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9th July 2015

Ms K Britton

Planning Policy Manager

Canterbury City Council

Military Road

Canterbury

CT1 1YW

Dear Ms Britton

The Council will be aware of the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) of 18 June 2015 entitled ‘Local Planning’. The main concern of the WMS is wind energy development.   When determining planning applications for such development involving one or more wind turbines, local planning authorities should only grant planning permission if the site is in an area identified as suitable in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan and, following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing. Suitable areas for wind energy development will need to have been allocated in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan.  The Planning Practice Guidance (ID:05) has been updated in this context.

I note that the Canterbury District Local Plan contains a criteria-based renewable energy policy DBE2 and a renewable and low carbon energy development policy CC1.   There are no allocated suitable areas for wind energy development.  I should be grateful if the Council could consider what, if any, changes to the Local Plan would be necessary to comply with the WMS policy.  The options for Councils generally to consider, depending on the circumstances of the plan are:

i. delete any criteria-based policy (or part thereof) that looks to approve wind turbines, leaving future planning decisions to rely on the WMS.

ii. add to the criteria-based policy the additional WMS tests saying a wind turbine proposal must be in area identified as suitable for wind energy development / fully address the planning impacts identified by local communities. This would mean the plan would include the up-to-date policy, and support any future part of the development plan (including a neighbourhood plan) that identifies suitable areas. The rationale could be provided in the supporting text (otherwise it might appear that the plan was requiring wind turbines to be in identified areas but not identifying any area as suitable for wind energy).

iii. amend the plan to make it clear that any generic policy on renewable energy development does not relate to wind turbines, that the wind turbine issue will be dealt with in a subsequent review of the plan or single issue DPD, and that in the meantime wind turbine proposals will be considered against the WMS.

I have asked the Programme Officer to add an additional Question b2) to Matter 12: Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change as follows:  ‘Is the Local Plan consistent with the Written Ministerial Statement of 18 June 2015 in terms of wind energy development.’

It would be appropriate then for the Council to offer its views on this with any suggested modifications to the Plan in a further statement to be considered with any comments from other parties.”

On that basis could you add my additional question to the Matter 12 list (after Q b)) and let parties know of this change in case they want to comment in a further statement in accordance with the set timetable.

Yours sincerely

M J Moore

Inspector