



Council
5 March 2012

**Subject: Renewable Energy Statement**

Report by: Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan

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Purpose / Summary: To inform the Council of the amendments made to the Renewable Energy Statement following the suggestions made at the last meeting of the Council on 16 January 2012.

- RECOMMENDATION(S):**
- 1. Members approve the revised Renewable Energy Statement and formally adopt it in 2012.**
  - 2. That Members note the proposed future actions referred to in the report and agree that an update report will be made to the Challenge and Improvement Committee in April 2012 on the proposals.**

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Legal:**

**None identified as a result of this report.**

### **Financial:**

**These would be identified once any actions to support the statement were agreed and an implementation plan agreed.**

### **Staffing:**

**The impact on staff would depend on the agreement to an action plan to contribute to the deliver of the statement.**

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

**An impact assessment would need to be carried out if at a later date revised policies were produced as part of the action plan.**

### **Risk Assessment:**

**If policies are not reviewed then there is a risk that they may not be fit for purpose.**

### **Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

**Deliver of actions on renewable energy will have as a key aim the reduction CO2 emissions.**

### **Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

Report CAI.04 11/12 to 21 June 2011 meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee. Accessed through WLDC website "Meetings, agendas, minutes and reports" <http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/your-council/decision-making-and-council-meetings/meetings-agendas-minutes-and-reports/>

Report CAI.20 11/12 to 25 October 2011 meeting of the Challenge and Improvement Committee. Accessed through WLDC website "Meetings, agendas, minutes and reports".

Report DM12 11/12 to 21 September 2011 meeting of the Development Management Committee. Accessed through WLDC website "Meetings, agendas, minutes and reports".

Report CAI.27 11/12 to 29 November 2011 meeting of Challenge and Improvement Committee. Accessed through WLDC website "Meetings, agendas, minutes and reports".

Renewable Energy Task and Finish Group meeting agendas and minutes. West Lindsey website link to renewable energy page <http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/your-council/decision-making-and-council-meetings/meetings-agendas-minutes-and-reports/committee-information-post-april-2011/challenge-and-improvement-committee/renewable-energy-task-and-finish-group/107623.article>

Draft report on Climate Change and Renewable Energy – Stephen Cirell Consultancy Limited. West Lindsey website link to renewable energy page <http://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk/your-council/decision-making-and-council-meetings/meetings-agendas-minutes-and-reports/committee-information-post-april-2011/challenge-and-improvement-committee/renewable-energy-task-and-finish-group/107623.article>

Centre for Sustainable Energy report on "Common Concerns about wind power". [www.cse.org.uk](http://www.cse.org.uk)  
[http://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/common\\_concerns\\_about\\_wind\\_power.pdf](http://www.cse.org.uk/downloads/file/common_concerns_about_wind_power.pdf)

**Call in and Urgency:**

**Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?**

Yes

No

X

**Key Decision:**

Yes

No

X

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report asks the Council to approve the renewable energy statement which has evolved following debate at the last meeting of the Council in January 2012. The statement has previously been considered by both Committees i.e. Prosperous Communities and Policy and Resources and it is now recommended to Council for final agreement. The statement referred to in section 3 of the report has been arrived at following work done previously by a Renewable Energy Task & Finish Group.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 In June 2011 the Challenge and Improvement Committee commissioned a task and finish group of Members (Councillors Bierley, Howitt-Cowan and Patterson) to look into the subject of renewable energy and specifically to look to produce a document that would set out “a design for the district in regard to renewable energy”.
- 2.2 The task and finish group reported back to the Challenge and Improvement Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011 on a renewable energy statement. Within the report that was before the committee information was provided on the council’s current position on climate change and carbon management and on why the renewable energy task and finish group was established. The report also covered the work the group had undertaken including information gathering, various visits and evidence gathering, and some work that had been done in exploring the opportunity green waste presented. The report made reference to climate change, some details on renewable energy technologies and the links to affordable warmth and fuel poverty.
- 2.3 Section 9 of the report provided a renewable energy statement.
- 2.4 Section 10 of the report referred to a range of actions. Section 9 and 10 of the Challenge and Improvement Committee report are covered in this report in Sections 3 and 4.

## **3.0 Renewable Energy Statement**

- 3.1 The aim of the statement that the Renewable Energy Task and Finish group had given consideration to and was agreed by the Challenge and Improvement Committee is as 3.2 below. The amended statement, incorporating the changes suggested in the 16 January meeting of Council is as 3.3:-

### **3.2 Aim of the statement**

The aim of this statement is for West Lindsey to clearly state what its vision and position is on renewable energy. This would then allow the community to clearly understand what WLDC thinks about renewable energy. The statement will then allow consistent messages to be communicated.

