

**INFORMATION REPORT BY THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC
PROTECTION**

THE SUGGESTED CREATION OF A WIND ENERGY WORKING GROUP

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on the request which was made by them at Planning Committee in February 2013 to create a new working group to examine the planning issues associated with wind energy developments and farm diversification in the County. The report is for information purposes only.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Planning Authority has seen an increasing number of planning applications for single or dual wind turbines in rural locations. These applications have been made under various guises, some being promoted as farm diversification schemes and others not.
- 2.2 The decisions made on these applications have also varied and concerns have been raised by Members about a lack of clear Policy guidance to support their decision making.
- 2.3 In an attempt to address this lack of guidance Officers had produced an Interim Planning Guidance document (IPG). Planning Committee had agreed to the production of this document and had authorised Officers to go out to consultation thereon. However, at the February 2013 Planning Committee meeting Members requested that a working group be set up to discuss the contents of the IPG.
- 2.4 The IPG was always going to be a guidance document which covered a specific period before a Local Development Plan (LDP) was brought into force. The Inspectors report on the Denbighshire LDP is imminent. Should the LDP be agreed then the Council would be looking to prioritise a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents to support the main LDP.
- 2.5 The prioritisation of the production of the SPGs is a matter for the LDP Steering Group which is scheduled to meet on 25th June 2013. It is envisaged that the production of formalised

guidance on Renewable Energy development will be progressed through this group. The group will be politically and geographically balanced and Officers feel that this is the most appropriate forum for Members to debate the content of any Planning guidance document required.

- 2.6 In addition Members should note that a key connected document to the assessment of wind turbines within Denbighshire has now been produced. The Conwy and Denbighshire Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment of Wind Energy Developments will be a valuable resource when assessing future wind turbine proposals. Consultation on this document is yet to take place but it is envisaged that Members will be able to discuss its contents through the LDP Steering Group.
- 2.7 The landscape document will sit alongside any new SPG and clearly the two documents will interlink for the purposes of decision making.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members note the contents of the information report and agree to progress the production of planning guidance on Renewable Energy through the LDP Steering Group.