Community Energy Policy

Policy Statement

Community Energy - Commercial Scale

The development of a Community Energy scheme is encouraged and will be supported if it accords with the criteria set out below:

- Developed and operated under a Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council legal entity ensuring democratic control over the type of energy generation technology, location, design, operation, future developments, assets, and financial surplus.
- Social, economic, and environmental benefits are inclusive and accessible to all within the local community.
- Financial surpluses are recycled for further community investments identified and desired by the local community.
- A viable business case for the lifetime of the scheme supported by confirmed financing arrangements.
- Overt support of a majority of the community by referendum.
- Satisfies WBC policy DM4 clause B i-iv with particular weight given to clause B iv.

Landscape and Environment

- Development proposals shall include hedges and landscaping around the perimeter providing screening and important wildlife habitat.

Biodiversity

- Developments shall increase biodiversity by a minimum of 10% and enhance green corridors.

Design

- Proposals shall adhere to the relevant WBC and NPPF policies and Design Codes in this plan.

Third Party Commercial Developments

Third Party development proposals shall:

- Adhere to the relevant WBC and NPPF policies and Design Codes in this plan.

- Consult with the community and positively respond to local opinion and concerns.
- Satisfy WBC policy DM4 clause B i-iv with particular weight given to clause B iv.
- Include hedges and landscaping around the perimeter providing screening and important wildlife habitat.
- Increase biodiversity by a minimum of 10% and enhance green corridors.
- Provide the community (Parish Council) with at least 2% of the developer's annual revenue stream each year for the life of the scheme to be used for community benefit.

Residential and Business Shared Facilities

Existing Sites

Applications for residential and commercial shared energy services will be encouraged and supported. Applicants seeking planning permission shall:

- Consult with residents adjacent to and/or might be affected by the scheme.
- Adhere to the relevant Design Codes in this plan.
- Satisfy national regulations for private energy generation.
- Satisfy the policies set out in WBC policy SP 5 clause e and DM 4 3. clause B i-iv with particular weight given to clause B iv.

New Developments

Applications seeking planning permission shall:

- Satisfy national regulations for private energy generation with the appropriate certification.
- Satisfy the policies set out in WBC policy SP 5 clause e and DM 4 3. clause B i-iv with particular weight given to clause B iv.
- Have a documented formal maintenance programme, contractual arrangement including named organisation(s) which will have responsibility for the longer-term oversight and management of the scheme, and legal safeguards, steps, and mitigation, should the management company fail, or is taken over, to ensure the commitment for the development and maintenance is sustained.
- An agreed cost for the maintenance programme including the formula for increasing the costs over the lifetime of the scheme.
- Adhere to the relevant Design Codes in this plan.

EV Charging

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

- Satisfy the latest building regulations.
- Provide 7kW charge points on residential developments and 150kW on non-residential public car parks.

Supporting Text

Purpose

- To encourage the community to investigate a community energy project
- To provide the criteria for assessment of development proposals
- To set minimum levels of power for EV Charging

Definitions

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, 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.

(The Centre for Sustainable Energy report 'Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency' (pp25-37).

Projects

Community Energy

The development of proposals is outside this Neighbourhood Plan. The judgement is that the running of a project to explore options for a possible community energy scheme, to gain the support of the community and to over-see its establishment is best done by a dedicated team. Such a team should be sponsored by SMPC possibly under the auspices of the Greening Mortimer campaign. This team would work in partnership with a delivery partner who would develop and operate the site for this purpose.

The policies set out the criteria that such a project shall satisfy. The Term of Reference of the project team would be set by the sponsoring body (SMPC) and in doing so should take into full account the policies in this plan.

Discussing specific projects – technology and sites - for the development of renewable energy projects can be sensitive. The Community for Sustainable Energy has produced detailed workshop resources to help

- (centreforsustainableenergy.ams3.digitaloceanspaces.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/18215641/neighbourhood-planning-in-a-climate-emergency-feb-2020.pdf).
- A complete set of the workshop resources can be freely accessed on www.cse.org.uk/projects/view/1315

The objectives of the workshops are to

- develop a consensus about what would and wouldn't be acceptable within the neighbourhood. They would
- explore with your community what is important about your landscape,
- develop objective information on the pros and cons of different renewable energy options (see introductory videos on different forms of renewable energy at (www.youtube.com/csebristol/videos).

The workshop outputs should provide the basis for a renewable energy strategy and schemes

Evidence required to support a community energy project include:

Call for Sites and Site Options Assessment (SOA) to identify available, suitable, and developable sites for energy;

Landscape evidence, to supplement the suitability analysis of the above;

Habitat Regulation Assessment and Strategic Environment Assessment to support the plan overall;

Financial business case including assured funding.

Legal contracts.

Safeguards, steps and mitigation, should the management company fail, or is taken over, to ensure the commitment for the development and maintenance is sustained. This should include the contractual arrangement including named organization(s) which will have responsibility for the longer-term oversight and management of the scheme.

Community consultation.

- Proposals should be of an appropriate scale in the range 1-3 Gw and not larger than 5 acres in area.

Residential and Business Shared Facilities

WBC Policies SP5 and DM 4 require new development to incorporate on-site energy generation.

Possible technologies on existing sites and new developments could be

- wired micro-grids where rooftop generation and battery stores to serve residential and commercial sites without exporting/importing to the grid. These technologies should be considered by a developer in the design of a development. (see www.hn-lc.org.uk/energy-local-north-oxfordshire and

https://www.karbonhomes.co.uk/about-us/media-centre/news/solar-power-battery-storage-system-set-to-boost-the-energy-efficiency-of-new-homes/)

- heat pump technology is an alternative. If a heat pump scheme is proposed it must not give rise to sound pollution.

It is important that any scheme remains viable for the life of the scheme including maintenance and financial implications for residents. The management of the installation shall be determined for example, whether it be a resident's team, a named third party.

Responsibilities of residents shall be documented.

EV Charging

Building regulations Part S - Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles' has been introduced to the Building Regulations 2010 sets out the requirements for the provision of charging points for both residential and commercial properties. These do not establish the charging power to be provided. This plan rectifies this stating minimum kW power for charging points of 7.5kw for residential and 150kw for public spaces including car parks and business premises.

Evidence

Community Support

70% of respondents to the July 2022 on-line questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed they would like to see more renewable energy generation in the Parish. 65% of responses to the November open forum said they would like to see a community energy generation scheme.

Relevant NPPF and WBC LPR policies

NPPF paras 165a and 166a establish broad parameters for supporting energy projects.

The emerging WBC Local Plan includes relevant policies –

- SP5e and DM4 which relate to and promote sustainable energy generation;
- SP8 on landscape character.

These provide a solid base to ensure energy projects are high quality and should significantly contribute to achieving the support of the community.

WBC have a requirement for the inclusion of a shared energy facility on new developments.

- SP 5 *…development will be expected to satisfy the following criteria: clause e. To generate and supply renewable, low and zero carbon energy for its own use and/or local distribution networks in accordance with Policy DM4*.

Evidence

Centre for Sustainable Energy, Neighbourhood planning in a climate emergency, Section 5Renewable Energy pp 25 - 37