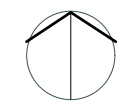
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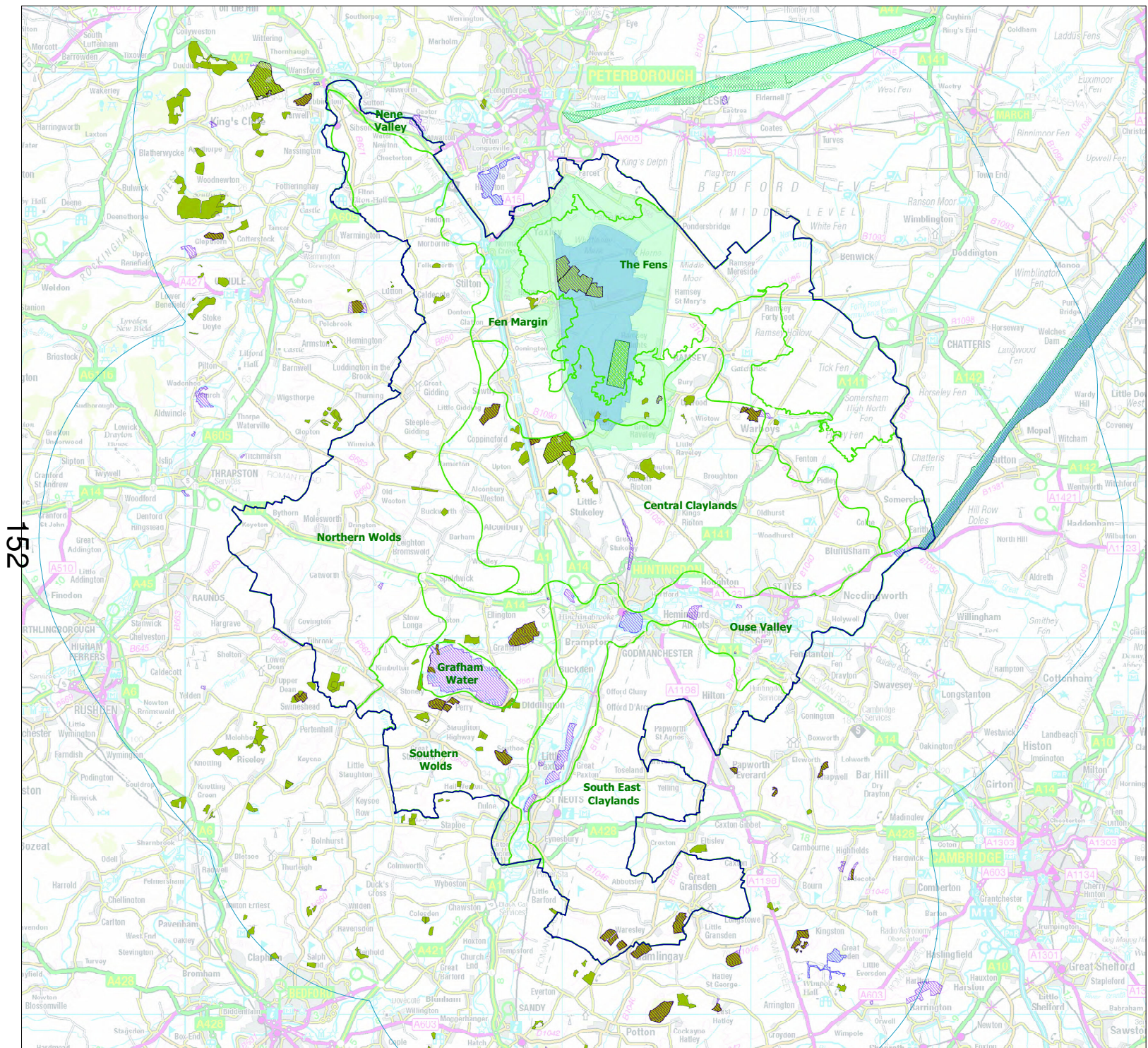
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Date **May 2013**












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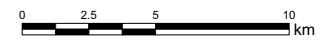
Checked **JB**





152

- Key**
-  District Boundary
 -  10km Buffer of District Boundary
 -  Landscape Character Areas
 -  RAMSAR
 -  SSSI
 -  National Nature Reserves
 -  Special Area of Conservation
 -  Special Protection Area
 -  Ancient Woodland
 -  Great Fen Project Area
 -  Great Fen Setting



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **National Biodiversity Designations**

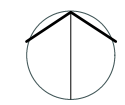
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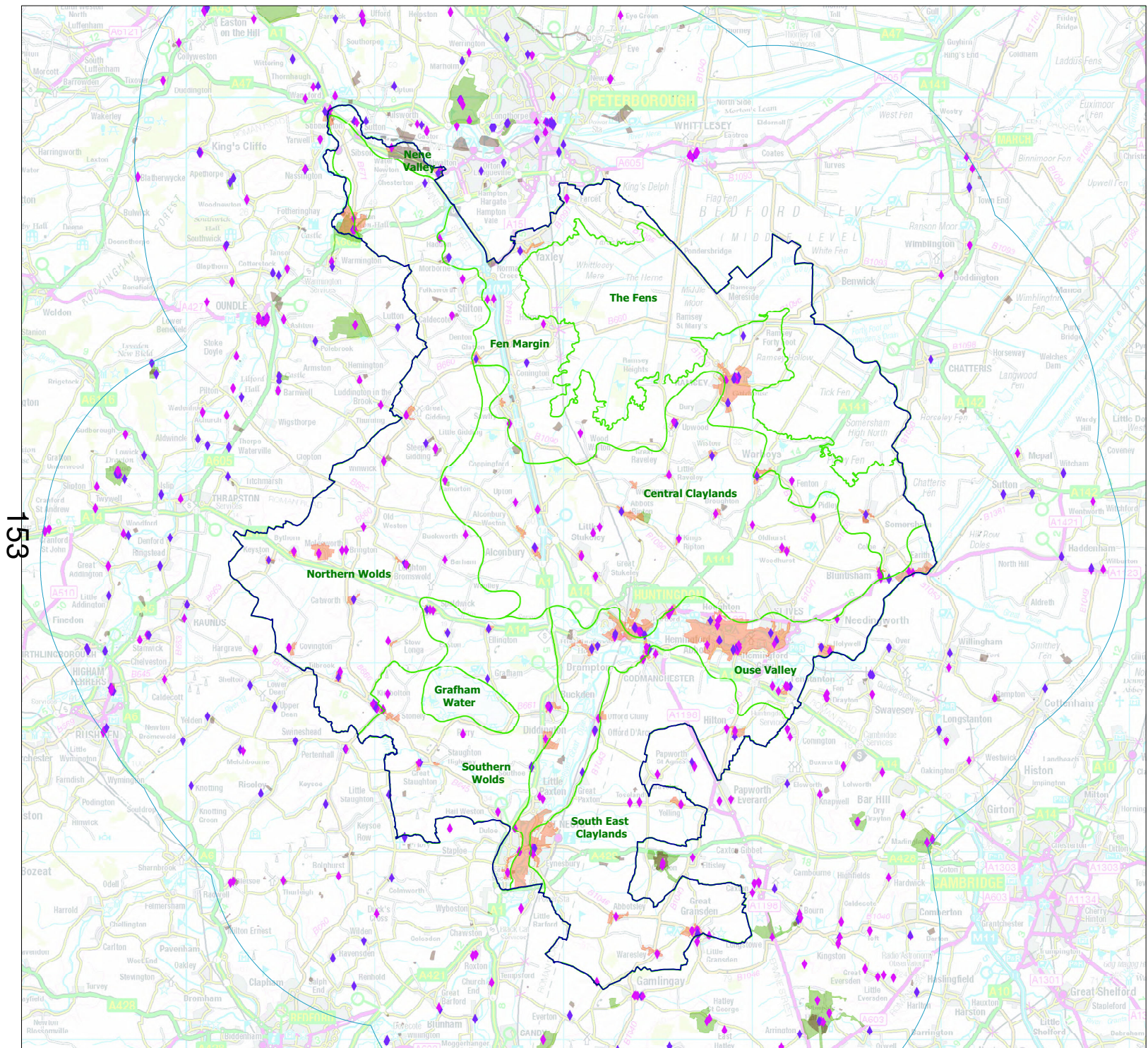
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
Date **May 2013**

