

Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Communities

Report to:	County Council
Date:	22 February 2013
Subject:	Wind Farm Policy

Summary:

This report summarises the results of a community engagement exercise conducted in December 2012 and January 2013. The County Council sought the views of the Lincolnshire public on its approach to locating wind farm developments. The wind farm questionnaire was administered through an online survey and an article included in the County News. There has been a healthy response amounting to approximately 4,000 completed questionnaires. The results indicate strong support for the Council's Wind Energy Position Statement.

Recommendation(s):

Members are asked to:

1. Note the results of the Council's Wind Farm Questionnaire; and,
2. Approve the Wind Energy Position Statement as the County Council's policy towards the location of wind farm development.

1. Background

The County Council adopted a Wind Energy Position Statement in June 2012 (available for viewing on the Lincolnshire County Council website). Following publication, much national and local interest was expressed by local authorities and the general public. Following this feedback, it was considered appropriate by the Council to invite the Lincolnshire public to voice their opinion on the important matter of where to locate new wind farm development.

On 17 December 2012 an online questionnaire was made available on the County Council's website. This was supplemented by an article and paper questionnaire in the County News on 31 December 2012. This magazine is distributed to every household in the county.

The questionnaire comprised 8 discrete questions reflecting the content of the Position Statement which was referenced on the website and in the County News. The deadline for completing the questionnaire was 21 January 2013. The results of the questionnaire are included in Appendix A to this report and may be summarised thus:

- Total Number of Responses was 3,973;
- Responses originated from all Lincolnshire districts, but particularly from East Lindsey (28%) and South Kesteven (20%);
- Over 60% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that wind farms should play a part in meeting Lincolnshire's future energy needs;
- Between 82% and 92% of respondents thought that the criteria included in the Council's Position Statement were either "very important" or important";
- 87% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the Council's Position Statement should be taken into consideration by local planning authorities and developers when deciding where to locate new developments.

2. Conclusion

The results from the Wind Farm Questionnaire indicate very strong support for the Council's approach to wind farm development. The Position Statement now has the benefit of community engagement which has allowed the Lincolnshire public to express its views. These will be taken into account by the County Council which will use the Position Statement as its formal policy approach when considering wind farm developments.

3. Legal Comments:

As the County Council is not the local planning authority for this type of development, it has no ability to make planning statements or policy. The District Councils through the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, or Local Plans, are responsible for preparing and adopting land use policies on renewable energy. However, the County Council is a consultee on these draft policies, and in the case of Central Lincolnshire and South East Lincolnshire, has an input into the development of the draft policies and also may need to give comments on proposals for new wind farms. In such cases the Position Statement, if approved, will be used to inform the County Council's response on these issues.

4. Resource Comments:

There are no direct financial implications arising out of acceptance of the recommendations in this paper. Should such implications arise in due course they will be considered as part of the normal budget setting process of the Council.

5. Consultation

a) Has Local Member Been Consulted?

n/a

b) Has Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

Yes

c) Scrutiny Comments

Not consulted.

d) Policy Proofing Actions Required

Impact Analysis completed. No adverse impact.

6. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Statistical Breakdown of the Wind Farm Questionnaire Results

7. Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Wind Energy Position Statement	LCC Website

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