### 3.3 The Statement

**“West Lindsey supports the use and application of renewable energy technology within the District provided that any adverse impacts on communities are mitigated as far as practicable.**

**Where appropriate, and where any adverse impacts can be minimised, the Council will use its best endeavours to encourage everyone to invest in and use renewable energy technology within the district. It is intended that this will reduce the carbon emissions from the activities that take place and maximise other benefits, such as job creation, residents’ wellbeing and social equity.**

**The Council will consider installing renewable energy generation systems on its own assets where financially and practicably viable.**

**In supporting renewable energy the Council will ensure the principle of the right technology and renewable energy solution is applied in the right location”.**

- 3.5 For clarity this statement is not intended to be used to predetermine any individual planning applications that may be submitted for renewable energy generation in any specific locations for different technologies. Every planning application will be considered on its merits and take into account the Central Lincolnshire Core Strategy Policies which include Renewable and Low Carbon Energy solutions. The acceptability of locations where developments will take place are planning decisions and the Development Management Committee are aware of the need to consider the impact on local communities and the environment.
- 3.6 The statement will be subject to regular review and monitoring of the agreed actions would need to take place to ensure that the delivery took place
- 3.7 The actions are intended to support this statement and form part of a delivery strategy, which effectively says how the Council will achieve the aims of the Statement. This will be referred to as the Renewable Energy Strategy or the Renewable Energy Delivery Strategy once the statement is approved.
- 3.8 This Strategy is a crucial document, because without it, the Statement is fairly worthless. Moreover, the strength and comprehensiveness of the Strategy will largely determine how much credence the claims in the Statement really have. In other words, if the delivery plans are vague, not properly resourced and have no clear timelines and metrics associated with them, the Statement will be dismissed as mere platitudes. On the other hand, if there are clear targets, a route map to get there and projects to form the steps, this will demonstrate that the Council is serious about ‘walking the walk’ as opposed to just ‘talking the talk.’

## 4.0 Actions

4.1 The report that the Challenge and Improvement Committee considered previously identified a range of actions that the Council is already taking that relate to renewable energy and these are summarised and updated below:-

- The Development Management Committee agreed to publicity procedures for development proposals received by West Lindsey for wind farms.
- Proposals for photovoltaic cells to be installed on Council buildings were considered by the Policy and resources Task and Finish group. They have now been installed at Gainsborough Leisure Centre and Festival Hall, Market Rasen.
- The council has in place a carbon management plan which deals with the reduction in CO2 emissions from Council activities. The Council has reduced emissions from 2,111 tonnes in 2008/9 down to 1,658 tonnes in 2010/11 and is continuing to reduce emissions. With West Lindsey having the lowest carbon emissions of all the Lincolnshire District Councils.

## 4.2 Proposed future actions

Included within the report that the Challenge and Improvement Committee considered was a section on proposed future actions and this is reproduced below.

Renewable energy is a key aspect of the Council's overall approach to the green agenda. The Council is working on a green programme with topics such as agile working, energy efficiency, carbon management, action to address fuel poverty and the opportunities to improve the housing stock all being considered. As part of this development of a green programme projects are being considered which include:-

- how new build can have a low/zero carbon impact,
- how we can encourage businesses to come into the district because of our approach to energy generation and usage,
- how we could establish a challenging fossil fuel target in the way we use our buildings and land etc.

Over the next 12 months it is intended that as part of delivery of the Green council programme a range of projects be scoped and developed. In addition to the above ideas there are a range of actions that the Council could consider taking that could contribute to delivering the renewable energy strategy. However it would be necessary for both the Prosperous Communities Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee to consider the proposed actions. These two Committees have each nominated two Members to work with officers on the proposed actions (or on other actions that the Committees may feel are more appropriate), that would contribute to the Renewable Energy Delivery Strategy.

The members nominated (Councillors Bierley, Howitt-Cowan, Patterson and Summers) will then select a representative to take reports back to their respective committees for consideration and approval. It is intended to report back on an amended action plan to the Challenge and Improvement Committee in April 2012. .

The table below details a number of proposed actions.