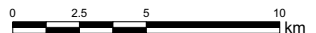
Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**





- Key**
-  District Boundary
 -  10km Buffer of District Boundary
 -  Landscape Character Areas
 -  Listed Buildings - Grade I
 -  Listed Buildings - Grade II*
 -  Conservation Areas
 -  Scheduled Monuments
 -  Registered Parks and Gardens



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Cultural Heritage**

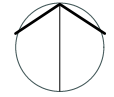
Drawing Number **Figure 03**

Scale **1:100,000 @ A1**

Date **May 2013**

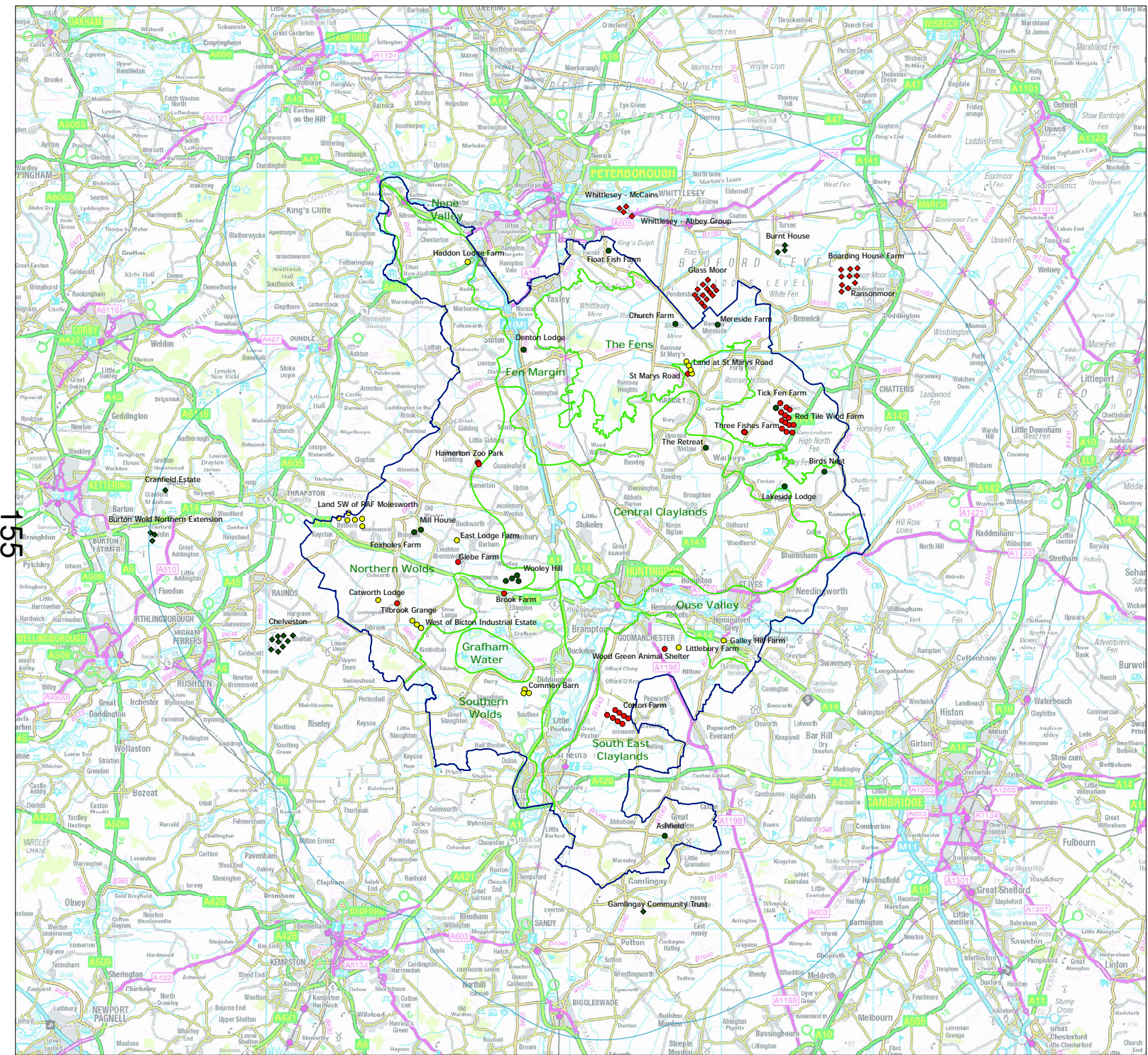
Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**



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155

Key

- District Boundary
- 10km Buffer of District Boundary

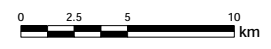
Neighbouring District Wind Turbines

- ◆ Operational
- ◆ Consented

HDC Wind Turbines

- Operational
- Consented
- In Planning

Landscape Character Areas



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Existing Wind Turbine Schemes Including Those 'In Planning'**

