

**Planning Technical Advice Note:  
Renewable / Low Carbon Energy Requirement  
for New Development**

February 2012



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## 1. Introduction

Coventry City Council's requirement for the provision of on-site renewable energy for new development is outlined in Section 4.9 of the 'Delivering a More Sustainable City' Supplementary Planning Document<sup>1</sup>, adopted in January 2009. This states:

'In all major developments, a minimum of 10% of the development's energy requirements should be provided through the on-site generation of renewable energy'.

The purpose of this document is to explain the policy in more detail and provide planning applicants with guidance on what information needs to be provided in order to demonstrate that the requirement has been met. It covers the following:

- policy context (Section 2)
- renewable energy requirement - description, scope and interpretation (Section 3)
- information requirements – gives an explanation of the information to be submitted with the planning application (Section 4)
- frequently asked questions (Section 5)
- contacts – how to get in touch with us (Section 6).

## 2. Policy context

### Background

Local planning policies requiring a specified proportion of a development's energy demand to be supplied using on-site renewables are now commonplace. Such policies are mandated through the Planning and Energy Act<sup>2</sup>, which states:

*'A local planning authority in England may in their development plan documents.....include planning policies for:*

- a) a proportion of energy used in development in their area to be energy from renewable sources in the locality of the development;*
- b) a proportion of energy used in development in their area to be low carbon energy from sources in the locality of the development;*
- c) development in their area to comply with energy efficiency standards that exceed the energy requirements of building regulations'.*

In addition, policies relating renewable energy provision within new development must have regard to the government's national planning policy statements (PPS), the most relevant being PPS22<sup>3</sup>, which covers renewable energy, and the supplement to PPS1<sup>4</sup>, which deals with planning and climate change. Paragraph 8 of PPS 22 says:

*'Local planning authorities may include policies in local development documents that require a percentage of the energy to be used in new residential, commercial or industrial developments to come from on-site renewable energy developments'.*

<sup>1</sup> Coventry City Council (2009). *Delivering a More Sustainable City. Supplementary Planning Document* [Available at [http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/835/delivering\\_a\\_more\\_sustainable\\_city](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/835/delivering_a_more_sustainable_city) ]

<sup>2</sup> Planning and Energy Act 2008 (c.21)

<sup>3</sup> ODPM (2004). *Planning Policy Statement 22: Renewable Energy*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, HMSO

<sup>4</sup> ODPM (2007). *Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change. Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, HMSO

This is echoed in the PPS1 supplement, which states that planning authorities should:  
*'set out a target percentage of the energy to be used in new development to come from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon energy sources where it is viable.....and, in bringing forward targets, set out the type and size of development to which the target will be applied'.*

#### *Coventry Development Plan (2001)<sup>5</sup>*

The Development Plan sets out the framework for development within the city. Policy OS4 of the Plan deals with sustainability, stating:

*'The developing concepts and techniques of sustainability will be applied through policies in this plan to:*

- *Ensure the efficient use and re-use of land and buildings*
- *Encourage rational modes and patterns of travel*
- *Promote the good stewardship of the natural and built environment*

*Sustainability assessments will be required in respect of large-scale or high impact development proposals in order to establish the best practicable mix of land uses and design of developments and relationship to the built and natural environment'.*

#### *Supplementary Planning Document: Delivering a More Sustainable City (2009)<sup>1</sup>*

The SPD was adopted in early 2009, and its purpose is to provide information for applicants on meeting the requirements of Policy OS4 of the Development Plan. Key requirements are outlined in Section 4.9, and are arranged under the following headings:

- Energy
- Materials
- Contaminated land
- Travel
- Waste and recycling
- Water
- Air quality

The energy section lists key considerations which must be taken into account for new development, including: how natural heating, cooling, ventilation and light will be used; how energy from renewable and/or low carbon sources will be used; what building controls will be incorporated; and whether there is potential for using district energy.

For developments to which the SPD applies, applicants are expected to provide a sustainability assessment detailing how the requirements will be met.

### **3. Renewable / low carbon energy requirement**

#### **3.1. Types of development included**

The requirement applies to new development only; applications for a change of use or refurbishment of an existing development are not covered. All major types of new development qualify for inclusion. For the purpose of Coventry City Council's renewable energy requirement, major developments are considered to be:

- Residential schemes of 10 more dwellings,
- or with a site area of greater than 0.5 hectares
- Other development with a site area of
- 1 hectare or more, or where the total floor space is 1000m<sup>2</sup> or greater

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<sup>5</sup> Coventry City Council (2001). *The Coventry Development Plan 2001*. [Available at [http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/490/coventry\\_development\\_plan\\_2001](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/490/coventry_development_plan_2001) ]

In addition, where a development:

- is not in line with policies contained in development plans; or
- could give rise to significant environmental or transport impacts; or
- may result in the loss of employment land or green space; or
- could have an impact on adjoining Conservation Areas, listed buildings, or sites of national or local ecological interest

the requirement may apply, even if the development does not meet the size criteria described above.

