APPENDIX 3

MIDLOTHIAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DRAFT

SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE

2014

Wind Energy Development in Midlothian

Contents

List of Figures

Appendix [in Members' Library]

1 Purpose of this Supplementary Guidance

1.1 Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP) policies NRG1 and NRG2 provide support in principle to wind energy development proposals, subject to a range of criteria. The Plan sets out the spatial framework for such development, as required in Scottish Planning Policy (June 2014); the spatial framework for Midlothian applies to proposals of one or more turbines with a height to blade tip of 30 metres or more. The Plan also contains additional guidance on the potential or otherwise to accommodate wind turbines below 30 metres in height which does not form part of the spatial framework.

1.2 This Supplementary Guidance has been prepared to provide:

- brief details of the national planning policy context in Scotland for wind energy development;
- information on the preparation of the spatial framework for wind energy, as presented in the MLDP Proposed Plan, and on its interpretation and application to the assessment of the potential for wind turbine development in Midlothian;
- detail on considerations for the application of MLDP policies NRG1 and NRG2 to the preparation and assessment of relevant development proposals;
- guidance on the siting of wind turbines; and
- information on the likely cumulative effect of wind energy development on Midlothian.

1.3 This Guidance also contains the Midlothian Landscape Capacity Study for Wind Energy (September 2014) prepared on behalf of the Council by Carol Anderson Landscape Associates. The Council has used the findings of this Study to inform the identification of the locations and scale of wind energy development that the Council considers can, subject to siting and design considerations, successfully be accommodated in Midlothian.

2 Scottish Planning Policy

Transformation to a Low Carbon Economy

2.1 Wind energy is one of a number of technologies that have an important role in Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)(2014) for generating electricity from renewable sources. SPP states that the planning system should:

- support the transformational change to a low carbon economy, consistent with national objectives and targets, including deriving:
    - 30% of overall energy demand from renewable sources by 2020
    - 11% of heat demand from renewable sources by 2020
    - the equivalent of 100% of electricity demand from renewable sources by 2020;
- support the development of a diverse range of electricity generation from renewable energy technologies – including the expansion of renewable energy generation capacity – and the development of heat networks;
- guide development to appropriate locations; and
- advise on the issues that will be taken into account when specific proposals are being assessed.

Spatial Frameworks

2.2 SPP requires planning authorities to prepare a spatial framework identifying areas likely to be most appropriate for onshore wind energy as a guide for both developers and communities.

2.3 The spatial framework should follow the Group 1-3 approach set out in SPP Table 1, page 39 (accessible on the Scottish Government's website: http://www.scotland.gov.uk). This approach requires the framework to identify the features or designations listed in Groups 1-3, which are represented in a planning authority's area. Table 1 identifies the suitability of each of the different groups and matters that should be taken into consideration in the preparation and assessment of wind energy proposals within them. Planning authorities are also required to identify the minimum scale to which their spatial framework is intended to apply.

2.4 SPP highlights that the spatial framework should be complemented by a more detailed and exacting process to assess planning applications and consider the merits of individual proposals against a full range of environmental, community and cumulative impacts.

2.5 Scottish Planning Policy: Table 1

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Group 1: Areas where wind farms will not be acceptable:

National Parks and National Scenic Areas.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Group 2: Areas of significant protection:

Recognising the need for significant protection, in these areas wind farms may be appropriate in some circumstances. Further consideration will be required to demonstrate that any significant effects on the qualities of these areas can be substantially overcome by siting, design or other mitigation.</td></tr>
<tr><td>National and international designations:

• World Heritage Sites;

• Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites;

• Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

• National Nature Reserves;

• Sites identified in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes;

• Sites identified in the Inventory of Historic Battlefields.</td><td>Other nationally important mapped environmental interests:

• areas of wild land as shown on the 2014 SNH map of wild land areas;

• carbon rich soils, deep peat and priority peatland habitat.</td><td>Community separation for consideration of visual impact:

• an area not exceeding 2km around cities, towns and villages identified on the local development plan with an identified settlement envelope or edge. The extent of the area will be determined by the planning authority based on landform and other features which restrict views out from the settlement.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Group 3: Areas with potential for wind farm development:

Beyond groups 1 and 2, wind farms are likely to be acceptable, subject to detailed consideration against identified policy criteria*[1].</td></tr>
</table>

*[1] Note that the policy criteria are as set out in the Midlothian Local Development Plan policies NRG1 and NRG2.

3 Midlothian Spatial Framework for Wind Farms

3.1 As required by SPP, the Council has produced a spatial framework for wind farms in line with the Groups 1-3 approach outlined in section 2 of this Supplementary Guidance. The spatial framework is intended to give information to communities and developers on what scale of wind energy development is most likely to be acceptable in principle to the Council.

3.2 The spatial framework is shown on Figure 1 of the MLDP and is replicated as Figure 1 in this Supplementary Guidance for ease of reference. The minimum scale of development to which the framework applies is one turbine with a height to blade tip of 30 metres.