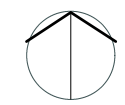
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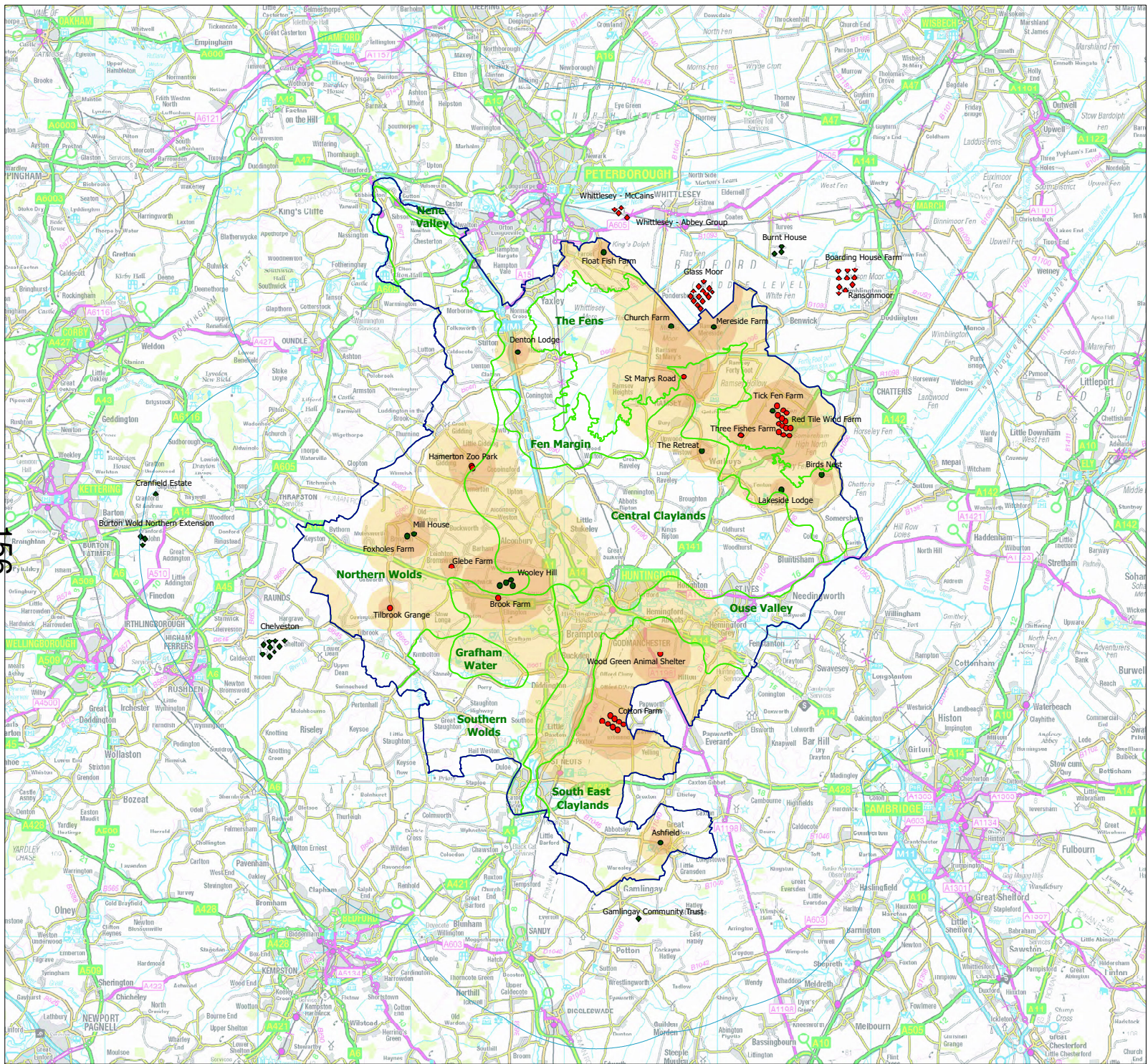
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Date **May 2013**

Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**





156

Key

- District Boundary
- 10km Buffer of District Boundary

Neighbouring District Wind Turbines

- Operational
- Consented

HDC Wind Turbines

- Operational
- Consented

- Prominent Zone
- Conspicuous Zone
- Landscape Character Areas



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Prominent and Conspicuous Zones (Current Schemes)**

Drawing Number **Figure 05**

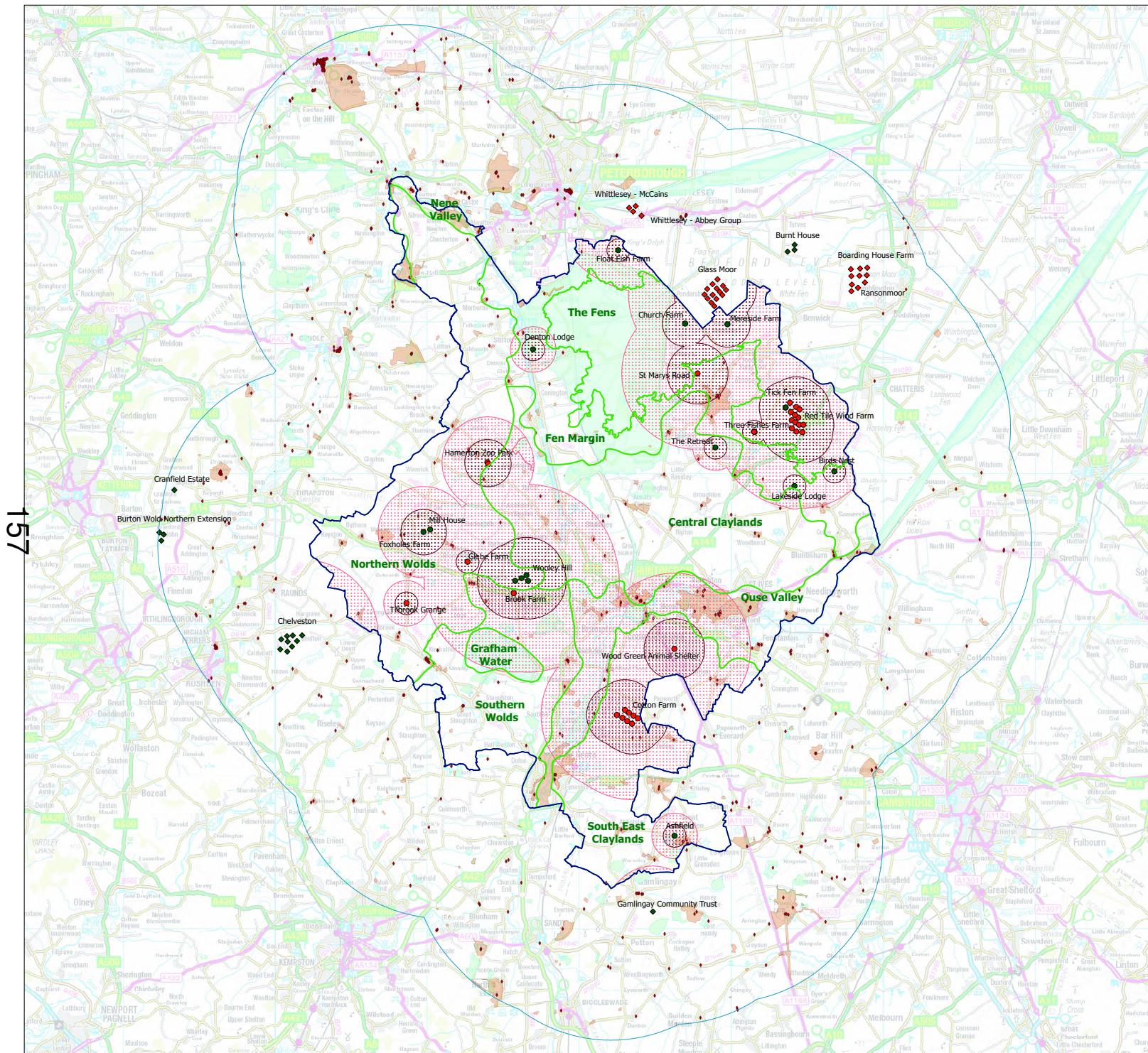
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Date **May 2013**

Drawn **GF**

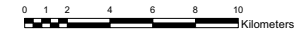
Checked **JB**





157

- Key**
- District Boundary
 - 10km Buffer of District Boundary
 - Neighbouring District Wind Turbines**
 - Operational
 - Consented
 - HDC Wind Turbines**
 - Operational
 - Consented
 - Prominent Zone
 - Conspicuous Zone
 - Landscape Character Areas
 - Wildlife Constraints
 - Heritage Constraints
 - Listed Buildings Grades I & II*



Project HDC Wind Turbine Study

Drawing Title Prominent & Conspicuous Zones and Combined Constraints (Current Schemes)