If further clarification or advice is needed, contact should be made with the Council at an early stage. Contact details are shown in Section 5 below.

### **3.2. Permissible renewable / low carbon energy types**

Provided the system is sized and sited appropriately, any of the commonly-used renewable and low carbon technologies are permissible.

These include:

- Solar thermal systems
- Solar photovoltaics
- Ground source heat pumps
- Water source heat pumps
- Air source heat pumps
- Wind turbines
- Hydro turbines
- Biomass boilers
- Combined heat and power systems (mains gas or renewable) (see note below)
- Anaerobic digesters
- District heating schemes (see note below).

More novel technologies such as fuel cells may also be accepted, but if the intention is to use a non-standard technology the Council should be consulted prior to an application being submitted.

#### *Notes:*

- a Where a development consists of more than one building, the renewable/low carbon energy system can be designed such that either:
  - Each individual building independently meets the requirement, or;
  - The requirement is met for the development as a whole, but without each individual building necessarily meeting it. However, if the development is to occur in phases, each phase must meet the requirement at the time of its construction – i.e. compliance cannot be deferred to a later phase - unless by prior agreement with the Council.
- b Although the requirement relates to meeting a proportion of a development's energy requirement through on site renewables, consideration should also be given to the predicted carbon savings. This will depend on both the technology used and the fuel type being displaced.
- c The inclusion of a particular technology type in the above list does not automatically suggest that it is a suitable choice for a given development or location. In addition to the

energy generated and the carbon saved, when selecting a technology there are certain practical considerations which need to be taken into account, including:

- The potential for the creation of a nuisance (noise, vibration, odour, fumes, etc.)
- Impact on air quality<sup>6</sup>
- Availability, sustainability and storage of fuel (for biomass installations)
- Maintenance requirements
- Impacts on visual amenity of the surrounding area, particularly if the site is within a Conservation Area or close to a Listed Building.

d Where CHP systems or district heating schemes fired by mains gas are being proposed they should be sized such that they give a 10% *saving* on the total energy consumed.

Full coverage of these issues is beyond the scope of this guidance, but any detailed planning application (i.e. a Full or Reserved Matters application) must demonstrate they have been adequately considered.

### 3.3. Meaning of 'energy requirements'

For the purpose of this policy, 'energy requirements' are considered to be the *total* energy used in the building, i.e. both Regulated and Unregulated energy. Regulated energy is covered by the Building Regulations and includes that used for space heating, hot water, lighting, and to run pumps and fans. Unregulated energy is the remaining energy and includes that used to run appliances/equipment and for cooking.

*Note:*

The renewable energy provided to meet Coventry City Council's planning requirement as described in this document should not be used to achieve the Target Emissions Rate (TER) required by Building Regulations. That is, compliance with Building Regulations should be achieved independently of meeting the 10% renewable/low carbon energy requirement.

## 4. Information requirements

This section explains what information needs to be submitted with your planning application in order to demonstrate that the renewables / low carbon energy requirement outlined above has been met. The level of detail required will depend on the type of permission being sought.

### 4.1. Outline applications

At the outline planning stage the available information will be limited. However, it is important for consideration to be given at an early stage to how the renewable requirements will be met, as there may be implications for the design and cost of the development.

For outline applications the following information should be submitted:

- *Description of the development* – overall size, use class(es), building type(s), and estimated size / number of units (as far as known)
- *Assessment of the predicted annual energy demand* – use published benchmarking data such as CIBSE Energy Benchmarks (TM46:2008)<sup>7</sup>, typical SAP calculations with an allowance for non-regulated energy, or other relevant sources of information as appropriate. In all cases the assessment method and source(s) of data used must be clearly stated

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<sup>6</sup> The whole of Coventry has been designated as an Air Quality Management Area, which means that it must be demonstrated that any proposed new development will not adversely impact on air quality.