Content of the Spatial Framework

3.3 The spatial framework identifies the opportunity areas that the Council considers have landscape capacity to successfully accommodate wind turbines of 30 metres or more in height to blade tip, with the appropriate height indicated in the framework. Further clarification of the scale of wind energy development (height and number of turbines) that may be acceptable in each area is contained in the *Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study* (2014) as explained in paragraphs 3.6-3.10 below. The spatial framework also identifies areas of significant protection in Midlothian.

3.4 There are no Group 1 features (National Parks and National Scenic Areas) present in Midlothian. The spatial framework identifies those features listed in Group 2 Areas of Significant Protection present in Midlothian. These are:

- Natura 2000 and Ramsar Sites;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- sites identified in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes;
- sites identified in the Inventory of Historic Battlefields;
- carbon rich soils*[2], deep peat (and priority peatland habitat); and
  (*[2] when available, reference should be made to the relevant Scottish Government “carbon calculator” in the development and assessment of proposals)
- a two-kilometre area around settlements*[3] as identified in the MLDP and indicated on Figure 1.
  (*[3] as stated in paragraph 2.5 of this document, SPP Table 1 sets out that wind farms may be acceptable within two kilometres of a settlement but it will be up to the planning authority to consider the effect that landform and other features may have on restricting views out from a settlement.)

Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2014)

3.6 In response to the publication of SPP, and to inform the Midlothian spatial framework for wind farms, the Council commissioned landscape capacity analysis to identify the locations where the Midlothian landscape might successfully accommodate wind energy development and the scale of development that might potentially be acceptable in these locations.

3.7 The *Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Stud*y (2014) forms part of this Supplementary Guidance (refer to Appendix). The Study provides information on where landscape, visual and cumulative impact issues may arise from wind energy development in Midlothian.

3.8 As stated in paragraph 3.3 above, the spatial framework identifies the opportunity areas that the Council considers have landscape capacity to successfully accommodate wind turbines of 30 metres or more in height to blade tip (with the appropriate height indicated in the framework) based upon the findings of the 2014 Landscape Capacity Study.

3.9 The Study should be consulted in the formulation and assessment of potential wind energy development proposals. Account should be taken of its findings with respect to potential development opportunities and relevant landscape, visual and cumulative impact constraints. This Supplementary Guidance will be a material consideration in the assessment of all wind energy development proposals.

3.10 Information on the methodology of the Study is contained in section 4 of this Supplementary Guidance.

Application of the Midlothian Spatial Framework for Wind Farms

3.11 The spatial framework will be taken into account, and the requirements of policies NRG1 and NRG2 will be applied, in the assessment of wind energy development proposals involving turbines above 30 metres in height to blade tip. Irrespective of their location and scale, it will be for applicants to demonstrate that their proposals are acceptable in this context, and that account has been taken of siting, design and cumulative impact issues to help mitigate any potential adverse impacts. The *Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study* (2014) will be a material consideration and must be consulted in the formulation and assessment of proposals.

3.12 Development proposals which fall outwith the locations identified as opportunity areas, and/or turbine heights, as specified in the spatial framework, may still be supported by the Council. However, such support would be dependent upon the scale and significance of the impacts of a

proposal with respect to the spatial framework and the requirements of policies NRG1 and NRG2.

3.13 For the avoidance of doubt, all wind energy proposals will be assessed against the requirements of MLDP policies NRG1 and NRG2.

Wind Energy Development under 30 metres in height to blade tip

3.14 Although not part of the spatial framework for wind farms, MLDP Figure 2 (replicated as Figure 2 in this Supplementary Guidance for ease of reference) provides information on where the Council considers there is potential for wind turbines up to 30 metres in height to blade tip. Similar to the spatial framework, the 2014 Landscape Capacity Study should be consulted in the formulation and assessment of development proposals and account taken of its findings on appropriate development opportunities and relevant landscape, visual and cumulative impact constraints identified for each of the areas which may have potential for this scale of development.

Siting of Turbines and Cumulative Impact

3.15 Sections 5 and 6 of this document refer to information on the siting of wind turbines and the potential for cumulative impact provided within the *Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study* (2014). The Study provides spatial guidance on these matters based upon 12 landscape character areas across Midlothian.

Other Relevant Information

3.16 Figures 3-12 are included in this Supplementary Guidance to clarify the information contained in the spatial framework and policies NRG1 and NRG2 with regards to the presence of key designations and features relevant to wind energy development proposals. Due to their numbers, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments and other sites of historic or archaeological interest (apart from historic battlefields) are not mapped. The relevance of the impact of any wind energy development proposals on such features will require to be considered in the formulation and assessment of proposals.

[NB: Figures 3-12 for inclusion in Finalised SG only – all information is presented on Figure 1]

4 Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2014)

Background

4.1 The Council commissioned this study in order to inform the identification, in its spatial framework, of appropriate locations for, and scale of, wind energy development in terms of the potential impact on Midlothian's landscape. The Council also required the Study to provide guidance on the landscape and visual implications, and the cumulative impact issues for Midlothian, from a range of scales of wind energy development. The full Study is contained in the appendix of this document.