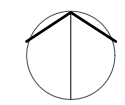
Drawing Number Figure 06

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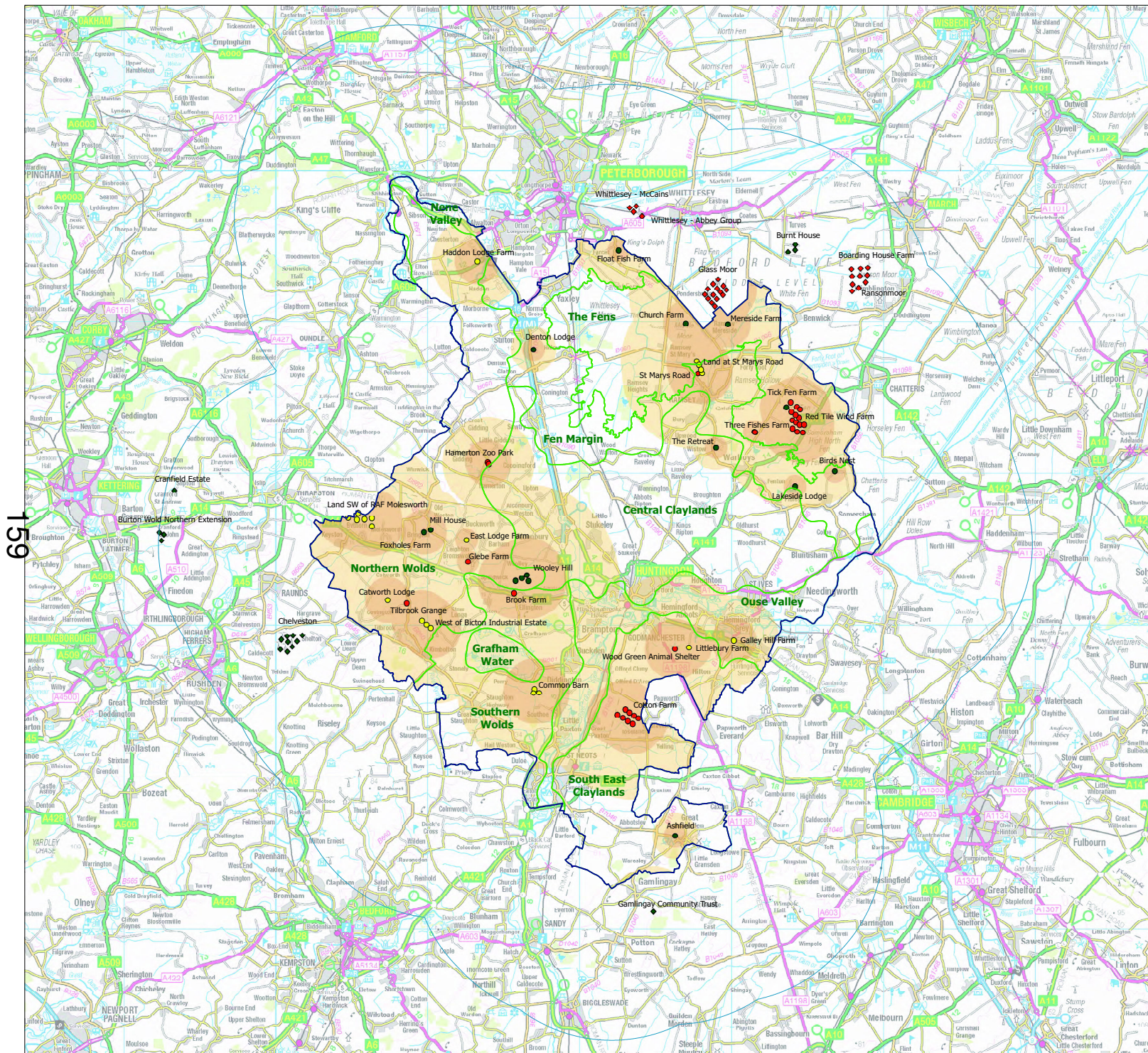
Date May 2013

Drawn GF

Checked JB

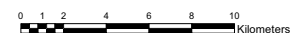


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159

- Key**
- District Boundary
 - 10km Buffer of District Boundary
- Neighbouring District Wind Turbines**
- Operational
 - Consented
- HDC Wind Turbines**
- Operational
 - Consented
 - In Planning
- Zones**
- Prominent Zone
 - Conspicuous Zone
 - Landscape Character Areas



Project HDC Wind Turbine Study

Drawing Title Prominent & Conspicuous Zones (Current and Potential Schemes)

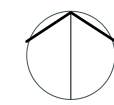
Drawing Number Figure 07

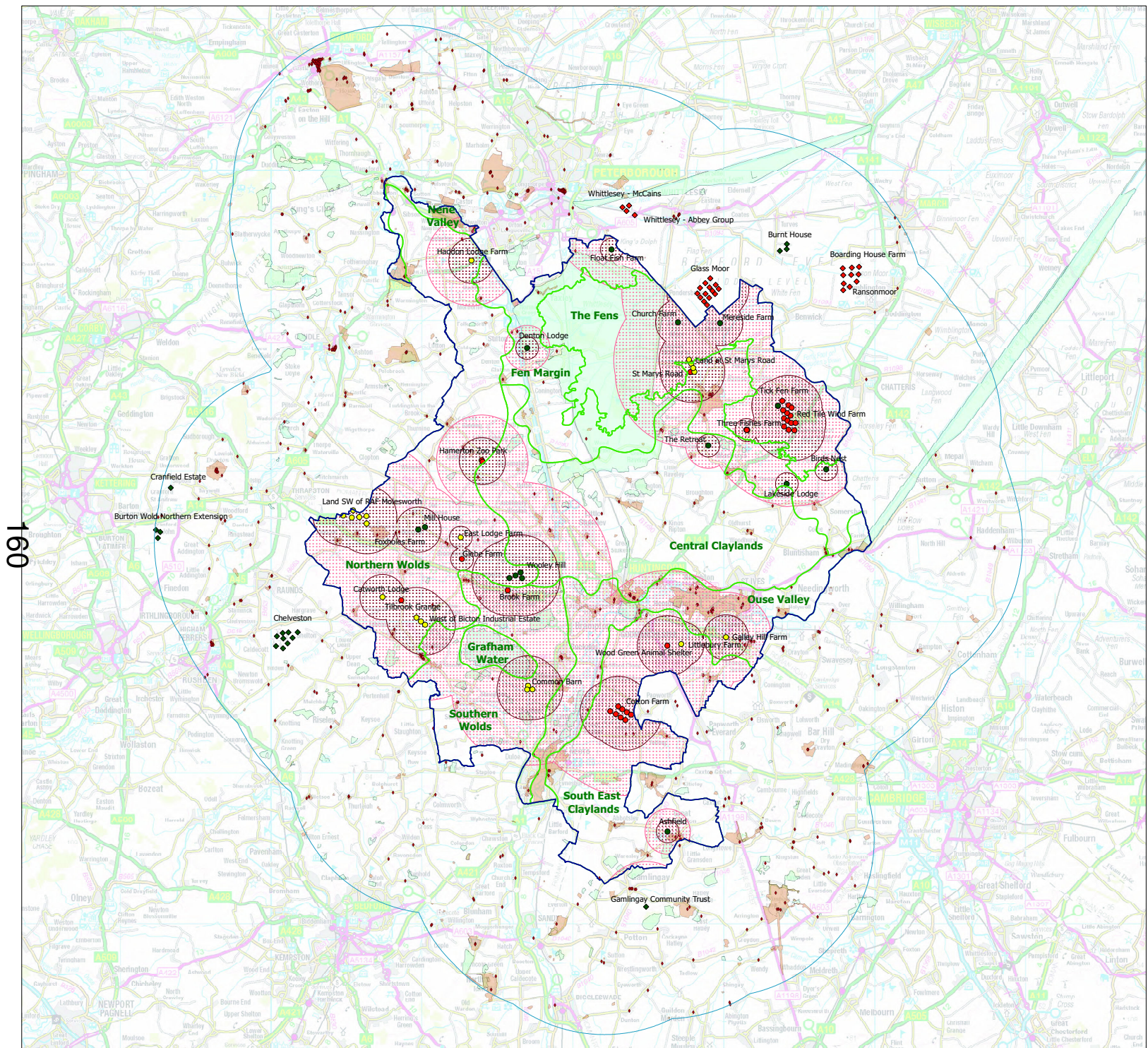
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Date May 2013

