

# Community Energy Policy

## - Preliminary Draft -

### Introduction

### Purpose

To provide the criteria to assess development proposals for community generation projects

The Community Energy policies address

Community Energy Generation on

- i. a commercial scale (e.g. solar farm)
- ii. new residential/business developments sharing common energy generation facility
- iii. EV Charging

### Definition

Community energy is:

- about people and communities taking democratic control over their energy future generating, using, owning, and saving energy in their communities. (Community Energy England)
- refers to the delivery of community-led renewable energy, energy demand reduction and energy supply projects, whether wholly owned and/or controlled by communities or through a partnership with commercial or public sector partners. (Community Energy England)

It does not include private individual residential or business schemes.

A community can be:

- The totality of residents and businesses that make up and reside or trade within the parish of Stratfield Mortimer, or
- a residential or business community which agree to come together to share a common energy facility

### Relevant NPPF and WBC LPR policies

- WBC LPR DM4.3 Renewable Energy

## **Policies**

### **Commercial Scale**

Development Proposal for a Community Energy scheme shall:

- have the overt support of a majority of the community and be promoted by the Stratfield Mortimer community at the pre-planning and the planning stages
- conceived by the community independently or in partnership with a community organisation and/or a developer (commercial or non-profit), or other third party
- give people and communities democratic control over their future renewable energy including the assets and financial surplus
- have the support of the wider community and community immediately adjacent to installations
- produce social, economic, or environmental benefits, which are inclusive and accessible to all within the local community over the lifetime of the project. ensuring financial surpluses are recycled for further community investments identified and desired by the local community

### **Landscape and Environment**

Development proposals shall:

- demonstrate to the satisfaction of the community it is sited and of a scale appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape
- include hedges and landscaping around the perimeter of energy farms providing screening and important wildlife habitat
- avoids any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and the local/adjacent residential and business environment. [See DM4.3]

## **Biodiversity**

- Development proposals will conserve and/or enhance biodiversity e.g. grazing beneath the panels and the creation of wildlife meadows. Hedges and landscaping around the perimeter of such farms shall provide screening and important wildlife habitat shall increase biodiversity by a minimum of 10%

## **Third Party Commercial Developments**

Third Party development proposals shall adhere to the 'Landscape and Environment' and 'Biodiversity' policies in this Plan. It will also consult with the community to take into account local opinion and concerns.

## **Residential and Business Shared Facilities**

- Development applications for residential and commercial shared energy services will be encouraged and supported. These schemes shall demonstrate they have:
  - i. the overt support of the community investing in, promoting and/or joining the scheme at the pre-planning and the planning stages
  - ii. that residents adjacent that might be affected by the scheme are consulted and concerns are taken fully into account
- New builds or major renovations applications will demonstrate that such shared services have been considered and if it is proposed not to install these provide the evidence to justify that decision.
- All applications for such schemes shall avoid any significant detrimental effect on the landscape and the local residents, residential and business environment.

## **EV Charging**

EV Charging on new developments, residential and commercial, shall at minimum:

- satisfy the latest building regulations

- provide
  - i. 7kW charge points on residential developments
  - ii. 50kW (or should it be higher to future proof say 150 250kw) on non-residential public car parks.

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## **Supporting Text**

1. Community energy generation,
  - a. Commercial scale, sustainable and economic, assessing alternative opportunities (type such as solar farm, potential locations, and outline business case)
  - b. Bulk purchasing opportunities - insulation, solar panels.
  - c. Improving Energy Efficiency of public buildings
  - d. EV Charging
    - i. Provision of EV charging for new residential and commercial developments including public car parking space will be in accord with the latest relevant building regulation
2. Evidence
  - a. July 2022 consultation
  - b. November 2022 consultation
3. Considerations
  - a. Neighbourhood planning in a climate emergency Renewable Energy pp 25 - 37
  - b. How green is my plan Rural Renewable Energy pp 3-4 (include score)
4. Reference relevant NPPF, WBC policies and Building regulations
5. Proposals are to encourage to be of a scale in the range 1-3 Gw and not larger than 5 acres in area. (???)

## **Projects (NewNP)**

1. Commercial Scale developments
2. Installation on existing public car parks

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27 March 2024

Check List – will our NP policies cover the following?

- Has a policy supporting the general **YES**
- Has a policy which gives specific support for community owned or led renewables. **YES**
- Includes support for commercial or community scale renewable energy, e.g. significantly larger than domestic scale. **YES**
- Has a policy giving support to renewable energy generation, and sets out specific criteria against which renewable energy proposals will be judged. **YES**
- Has a policy which identifies specific sites as being suitable for renewable energy projects. **No developments will be projects outside the NP**
- Our policy gives specific support to:
  - Rooftop solar
  - Heat pumps
  - Micro-hydro
  - Cropping of woodlands for wood fuel
  - Ground mounted solar (inc solar farms)
  - Anaerobic digestion (often using agriculture by-products)
  - District heating
  - Onshore wind (and identifies suitable areas for wind development)

**Implied support for all these forms.**

26<sup>th</sup> November 2023

27 March 2024