Study Methodology

4.2 The Study assesses the landscape impact on Midlothian of three turbine heights (referred in the Study as "typologies") to identify what is considered to be the landscape capacity in Midlothian for each to be successfully accommodated.

The three height ranges/ typologies assessed are:

- typology A: turbines over 80 metres to blade tip;
- typology B: turbines 50-80 metres to blade tip; and
- typology C: turbines 30-50 metres to blade tip.

4.3 Guidance is provided in the Study for turbines less than 30 metres in height. This was chosen as the minimum height/typology for the assessment as it was considered that there was less demand, with fewer turbines below this height coming on to the market and being installed.

4.4 The Study splits Midlothian into 12 landscape character areas, identifying areas with similar landscape types and characters; these are shown in Figure 1 of the Study. It then assesses a range of criteria against each of the three turbine height typologies in each landscape character area. The criteria are listed below. This Study determines the sensitivity and ability of different parts of Midlothian to successfully accommodate different scales of wind energy development in each of the landscape character areas. The assessment criteria are:

- scale (of landscape, rather than of development);
- landform;
- landscape pattern;
- built environment;
- perceptual qualities;
- landscape context;

- visual amenity; and
- cumulative effects.

4.5 The Study identifies the sensitivity to each turbine typology range (A-C – see paragraph 4.2) in each Midlothian landscape character area through the following categories of sensitivity:

- Low;
- Low-Medium;
- Medium;
- Medium-High; and
- High.

4.6 "Low" means low sensitivity to turbines and equates to the landscape being perceived as most able to successfully absorb wind turbines. Conversely, landscape character areas with a "High" sensitivity assessment are perceived as least able to successfully absorb wind turbines.

Study Outcome and Findings

4.7 The Study concludes that Midlothian's landscape capacity to accommodate wind turbines is largely restricted to smaller-scale developments in terms of both height and number of turbines. This scale of development is considered to relate better to the intimate and undulating nature of the Midlothian landscape than would be the case for larger developments. However, care and consideration is still required in assessing the potential for smaller-scale turbine developments.

4.8 The locations where the Study indicates that there may be potential for wind energy development are identified by landscape character area in the following table:

Landscape character areas	**Height of turbines to blade tip**	**Number of turbines in separate clusters**
North Esk/ Lower South Esk Valleys	Limited potential for turbines under 30 metres	Single and up to 2 turbines
Upper South Esk/ Tyne Water Valleys	Very limited potential for turbines under 20 metres	No numbers identified - see Study
Mayfield/ Tranent Ridge	Limited potential for turbines under 30 metres	Single and up to 2 turbines
Musselburgh/ Prestonpans Fringe	Very limited potential for turbines under 30 metres	No numbers identified - see Study
Agricultural Plain	Limited potential for turbines under 30 metres	No numbers identified - see Study
Rosewell/ Carrington Spur	Limited potential for turbines under 30 metres	No numbers identified - see Study

North Lammermuir Platform	Limited potential for turbines under 30 metres	Single and up to 2 turbines
Moorland Fringes	Very limited potential for turbines 50-80 metres but towards the lower end of the range Limited potential for turbines 30-50 metres Potential for turbines under 30 metres	Up to 6 turbines No numbers identified - see Study Single and up to 2 turbines
Lowland Moorland	No landscape potential identified	No landscape potential identified
Plateau Grassland	Very limited potential identified for turbines 30-50 metres Limited potential for turbines under 30 metres	Up to 5 turbines No numbers identified - see Study
Moorfoot Hills	Very limited potential for turbines under 30 metres	Single and up to 2 turbines
Pentland Hills	No potential for turbines above 20 metres; some limited scope for turbines less than 20 metres	No numbers identified - see Study

Note: The Study should be consulted for guidance on siting and cumulative effects of development.

5 Turbine Siting Guidance

5.1 The 'Summary of Sensitivity' and 'Guidance for Developments' sections of the *Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study* (2014) - as given for each landscape character area - provide information and guidance on the appropriate siting of wind turbines within the 12 landscape character areas in Midlothian. Reference should also be made to Appendix B of the Study (Detailed Sensitivity Tables). All of the above information should be consulted in the formulation and assessment of all wind energy development proposals.

6 Cumulative Effect of Wind Energy Development on Midlothian

6.1 The 'Summary of Sensitivity' and 'Guidance for Developments' sections, and Appendix B, of the *Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study* (2014) also provide information and guidance on the potential for cumulative impact to arise from multiple wind energy developments within the 12 landscape character areas in Midlothian. Figure 2 of the Study identifies the areas where cumulative effects need to be carefully considered. All of the above information should be consulted in the formulation and assessment of all wind energy development proposals.

Figure 1: Midlothian Spatial Framework for Wind Farms

[Not replicated here for the purposes of this Planning Committee report - refer to Figure 1 in the draft policy framework]

Figure 2: Potential for Wind Turbines under 30 metres in height to blade tip in Midlothian

[Not replicated here for the purposes of this Planning Committee report - refer to Figure 2 in the draft policy framework]

Appendix: Midlothian Landscape Wind Energy Capacity Study (2014)

[*Available in the Members' Library*]