Drawn GF

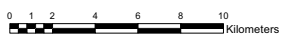
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160

- Key**
- District Boundary
 - 10km Buffer of District Boundary
 - Neighbouring District Wind Turbines**
 - Operational
 - Consented
 - HDC Wind Turbines**
 - Operational
 - Consented
 - In Planning
 - Prominent Zone
 - Conspicuous Zone
 - Landscape Character Areas
 - Wildlife Constraints
 - Heritage Constraints
 - Listed Buildings Grades I & II*



Project **HDC Wind Turbine Study**

Drawing Title **Prominent & Conspicuous Zones and Constraints (Current and Potential Schemes)**

Drawing Number **Figure 08**

Scale **1:125,000 @ A1**

Date **May 2013**

Drawn **GF**

Checked **JB**



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)

2ND JULY 2013
4TH JULY 2013
9TH JULY 2013

WORK PLAN STUDIES
(Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

2. STUDIES

2.1 The Council has a duty to improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of the District. This gives the Overview and Scrutiny Panels a wide remit to examine any issues that affect the District by conducting in-depth studies.

2.2 Studies are allocated according to the Overview and Scrutiny remits. Details of ongoing studies being undertaken by the two other Panels are set out in the attached Appendix.

2.3 Members are reminded that if they have a specific interest in any study area which is not being considered by their Panel there are opportunities for involvement in all the studies being undertaken.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Panel is requested to note the progress of the studies selected.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Minutes and Reports from previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Contact Officers: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
01480 388006

Mrs C Bulman, Democratic Services Officer
01480 388234

ONGOING STUDIES

| STUDY | OBJECTIVES | PANEL | STATUS | TYPE |
|---|---|-------------------|--|--------------------|
| Social Value | To consider the development of a methodology for the quantification of Social Value. | Social Well-Being | Working Group will focus on three key areas; namely social, health and financial benefits of the Council's activities. Officers have been tasked with attaching financial values to these benefits. Meeting to be held on 18th July 2013. | Working Group |
| CCTV Provision within the District | To review the impact of the Council's proposal to cease the CCTV service with effect from April 2012. | Social Well-Being | A report on changes to the CCTV service in 2012/13 will be submitted to the Panel in July 2013. | Whole Panel Study. |
| Consultation Processes | To assist the Corporate Team with its review of the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy. | Social Well-Being | Strategy and Guidance being updated by the Corporate Office to incorporate comments suggested by the Working Group. Expected to be presented to the Panel and Cabinet at their October 2013 meetings. Meeting of Working Group being arranged. | Working Group. |
| Review of Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire | To undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire. | Social Well-Being | At a recent meeting of ELSG, the Cabinet agreed to review their decision on Local Joint Committees (LJCs) on the | Working Group |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---------------------|---|----------------|
| | | | understanding that they will be permissive on local communities' part and that groups of Parishes will organise, pay for and service the meetings themselves. A report to this effect will appear before the Cabinet in due course. | |
| District Council Support Services | To review the services provided by the District Councils Document Centre to form a view on its efficiency and cost effectiveness. | Economic Well-Being | The Panel has established a Task & Finish Group to review the progress which has been made with regard to their recommendations on the Document Centre. | Working Group |
| Economic Development | To be determined. | Economic Well-Being | The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 to 2023 will be considered by the Panel in July 2013. | Whole Panel. |
| Delivery of Advisory Services Across the District | To monitor the performance of the voluntary organisations awarded grant aid by the Council in 2013-2015. | Social Well-Being | Working Group will meet with each voluntary organisation in August 2013 to review their progress with a further meeting to be arranged 6 months thereafter. Annual Report on organisations supported by grants through Service Level Agreements to be presented to Panel in November 2013. | Working Group. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------|--|---------------|
| Housing Benefit Changes and the Potential Impact Upon Huntingdonshire | To monitor the effect of Government changes to the Housing Benefit System arising from the Welfare Reform Act. | Social Well-Being | Quarterly reports presented to the Panel. Members of the Economic Well-Being Panel will be invited to attend. Next report expected in July 2013. | Whole Panel |
| Local Plan 2036 – Provision of Social, Affordable and Supported Housing and Impact Upon Homelessness | To explore how the new Local Plan would help to address housing and homelessness needs within the District. | Social Well-Being | An outline of how the new Local Plan will help to address housing and homelessness needs within the District was delivered to the Panel. Regular updates to be provided. Next update expected September 2013. Panel agreed in June 2013 to widen the scope of its work to include supported housing. | Whole Panel. |
| Customer Services Strategy | To contribute to the production of the new Customer Services and Channel Migration Strategy. | Economic Well-Being | Meetings of the Working Group have been held on 13 th February, 26 th March and 21 st May 2013. Officers will now undertake further work and the Group will reconvene once a draft proposal has been developed prior to its consideration by Overview & Scrutiny and the Cabinet. | Working Group |
| Review of Elderly Patient Care at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital | To undertake a review of elderly patient care at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. | Social Well-Being | Working Group appointed to undertake a review which will be undertaken in conjunction with the | Working Group |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------|---|------------------|
| | | | Hospital. Chairman awaiting information from the Franchise Manager at the Hospital to determine how the study should proceed. Public views will be elicited as part of the study. | |
| Review of Ambulance Service Provision | To undertake a review of Ambulance Service provision within the District. | Social Well-Being | Background information on Ambulance Service provision to be submitted to the Panel at a future meeting. | To be determined |

