

Seascale Parish Council Planning Policy on Renewable Energy

Introduction

Seascale Parish Council's policy is designed to reflect broadly the planning policy of Copeland Borough Council. It would be unrealistic to devise a policy out of alignment with that of the district council which would make it impossible to implement.

Copeland's policy, and by extension Seascale's, will evolve over time. Amendments to both policies will reflect the policies of national government and the level of support offered by government to local authorities, businesses and householders for renewable energy installations. Seascale's policy reflects the particular needs of the parish and of the parish in relation to neighbouring areas and builds on past and current experience of planning for renewable energy. Experience at present suggests that consultation within the parish and in surrounding areas is of major importance in considering applications.

Seascale's policy covers all types of renewable energy development. In the case of wind power it covers wind turbines singly or in small groups as well as wind farms. Currently no application for installation of solar panels (photo-voltaic cells) has come before the Parish Council. Domestic installations do not need planning consent unless the building is listed or is within a conservation area. Should a larger installation which requires planning permission (eg a solar farm) be submitted the same considerations would be applied. Bio-mass installations (classified in Copeland's local plan as secondary or tertiary, see below) can range in size from small schemes to transform domestic or farm waste into energy to large scale municipal waste digesting or burning schemes. Planning consent is required for bio-mass projects, apart from most domestic household schemes, and Seascale's policy would therefore be applied.

Types of renewable energy currently in use (as defined in the Copeland Local Plan 2011 – 2016)

Primary

Energy derived directly from natural processes: wind, wave, solar, tide, hydro and geothermal.

Secondary

Energy derived from animal and vegetable processes: wood fuel and other vegetable based products either by bio-digestion or direct combustion.

Tertiary

Energy derived from urban and industrial waste: land fill gas and municipal waste by bio-digestion or combustion.

Copeland currently consider wind power to be the most significant locally available source.

Summary of Copeland Borough Council's Policy (as set out in the Copeland Local Plan 2011 – 2016)

POLICY EGY 1: Renewable Energy

Proposals for any form of renewable energy development must satisfy the following criteria:

- 1. That there would be no significant adverse visual effects.*
- 2. That there would be no significant adverse effects on landscape or townscape character and distinctiveness.*
- 3. That there would be no adverse impact on biodiversity.*
- 4. That proposals would not cause unacceptable harm to features of local, national and international importance for nature or heritage conservation.*
- 5. That measures are taken to mitigate any noise, smell, dust, fumes or other nuisance likely to affect nearby residents or other adjoining land users.*
- 6. That adequate provision can be made for access, parking and any potentially adverse impacts on the highway network.*
- 7. That any waste arising as a result of the development would be minimized and dealt with using a suitable means of disposal.*
- 8. There would be no adverse unacceptable conflict with any existing recreational facilities and their access routes.*
- 9. That they would not give rise to any unacceptable cumulative effects when considered against any previous extant planning approvals for renewable energy development or other existing/approved utility infrastructure in the vicinity. Developers are expected to actively consult with local communities in developing their proposals and to deliver significant benefits to the community where the scheme is to be sited wherever possible.*

POLICY EGY 2: Wind Energy

Proposals for wind energy developments will be considered against the criteria of Policy EGY 1 with the additional requirement that:

There would be a scheme for the removal of turbines and associated structures and the restoration of the site to agriculture when the turbines become redundant.

POLICY EGY 3: Solar Energy

Proposals for solar energy developments will be favourably considered so long as:

- 1. The proposal does not affect the character and setting of a Listed Building or Conservation Area.*
- 2. The installation does not unduly harm the character of the building and, where on a roof, is generally flush with the plane of the roof.*
- 3. Light reflection from the installation would not adversely affect residential amenity or highway safety.*

POLICY EGY 4: Hydro Electric Schemes

Proposals for Hydro Electric schemes will be considered against the criteria of Policy EGY 1 and other Plan policies.

POLICY EGY 5: Tidal Energy

The Council will not support proposals for a tidal barrage or other tidal energy scheme across the Duddon Estuary unless there are imperative reasons of overriding national interest which are sufficient to outweigh any damage to nature conservation and other interests. Proposals for all such development will be measured against Policies EGY 1 and DEV 8.

POLICY EGY 6: Waste and Bio-fuels

Proposals for the generation of energy or heat from commercial, domestic and agricultural waste or bio-fuels will be considered against the criteria of Policy EGY1 with the additional requirements that:

- 1. Wherever possible the scheme should be sited on existing industrial/employment sites or previously used land that is well related to the resource catchment.*
- 2. Wherever practicable measures to transport fuel and waste by rail or water are made.*
- 3. Proposals involving agricultural waste within existing farm units or involving sewage sludge should be well related to the activity, scale and character of the business or enterprise and its setting.*

POLICY EGY 7: Energy Conservation and Efficiency

All development proposals should take into account the need to maximize energy conservation and efficiency. The design, layout and choice of materials should incorporate measures which help reduce energy consumption and waste and increase the potential for recycling. Developers should also make provision for energy production on-site from renewable sources and such schemes must be designed and of a scale appropriate to the form of development, its character and the wider setting.

Seascale Parish Council's Policy

Seascale Parish Council endorses the policies in Copeland Borough Council's Development Plan (2011-2016). In addition Seascale PC emphasises the need for consultation at various levels and stages of the planning process.

Consultation

When considering any Planning Application for a renewable energy development in the area Seascale PC will make consultation its first consideration.

1. Any planned development within the parish or within parishes with boundaries with Seascale shall be submitted by Copeland BC or Cumbria CC to Seascale PC for consideration and comment. Some schemes outside the parish boundary which cover a wide area or which involve tall structures will impact on Seascale visually and in other ways.
2. Copeland state that local consultation is an expectation, but do not consider lack of consultation to be grounds for refusing an application. Seascale PC insists that local consultation is a necessity, and without it

would almost invariably oppose a development.

3. Developers of large scale projects pay lip service to local consultation and to community benefits associated with a scheme. Seascale PC will make clear to them that more than tokenism is needed. Smaller developers may not appreciate the importance of consultation and given the guidance from the district council may not accord it the priority that Seascale demands. Seascale PC will emphasise this to developers.

4. Seascale PC will stress that local consultation is a precondition to the Parish Council giving sympathetic consideration to a development.

5. Local consultation can take a number of forms and could be organised for one parish or for a number of parishes within the locality partnership. Seascale PC would expect at least a drop-in session or a public presentation with the opportunity for residents to ask all the questions they want to. After that a separate consultation with the parish council or locality partnership might be sought. There would then need to be a reasonable length of time, depending on the complexity of the proposed development, for the Parish Council or locality partnership to assess public opinion and form its own views before making a formal response.

6. In addition to consultation Seascale Parish Council would expect developers to take account of Community Benefit. Most developments bring no advantages to a community and are purely for private consumption and profit. The developer should therefore expect to recompense the community where there is local impact on landscape and quality of life.

Conclusion

This policy will form a part of Seascale's Neighbourhood Plan and will be revised in the light of experience and changing political priorities.

Seascale Parish Council 4 December 2012

Adopted 9 January 2013

Revised June 2013

Revised Policy Adopted 3 July 2013