

# Central Lincolnshire Policy S16 Wider Energy Infrastructure Evidence Report

Formerly Policy S15

March 2022



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan is being updated since the first Local Plan for Central Lincolnshire, an area covering the districts of City of Lincoln, North Kesteven and West Lindsey, was adopted in April 2017.
- 1.2 This Evidence Report (which is one of a collection) provides background information and justification for Policy S16, which relates to wider energy infrastructure. The policy supports, in principle, proposals which are necessary for, or form part of, the transition to a net zero carbon sub region, requiring that all reasonable opportunities to mitigate harm arising from a proposal are taken.

## 2. Policy Context

### National Policy and Guidance

- 2.1. Since the Central Lincolnshire Plan was adopted the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2018, with subsequent additional changes being published in February 2019 and in July 2021.
- 2.2. Chapter 2 of the NPPF sets out national policy for achieving sustainable development, and separates it out into three objectives – economic, social and environmental. Within the environmental objective, “*mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy*” forms a key part of achieving sustainable development – a key goal of the planning system.
- 2.3. Paragraph 20 of the NPPF sets out the strategic matters that should be addressed through strategic policies, including “*planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.*”
- 2.4. Chapter 14 of the NPPF provides national planning policy relating to climate change. It provides some clarity on the expectations of how Local Plans should address the challenges of climate change in paragraph 152 where it says:

*“The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.”*
- 2.5. Paragraph 155 of the NPPF goes onto state that to increase the use and supply of renewable energy, plans should:
  - a) *provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);*
  - b) *consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and*
  - c) *identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers.*

- 2.6. This all makes it clear that there is a duty for Local Plans to proactively plan to deliver a renewable and low carbon energy future.
- 2.7. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was first introduced in 2014 and offers 'live' government guidance. The PPG provides guidance to help in the implementation of policy in the NPPF.
- 2.8. The PPG includes a section of guidance titled [Renewable and low carbon energy](#). In this section it provides guidance for how Local Planning Authorities should plan for renewable and low carbon energy including setting out its importance:

*“Increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. Planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Local Policy

- 2.9. The current Local Plan (2017) does not include any policy provision in relation to wider energy infrastructure. While there is overarching support for renewable energy development as well as sustainable development, the Local Plan contains no specific policy considerations in relation to the principle of development of wider energy infrastructure to support transition to a zero-carbon economy.

## 3. Context and Evidence

- 3.1. Consultants were appointed in July 2020 to investigate the scale of Central Lincolnshire's contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, and the opportunities that exist to tackle these problems locally, including through the Local Plan.
- 3.2. This work set out the overarching context for Central Lincolnshire identifying what would need to be done in order to achieve a carbon neutral Central Lincolnshire by 2050 (and 2041 to align to the science-based approach) to accord with the Paris Agreement. This research painted a very challenging picture to achieve these goals.
- 3.3. The Central Lincolnshire Local Plan is striving to deliver a carbon neutral Central Lincolnshire: policy S16 is essential to ensure that the delivery of the energy infrastructure needed to achieve this goal is not jeopardised.

## 4. Issues and Options Consultation

- 4.1. The Issues and Options Consultation in 2019 did not include any specific question around the delivery of wider energy infrastructure to support the transition to net zero carbon.

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<sup>1</sup> PPG Reference ID: 5-001-20140306

## 5. Regulation 18 Consultation

- 5.1. A Consultation Draft of the Local Plan was published for consultation between 30 June and 24 August 2021. During this eight week consultation comments were received on the plan, the policies within the plan, and supporting information and evidence.
- 5.2. There was a mixed response to the draft policy, with some in support and others raising objections. There was objection to the 'carte-blanche' approach, plus concerns regarding batteries and battery storage in terms of hazards and safety.
- 5.3. Consideration has been given to the responses to the Consultation Draft Local Plan, and in view of the clear direction of the NPPF and national guidance, the proposed policy and supporting text have not been amended from that of the previous draft.

## 6. Proposed Approach in Proposed Submission Local Plan

- 6.1. The preferred policy approach, as presented in the draft Local Plan, expresses support, in principle, for development or significant investment in new and upgraded energy infrastructure which is necessary for or forms part of the transition to a net zero sub-region.
- 6.2. This policy approach follows the recognition that there is a need to move away from fossil fuels (gas, petrol, diesel, oil) towards low carbon alternatives. Moving away from fossil fuels to low carbon alternatives will increase demand for electricity and as a result, electrical infrastructure, and electricity management and storage will need to adapt and expand.

## 7. Reasonable Alternative Options

- 7.1. The alternative policy approach considered was to have no local level policy, and instead rely on national policy and guidance.
- 7.2. This option was discounted through the sustainability appraisal process because it is not likely to have any impact upon any of the sustainability objectives, while the preferred approach has some potential for positive sustainability impacts. While the impacts of the preferred approach are uncertain, given the fact that such infrastructure proposals may not be dealt with by a Central Lincolnshire authority/ authorities, the potential for positive impacts exists in the instances where they are.

## 8. Conclusion

- 8.1. This Evidence Report demonstrates the rationale for the proposed policy as contained in the Proposed Submission Central Lincolnshire Local Plan. This helps bring together relevant evidence that has informed this policy and how we have responded to comments received during the plan making process, as well as how the latest evidence and national guidance has been taken into account.