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| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|--|---|---|--|---------|
| 15/05/13 | <p><u>Leadership Direction</u></p> <p>Councillors G J Bull and Mrs L Kadić have been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group.</p> | <p>Meetings of the Corporate Plan Working Group held on 1st and 28th August and 12th November 2012. Draft considered by Executive Leaders Strategy Group on 10th September 2012 and 14th January and 26th March 2013.</p> | <p>The Delivery Plan was endorsed by the Executive Leaders Strategy Group on 26th March 2013. A programme of bi-monthly meetings of the Corporate Plan Working Group will be arranged over the course of the year with a view to holding Executive Members to account. A meeting of the Working Group was held on 13th June 2013. A brief update on its outcome of this meeting will be delivered at the meeting. Further meeting to be held in July 2013.</p> | 9/07/13 |
| <p>13/7/10 8/3/11 12/10/11 8/11/11</p> <p>12/03/13</p> | <p><u>Great Fen Project</u></p> <p>The Panel attended tours of the Great Fen. Latest visit undertaken on 1st October 2012.</p> <p>Copy of the Socio-Economic study presented to Panel. The Panel has challenged the figures relating to the number of new jobs created since the Project came into being and has sought clarification on what the real economic benefits of the Project are. These were circulated around to Panel Members on 25th March 2013 via email.</p> | <p>Updates on the progress of the project to be presented to the Panel at 6 monthly intervals.</p> <p>Site visits and information reports will be provided to the Panel as the Great Fen Project develops.</p> | <p>Site visit to be held on 17th September 2013 – final arrangements to be confirmed.</p> | TBC |
| 14/09/10 | <p><u>Tree Strategy</u></p> <p>To form a strategy in conjunction with the Tree Officers for</p> | <p>A series of Working Group meetings have</p> | | |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|----------------|
| 11/09/12 | <p>the retention and planting of trees.</p> <p>Councillor J W Davies updated the Panel on progress made towards completion of the Tree Strategy.</p> | <p>been held comprising Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee and J W Davies. A draft policy is being drawn up by the Arboricultural Officer for submission to the Working Group for comment.</p> <p>Ways of finalising the Tree Strategy are being considered. Arboricultural Officer met with consultants on 18th January 2013 and a proposal for a programme of work has been received but referred back for further refinement. Likely timescales to be advised in due course.</p> | | TBC |
| <p>9/04/13</p> <p>11/06/13</p> | <p><u>Whole Waste System Approach</u></p> <p>Panel received an update on progress with the RECAP Waste Partnership. The Panel has endorsed, in principle, the whole system approach, a business case for which is expected to be delivered to the Panel in the Autumn.</p> <p>In considering the Panel's work programme, Panel agreed that it may be necessary to reconvene the Waste Collection Working Group when consideration is given to the whole waste system approach. The Working Group comprises Councillors M G Baker, G J Harlock and C R Hyams.</p> | <p>Head of Operations acknowledged the Panel's request for the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p> | <p>Report expected in October 2013.</p> | <p>8/10/13</p> |
| 8/11/11 | <p><u>Design Principles for Future Developments</u></p> <p>Working Group appointed comprising Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, I Curtis, P M D Godfrey and G J Harlock to examine the matters raised during the Panel's discussions on Loves Farm, St Neots. The Working Group has been tasked with making recommendations to inform future developments.</p> | | | |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|------------|---|--|---|---------|
| 6/01/12 | First meeting of the Working Group held where Councillor Mrs M Banerjee was appointed rapporteur. It was agreed that the Working Group needed an overview of the site from a Planning Officer, followed thereafter by a site visit. | Working Group met with the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning on 26 th January 2012 to receive an overview of the Loves Farm site. Site visit held on 2 nd March 2012 followed by a de-brief on 21 st March 2012 and a meeting on 1 st June 2012. | The Working Group has considered a report by the Urban Design, Trees and Landscape Team Leader analysing the results of the 'Building for Life' assessments which were completed on the site visit. The Working Group will begin to draft their final report. | |
| 11/09/12 | The Panel considered the report of the Working Group which outlined its findings to date. | Meeting with the Urban Design, Trees and Landscape Team Leader was held on 5 th October 2012 to discuss aspects of the Design Guide in more detail. Officers met with consultants in January 2013 to discuss the matter further. | Draft revised Design Guide is expected to be made available to the Working Group in due course. Amendments currently being made. | TBC |
| 9/10/12 | <p><u>Drainage Issues/Maintenance of Water Courses</u></p> <p>Panel has concluded a study in response to a petition received relating to the overflow of sewage in Yaxley. Report of the Working Group considered at the meeting. The outcome of negotiations between Anglian Water and the County Council on drainage in Yaxley is awaited.</p> | An update has been received from Anglian Water and was reported to the Panel at its January 2013 meeting. | | |
| 15/01/13 | Panel received an update on recent flooding events within the District and noted the actions taken by the Council to deliver sand bags to affected households. An update on the Council's Emergency Planning arrangements, to include the Council's use of sandbags, has been requested for submission to a future meeting. | The Panel has requested for regular updates on drainage and flooding to be provided. | Invitation extended to the Projects and Assets Manager to attend the Panel's July meeting – awaiting confirmation. | 9/07/13 |
| 15/01/13 | <p><u>Statement of Consultation and Draft Revised SPD Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development</u></p> <p>Panel were provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft revised Wind Power SPD which was undergoing</p> | Comments have been forwarded to the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy | The consultation outcome report is expected in July 2013. This | 9/07/13 |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|--|---|--|--|----------------|
| | consultation. The Panel has expressed their concerns over a number of matters including the impact of cumulative developments upon the District, the absence of any limits set on the proximity of turbines to dwellings and the group size proposed for large scale developments. With regard to the latter, the Panel is of the view that 24 turbines on one site is not an appropriate policy to adopt for Huntingdonshire. Additionally, the Panel has requested for point (e) of the guidance to be reconsidered in respect of Ouse Valley area's landscape as it was felt that this required further clarification. | who advised that he would include Members views as part of the consultation. | item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. | |
| 10/07/12 & 9/04/13 11/06/13 | <u>Rural Transport</u> Report received on Transport for Cambridgeshire. A number of comments have been made and were conveyed to the Cabinet. The Panel wishes to review the provision of transportation in rural areas and has requested sight of the final report to be submitted to them at a future meeting. Councillor Mrs L Kadić appointed as the Panel's representative on the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Initiative. | Outcome of the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27th March 2013 reported to Members where discussion took place on Cambridgeshire Future Transport. | Further updates to be delivered in due course. | TBC |
| 12/03/13 11/06/13 | <u>Grounds Maintenance – Service Standards</u> Panel agreed to undertake a review of the Council's Grounds Maintenance budget. Report submitted on grounds maintenance service standards. An opportunity does exist to achieve savings in respect of litter picking. A number of suggestions were made by the Panel for further investigation by the Executive Councillor for Environment. Question was raised on the | | A report on litter picking will be submitted to the Panel in the Autumn. | 8/10/13 |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| | number of open cemeteries and closed churchyards that the Council currently maintains. Head of Operations undertook to circulate these details outside of the meeting. | Information requested from the Head of Operations. Response circulated to Panel via email on 18th June 2013. | | |
| 11/06/13 | <p><u>List of Areas for Potential Future Studies</u></p> <p>Panel agreed to the addition of the following subject areas to their work programme:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking management • The impact of large scale housing developments upon the A428 (subsequently agreed by the Joint Chairmen that this is a Local Plan issue and will not be taking the matter forward) • Local bus services within Towns • Recycling in Flats | Agreed to discuss how this work will proceed at their July meeting. | Panel to discuss this at their meeting. | 9/07/13 |
| | <p><u>Notice of Executive Decisions</u></p> <p>Local Plan (Stage 3 Consultation)</p> <p>Due to go before the Cabinet in May 2013 and on to the Panel thereafter in July 2013.</p> <p>A14</p> <p>Awaiting Government announcement. Update expected in shortly.</p> <p>Dairy Crest Fenstanton: Planning and Urban Design Framework</p> <p>Panel requested sight of the report prior to its submission to</p> | <p>Suggested by Chief Officers Management Team that the Panel should have sight of the consultation outcome report when it is available.</p> <p>Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning aware of Panel's interest in subject matter.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Assistant Director</p> | <p>Member Seminar detailing the outcome to be held on 10th July 2013 @ 5.45pm in Civic Suite.</p> <p>Update expected in October 2013.</p> <p>Report expected in early 2014.</p> | <p>8/10/13</p> <p>TBC</p> |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|------------|---|---|--|---|
| | <p>the Cabinet.</p> <p>Huntingdon West Masterplan</p> <p>Panel requested sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p> <p>Local Plan to 2036 – Proposed Submission</p> <p>Panel will have sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p> <p>Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines SPD</p> <p>Panel will have sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p> | <p>for Environment, Growth and Planning.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning.</p> | <p>Report expected October 2013.</p> <p>Report expected December 2013.</p> <p>Report expected November 2013.</p> | <p>8/10/13</p> <p>10/12/13</p> <p>12/11/13</p> |
| | <p><u>Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP)</u></p> <p>The Panel has a legal duty to scrutinise the work of the HSP, with the following thematic group falling within the Panel's remit:-</p> <p>Growth and Infrastructure</p> <p>Panel is yet to undertake some scrutiny of this thematic group.</p> | <p>The item will be programmed in for a future Panel meeting as appropriate.</p> | <p>Due to appear before the Panel in October 2013.</p> | <p>8/10/13</p> |

