

Protecting Residents from the Impact of On-shore Wind Turbines

A Motion to be put to the Full Council of Torridge District

This Council notes the concern that residents in Torridge have expressed concerning the development of on-shore wind turbines, and the potential of these turbines to create low-frequency noise (infrasound) disturbance to residents.

Key principles (i) and (viii) from PPS 22 on renewables suggests that:

(i) Renewable energy developments should be capable of being accommodated throughout England in locations where the technology is viable and environmental, economic, and social impacts can be addressed satisfactorily.

(viii) Development proposals should demonstrate any environmental, economic and social benefits as well as how any environmental and social impacts have been minimised through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures.

However the current guidance on renewables, PPS22 and ETSU-R-97, do not take into account new evidence of the health impacts of low-frequency noise (infrasound) on residents.

Together with the ongoing issues of visual intrusion, this Council proposes that:

(1) a request is made to Government to update the ETSU-R-97 guidelines to take on board the latest evidence including that of the impact of low-frequency noise (infrasound) on residents;

(2) in accordance with PPS22, the development of a Supplementary Planning Document should set out the guidelines and criteria for the development of on-shore wind turbines in Torridge;

(3) broad criteria should be used to set out the considerations that developers of on-shore wind turbine sites should address in relation to local communities. These should ensure that proposals are not permitted if they would have a significant long term detrimental impact on the amenity of people living nearby;

(4) using the example of guidance from Scotland (PAN45), as a general rule a separation distance of 2km between turbines and the edge of towns and villages should be adopted in the Supplementary Planning Document, unless it can be demonstrated that (i) there are no suitable sites complying with this requirement; and (ii) the proposed turbines do not adversely affect the living conditions of the residents of those communities.

(5) to assist in speeding up the planning process, pre-planning discussions with a developer of on-shore wind turbines should include an invitation for the developer to devise a scheme such that any person who resides (and owns that property) within a specified distance of a wind turbine is guaranteed a price for their property by the developer for a period of years.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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