<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>Proposed Timescale</b>	<b>Council Operation or Community/ District wide and Partners to be involved</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Deliverability and possible barriers to overcome</b>
<p><b>1.</b> Business cases need to be developed and considered for renewable energy to be generated on the Councils assets and or on others assets. Include business case for anaerobic digesters and a crematorium</p>	ongoing	<p>Council Operation -Renewable energy suppliers - Third party asset owners</p>	<p>More renewable energy generated on Council assets and others assets in the District. Consideration by WLDC of establishing an energy services company</p>	<p>Community concerns Planning issues for specific developments, Finance available Availability of suitable partners</p>
<p><b>2.</b> Work on an aspirational target for future years that sets an aim of zero fossil fuel usage on WLDC land and buildings</p>	6 months	<p>Council, Occupiers of Council assets</p>	<p>Reduced carbon emissions from WLDC operations</p>	<p>Practicalities of changing Technology and energy generation, financial implications of change, lack of opportunities to offset carbon emissions</p>
<p><b>3.</b> A communications and education – promotion plan needs to be agreed to ensure the Councils approach to renewable energy is explained and developed. Include website development, possible renewable energy awards scheme, regular features in West Lindsey News, the scope for providing advice and information</p>	3 Months	<p>Council operation - Local media</p>	<p>More Community knowledge and interest and development of renewable energy projects, increased media interest and coverage</p>	
<p><b>4.</b> Engagement with Communities to understand local needs and interest, through - Area Manager working, area profile development to include information on local generation of renewable energy.</p>	Commence with Area summits Jan 2012	<p>District wide - Parish Councils Community Groups</p>	<p>Communities more involved and engaged and influencing what happens in their areas.</p>	<p>Area Manager time, lack of interest from communities</p>



<b>5.</b> In the decision making process renewable energy aspects and impact assessment be taken into account- Council Committee reports including Development Management determinations on Planning Applications	3 months	Council	Renewable energy demonstrated at the heart of Council decisions	
<b>6.</b> Explore the opportunities for funding and contributions to be used to increase the generation and use of renewable energy in the District e.g. section 106 contributions/ the Community Infrastructure Levy, localism funds	6 months	Council in Partnership with Central Lincolnshire authorities through the work of the JPU	More funding to renewable energy projects	Restrictions on use of funds for this purpose, other demands on the funds
<b>7.</b> Explore the opportunities for Communities to benefit from any funding that Renewable Energy Developers provide.	6 months	Energy developers Local community	Communities receiving benefit from renewable energy	Communities not interested, lack of interest from Energy Developers in WL area
<b>8.</b> Detailed work needs to be done to identify the actions that the Council can take to link renewable energy with helping address the issue of fuel poverty in the District. Explore the options of retrofitting houses to improve energy efficiency and use of renewable energy. Explore options for new build neighbourhoods to be low carbon	9 months	Council, Owners and tenants of properties, Housing improvement Organisations. County Council	Fewer households in fuel poverty	Funding availability
<b>10.</b> Annual review of the statement and regular reporting on performance in delivering the agreed actions.	Jan 2013	Council	Demonstration to the Community of Council Commitment	

## 5. Considerations

- 5.1 Officers consider it essential that West Lindsey has a holistic climate change strategy. This is not just a few solar panels here and a biomass boiler there – but a fully thought through view on how climate change will affect the area; and what we are going to do about it. Areas covered should include: emissions reduction, renewable energy, behaviour change, biodiversity, the economic angles, green jobs and so on. It is felt important to avoid delay, produce a plan and begin working towards it. That alone will mean that West Lindsey stands out from other districts and begin working towards fulfilling our green council ambitions.

The green strategy will have a number of different strands and each will have its own delivery plan. The renewable energy programme will be just one of its seven limbs.

It should be emphasised that the statement itself is not what is important. The three key elements in the whole package are:

- targets / aims / or goals as to what West Lindsey wants to achieve. An example is that we will produce a quarter of the energy that the authority uses from renewable sources by 2015;
- a route map of how to get there. In order to deliver that, we will install X MW of solar PV, Y MW of biomass etc;
- Identify projects that will deliver those goals. The first projects will be solar PV and will soon be operational at Gainsborough Leisure Centre and Festival Hall, Market Rasen. These will need to be followed by others which are referred to in section 4.

If members of the Council formally approve the revised renewable energy statement, members nominated from the Prosperous Communities Committees and Policy and Resources Committee can accelerate work with officers in scoping and exploring the actions outlined in section 4. It is suggested that a project brief is produced for each of the proposed actions following the Sharepoint programme office format which would cover outcomes, stakeholders, deliverables, milestones, risks, resources monitoring and key actions.

- 5.2 Once work had taken place on these, a further report would need to be produced for the committees on recommended actions and timescales with a view to information then being reported back to the Challenge and Improvement Committee.