ACTION LOG

(Requests for information other than those covered within the Progress Report)

| <u>Date of Request</u> | <u>Description</u> | <u>Response</u> |
|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| | <i>None at present.</i> | |

Decision Digest

Edition 135

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 22nd May to 26th June 2013.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT

A copy of the final version of the Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Charter and Voluntary Sector Compact for Huntingdonshire was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). The compact seeks to achieve the objectives of the Localism Act 2011 by providing a framework within which the County, District, Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector can work in partnership to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Huntingdonshire for the benefit of the local community.

Huntingdonshire currently is the only Cambridgeshire authority to have a Charter and Compact document in place. The level of engagement in drafting the documents with both the Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector has been encouraging.

As both documents are still subject to final agreement with the Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector, the Panel will have sight of them again September prior to their submission to the Cabinet.

HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SHARED SERVICE REVIEW AND DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BUDGET

The outcome of a review of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) shared

service after its first year of operation was reported to both the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). Details of the ongoing demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) were also noted by the Panel.

Despite improvements made to reduce Occupational Therapy (OT) waiting times, the Panel is keen to see further reductions in the future. The Panel is also concerned over the dissolution of Cambridgeshire Community Services and the future OT service provision. An additional Surveyor has been appointed on a temporary basis to assist with the current backlog of casework in Huntingdonshire.

The Panel has noted the HIA's work plan for 2013/14 and suggested that the option of bringing contractors in house should be explored. A number of questions were raised relating to DFGs and a response to each was given to Members. In terms of the budgetary side of DFGs, the Panel suggested that the Council should review its commitment to financing these adaptations in the future.

Having been advised of the Panel's views, the Cabinet has requested Officers to undertake additional modelling of current and future demand for DFG's to feed into the Medium Term Plan process in September 2013.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have reviewed their work priorities for

2013/14 and the memberships of their respective Working Groups. All three Panels endorsed the content of an Overview and Scrutiny Protocol which provides a framework for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

The Social Well-Being Panel has established a Working Group to undertake a review of elderly patient care at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. The Panel also has agreed to include a review of Ambulance Service provision within its work programme. Given the Panel has developed its health scrutiny role over the previous few years, the Panel has also requested a report to be submitted to a future meeting on health trends within the District.

The Economic Well-Being Panel has identified a number of potential areas for future investigation which will be discussed further at its next meeting. These include –

- communications and marketing;
- treasury management – shared services;
- the A14;
- the Making Assets Count programme;
- estates; and
- the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Panel has also agreed to establish a small team to follow-up on the recommendations arising from the review of the Document Centre.

The Environmental Well-Being Panel has identified the following areas as potential future study areas and will discuss how this work will proceed at its July 2013 meeting:-

- car parking management;
- the impact of large scale housing development upon the A428;
- the A14;

- local bus services within Towns; and
- recycling in flats.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS

The outcome of a recent meeting of the Executive Leader's Strategy Group was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). The Panel's proposals relating to Local Joint Committees (LJCs) will be reviewed again by the Cabinet. Whilst there is support for the proposals, the Executive Leader has stressed that it will be permissive on local communities' part and that it will be up to groups of Parishes to organise, pay for and service the LJCs themselves. A report to this effect will be submitted to the Cabinet in due course.

The Panel has also agreed to widen its scope of work relating to the Local Plan 2036 in respect of social and affordable housing to include supported housing.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGULATION 123 AND INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14 LIST

The outcome of the public consultation on the Draft Huntingdonshire CIL Regulation 123 List has been reported to both the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). The List defines the types of infrastructure that the Council intends to fund from the Levy to ensure that there is no duplication between contributions from CIL and Section 106 Agreements.

Members have been informed that the Government continues to change the Regulations surrounding the Levy and is currently considering proposals to exempt self-build properties. The Council has responded to the consultation on this proposal on the basis that it should not be permitted

because small sites constitute a significant proportion of development within the District.

In view of the concerns which they had previously expressed the Panel has welcomed the work which has now started with town and parish councils to develop the way in which the District Council works with them on how their contributions will be spent.

In considering the contents of the report, a Panel Member has expressed concern that infrastructure previously negotiated by communities through already existing Urban Design Frameworks might not now be delivered. Whilst it is not possible to give any guarantees, the Deputy Executive Leader has explained that best endeavours will be made to meet existing commitments.

The Panel has asked a number of questions on a range of matters, which included the audit trail for the distribution of CIL monies and the publication of proposals for the new Local Plan after the consultation.

In approving the List, the Cabinet has stressed the need to work with Town and Parish Councils to identify their priorities as part of the next stage of the Business Plan process.

COMMUNICATIONS

A presentation on the Council's communications function has been given to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) by the Corporate Team Manager. The aim of the function is to achieve a cross Council, unified approach to communications and secure value for money.

As part of the presentation, the Panel has been advised of the work which is currently being undertaken to develop

an external communications strategy. It has been suggested that local Members could be a useful communications tool for the Council and they should be utilised more than they presently are.

The Panel has discussed the use that is made by the Council of Twitter and Facebook. Their attention having been drawn to the successful use of Twitter by Coventry City Council, Members have expressed the opinion that a more strategic approach should be adopted towards use of the facility. It has also been suggested that it may be useful to segment the twitter feeds for different groups of customers.

Members have also asked about the Council's list of Twitter followers and the ways in which the Council intends to improve on the current number of them.

Information on the budget for communications and the outcome of efforts being taken to measure the benefits of the work which the communications team does also was requested.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed the Council's treasury management performance for the year ending 31st March 2013. Members were pleased to note that the funds had performed well, significantly exceeding both the benchmark and the budgeted investment interest figure.

The Panel has commented on a range of issues including current economic trends and the problems being experienced by the Co-Operative Bank. The Accountancy Manager has been asked to provide the Panel with further

information on the estimated credit budget for the forthcoming year.

Members have noted that the Council's liability for VAT is reviewed annually by HMRC. The Panel has discussed whether there might be a benefit for the Council of transferring the leisure centres to a trust. However given that the Council's VAT liability is not wholly attributable to the leisure centres there would not be a total saving of the VAT sum.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has noted the contents of the report and has recommended to Council that they receive the Treasury Management Annual Report 2012/13.

REVIEW OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICE STANDARDS

The first stage of a review of grounds maintenance service standards was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being). The Panel agrees that the standards in respect of grass cutting should be retained at the current levels. The service has already been streamlined following a review undertaken back in 2011 and it is difficult to achieve further efficiency savings. There is however an opportunity to create efficiencies in respect of litter picking. A report outlining proposals to this effect will be submitted to the Panel in the autumn. The Executive Councillor for Environment has undertaken to investigate a number of suggestions made to him by the Panel once senior management's plans for savings have been published.