<sup>7</sup> Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (2008). *TM47: Energy Benchmarks*. CIBSE

- *Outline assessment of possible renewable/low carbon options and, for those technologies which are deemed to be suitable, an indication of the installed capacity which would be required to meet the 10% renewables requirement.*

#### 4.2. Full / reserved matters applications

At the detailed planning application stage the following information should be submitted:

- *Description of the development* – overall size, use class(es), building type(s), and number/size(s) of units
- *Assessment of the predicted annual energy demand* – use benchmarking or other data as described in section 4.1 or, where available, building modelling data (SAP, SBEM, etc.)
- *Full assessment of renewable / low carbon energy options* considered for the site
- *Full details of the selected technology* (or technologies), to include:
  - System description, supported by site plans
  - Installed capacity and estimated output
  - Relevant operational considerations. These will depend on the technology but may include: fuel storage and delivery arrangements, avoidance of nuisance and air quality issues and arrangements for maintenance.

#### 4.3. Format of information

The information can be submitted in a number of different formats, as follows:

- a) As a standalone report
- b) As a section of the sustainability assessment (see Section 2 above), or
- c) As a section of the design and access statement.

*Note:*

In conjunction other local authorities in the sub-region and the Carbon Trust, Coventry City Council has produced a web-based toolkit - known as Enplanner - specifically to assist developers in demonstrating compliance with renewable energy requirements. Basic information about the site (location, size, type, build specification, etc.) is entered as inputs, and the software estimates the energy demand of the development and gives an indication of the available renewable energy resources at the location. The user can then explore different options for meeting planning requirements and, once a technology (or combination of technologies) has been selected, an energy statement can be generated. This can form part of the information submitted to demonstrate compliance with planning requirements, as referred to above. It is free to register as an Enplanner user, but a charge of £72 (inclusive of VAT) per energy statement generated applies. For further information, visit <http://enplanner.com/>

### 5. Frequently asked questions

*What happens if the site isn't suitable for renewable technologies and therefore can't meet the 10% requirement?*

There may be instances where there are restrictions at the site which mean that it is not possible to meet the requirement. In such cases you will still be required to show that you have considered all reasonable options and give a clear explanation as to why you consider the requirement cannot be met. If the Council accepts the case made, a lower target may be accepted. Alternatively, it may be possible to achieve carbon reduction through improving the design of the building such that it exceeds Building Regulations minimum standards. However, if this is the approach you are planning to take, it is important that it is discussed with the Council *before* submitting an application.

*Will my planning application be turned down if I do not meet the requirement?*

The extent to which you comply with the requirements outlined in the Delivering a More Sustainable City SPD is an important consideration in determining a planning application. In line with recent new guidance from central government<sup>8</sup>, all applications will be subject to the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that your application will be approved and without delay provided any identified impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. In the Coventry context, it has been identified that one of the ways in which development can be made sustainable is through the provision of on-site renewable energy, as detailed in this guidance note.

*How do you expect me to pay for these requirements, especially at a time when there is less and less money available?*

It is recognised that councils must ensure that they do not place undue burdens on the development industry. Costs of compliance with the 10% renewables requirement will vary widely according to the characteristics of the site in question and the type(s) of technology selected. The Enplanner toolkit referred to in Section 4 allows a range of renewable technologies, some of which may not previously have been considered, to be explored, which may result in a more cost-effective solution being found. Furthermore, renewable/low carbon technologies can result in significantly lower building running costs and some will qualify for payments through the Feed-in Tariff<sup>9</sup> or Renewable Heat Incentive<sup>10</sup> schemes, factors which will potentially increase the attractiveness of the development to prospective purchasers or tenants, with corresponding increases in resale or rental value.

## 6. Contacts

### Planning Policy

Floor 6, Civic Centre 4, Much Park Street, Coventry CV1 2PY  
Telephone: 024 7683 1431  
Email: [ldf@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@coventry.gov.uk)

### Development Management

Floor 3, Civic Centre 4, Much Park Street, Coventry CV1 2PY  
Telephone: 024 7683 1212 or 1213  
Email: [planning@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:planning@coventry.gov.uk)

### Sustainability Services

Floor 1, Civic Centre 4, Much Park Street, Coventry CV1 2PY  
Telephone: 024 7683 2320  
Email: [climate.change@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:climate.change@coventry.gov.uk)

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<sup>8</sup> Communities and Local Government (2011). Draft National Planning Policy Framework. [Available at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicyframework/> ]

<sup>9</sup> Further information can be found at: [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting\\_energy/renewable\\_ener/feedin\\_tariff/feedin\\_tariff.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting_energy/renewable_ener/feedin_tariff/feedin_tariff.aspx)

<sup>10</sup> Further information can be found at: [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting\\_energy/renewable\\_ener/incentive/incentive.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting_energy/renewable_ener/incentive/incentive.aspx)