MEETING OUR OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED FOR HOUSING: MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION – SUPPORTING THE SPATIAL APPROACH 2011-2031

In conjunction with the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has endorsed the content of a Memorandum of Co operation on the assessment of future housing needs. The Memorandum refers to the Council's joint working with partner authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and demonstrated the Council's compliance with the Duty to Co-operate as contained within the Localism Act 2011.

Huntingdonshire will be contributing 21,000 homes within the Cambridge Sub-Region Housing Market Area by 2036 and it is expected that this figure will be achieved.

Matters discussed by the Panel include the methodology employed to determine housing allocations across each local authority area and the factors likely to cause an increase in demand for housing such as fluctuations in birth rates, the ageing population and local economic pressures.

The Cabinet has stressed the need to be mindful of the plans of neighbouring authorities outside the strategic housing area which may have considerable impact on the district.

HOUSING NEEDS COMPLAINT AWARD OF COMPENSATION

The Corporate Governance Panel has approved a compensation payment of £250. The payment relates to a complaint to the Ombudsman regarding a homelessness matter and will be set against a debt owed to the Council by the complainant relating to a bond

granted under the Rent Deposit scheme.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

All three Panels have noted the outcome of an exercise undertaken by a Working Group established to review the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny. The report concluded that the Panels were generally acting effectively in terms of the discharge of their responsibilities and fulfilling their terms of reference.

Concerns continue to be expressed that the North West Huntingdonshire pilot Local Joint Committee had not materialized as expected in the last year. The Social Well-Being Panel referred to the lack of any forum whereby the three tiers of local government and partners can meet to discuss issues of local concern for the benefit of the community. With this in mind, the Chairman suggested that the Deputy Executive Leader be asked to update the Panel on the progress being made with the pilot scheme.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENES OF INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, the Corporate Governance Panel has reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal audit and is satisfied with the Audit and Risk Manager's opinion that the areas of non-conformance were of a minor nature and not considered significant enough to warrant inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement.

FRAUD WORKING GROUP

Councillors E R Butler, K J Churchill, G J Harlock and P G Mitchell have been re appointed to the Fraud Working Group for the ensuing year.

ROLE OF THE EMPLOYMENT PANEL

Following review of the arrangements for the consideration of employment matters which were approved earlier in the year, the Employment Panel has been reminded about their new role and terms of reference.

In considering potential areas for investigation, Members have suggested a number of ideas which might form the basis of a work programme for the year. These included the culture of the organisation and the ways in which Managers managed their teams and staff grievances.

In terms of their future relationship with the Staff Council, the Panel has noted that the Chairman and Vice Chairman will continue to meet informally with employee representatives and that there would be opportunities for the Staff Council to raise issues with the Panel. Democratic Services undertook to clarify the process by which representatives could present directly to the Panel.

MANAGING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

As part of LGSS' commitment to review five policies and procedures per year, the Panel has reviewed and endorsed the content of a new policy for Managing Employee Performance.

The new Policy provides guidance to managers on how to help employees achieve and maintain good performance levels and where this falls below acceptable standards ensures that any potential issue is dealt with promptly, sensitively and consistently. It also provides guidance to employees where performance standards are not reached and the potential consequences for their continued employment.

Training on the application of the new policy will be extended to all managers across the organisation.

EMPLOYMENT REPORT – QUARTER 3

The Employment Panel received a quarterly report on Human Resource matters impacting on the performance of the organisation. The report included the latest position and trends relating to:-

- employee numbers;
- salary costs;
- employee turnover;
- sickness absence reporting; and
- Human Resources caseload.

The Panel noted that the average days sickness per FTE employee had increased to 8.9 days during the last quarter, which is higher than the corresponding period in the previous year. The Panel also received information on sickness levels being experienced by other public sector organisations and noted that there was a general upward trend.

Having noted that work was being undertaken to investigate a workplace based support service for staff that were experiencing stress at work, the Panel discussed the support which was currently available to staff from First Contact and Occupational Health services. Members were assured that these proposals would provide an additional work based service and that there was no desire to change the existing arrangements. The Panel requested further information on the existing services and an update on the proposals for work based counselling at a future meeting.

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR HR, PAYROLL AND ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Employment Panel considered the performance of LGSS Human Resources, Payroll and Organisational Workforce Development services across the key service measures put in place at the start of the contract over the period May 2012 to end of March 2013.

Whilst general service standards had been met, the Panel noted that there was further work to be done in Organisational & Workforce Development to encourage a greater take-up of training courses (only 304 places had been delivered out of a target of 500 in an 11 month period). LGSS will be working with Managers to help address this issue.

The Panel was assured that feedback on the LGSS contract is requested from managers and staff and been reminded that the LGSS contract represented a change in culture for many Managers and an expectation that managers are required to be more self sufficient. Further work is required to help staff understand their new roles and responsibilities, and this will be addressed as part of the training on new policies. The reinvigoration of the Council's Leadership programme also would help in this respect.

PAY REVIEW PROJECT

The Employment Panel has received an update on the progress being made on the Council's Pay Review project. It was noted that Stage 1, the evaluation and moderation process was nearing conclusion and was expected to be completed by mid July. LGSS will then commence work on the next stage of the project (Stage 2), which includes:-

- pay modelling / development of a new pay & grading framework;
- benchmarking;
- pay policy review;
- the consultation process; and
- the appeals procedure.

In response to comments made by representatives of the Staff Council and Members regarding the need to improve communications on the subject and to bring the process to a close as quickly as possible, the Panel was informed that the current timetable for the remainder of the project was to be considered by the new Managing Director. In this regard, the Panel has agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman should meet with the new Managing Director to seek to progress the matter further and that in the interim staff should be updated as to the current position.

REPRESENTATIONS ON ORGANISATIONS

The Cabinet has appointed representatives to serve on a variety of organisations for the ensuing year. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services, after consultation with the Deputy Executive Leader, has been authorised to make any changes to the schedule that may arise throughout the year.

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

A timetable for the acceptance of expressions of interests (EOI's) under the new Community Right to Challenge Initiative has been approved by the Cabinet.

The Right to Challenge was created by the Localism Act and introduces a right

for defined organisations and persons to submit an Expression of Interest in taking over the provision of a service on behalf of the Council. Where a valid expression is received, the Council will be required to undertake a procurement exercise for that service which may lead to the authority awarding a contract for the service provision. The timetable identifies when services will be open for receiving EOI's.

LOAN TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE

The Cabinet has approved, in principle the provision of a loan to Huntingdonshire Regional College to fund the expansion of their facilities. The College will provide security in the form of a charge against an area of land, the valuation of which exceeds the value of the loan. The Assistant Director, Finance and Resources has been requested to finalise the details of the loan, after consultation with the Executive Leader and the Executive Councillor for Resources.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

At its June meeting, the Development Management Panel considered nine development applications of which six were approved, three refused and one deferred. These included consent for a scheme of eight dwellings on a site in Holme which would provide two affordable homes via a related S106 Agreement.

Having regard to two appeals against non determination, the Panel has indicated to the Planning Inspector that it would have been minded to refuse applications for a proposed food store and residential development on Stukeley Road, Hartford and 6 wind turbines and associated infrastructure, south west of RAF Molesworth, Bythorn.

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