



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CLIMATE CHANGE,
BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION**

MONDAY, 23 MAY 2022

Report of the Executive Director - Place

**Derby, Derbyshire and Peak District National Park Renewable Energy
Study**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the commissioning of the Derby, Derbyshire and Peak District National Park Renewable Energy Study ('the study') and its implications for the constituent local authorities in the study area regarding the development of planning policies in guiding the provision of renewable energy technologies.

2. Information and Analysis

Background

- 2.1 Climate change and the need to mitigate and adapt to its impacts is now the greatest challenge facing our society. Recent international and national reports (as summarised below) have made it clear that now is the critical time for action.
- 2.2 The report by the UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) entitled, 'Net Zero – The UK's Contribution to Stopping Global Warming' (May 2019) recommends that the '*UK should set and vigorously pursue an ambitious target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 'net zero' by 2050, ending the UK's contribution to global warming within 30 years*'.
- 2.3 In May 2019, Government backed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency. In June 2019, the UK became the first major economy in the world to introduce laws to require its domestic net greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to reduce to net zero by 2050. This was through an

amendment to the Climate Change Act, 2008 to set a commitment to a 100% reduction in net UK GHG emissions against the 1990 baseline (the previous commitment under the Act was to an 80% reduction).

- 2.4 In December 2020, the CCC published its recommendation for the UK's Sixth Carbon Budget. This provided advice on the reducing the amount of greenhouse gases UK-wide between 2033 and 2037, recommending a 78% reduction by 2035 against the 1990 baseline and that the Budget should, for the first time, include shipping and aviation emissions.
- 2.5 In October 2021, Government published its 'Net Zero Strategy – Building Back Greener', which seeks to deliver a decarbonised national energy system by 2035, with a particular focus on accelerated delivery of renewable energy technologies.
- 2.6 At the more local level, the Council's 'Achieving Net Zero Strategy and Action Plan' sets out its climate change mitigation approach, and how emissions will be reduced across its operations and estate to net zero by 2032 or sooner. It also sets out how the Council will work with its partners and communities to reduce emissions across the County from transport, homes, commercial sites, businesses, industry and waste to net zero by 2050. The expansion of renewable energy technologies is identified as a priority action in the Strategy (due to be reviewed and updated in 2025).
- 2.7 Through the Vision Derbyshire programme, a Planning and Climate Change workstream has been created to help deliver the 'live and work sustainably' theme. Following a meeting of the Planning and Climate Change Executive Group, a number of quick wins were identified, one of which was for a Derbyshire-wide review to be carried out of Development Plan policies related to climate change and to consider good practice opportunities. A Climate Change and Planning Sub-Group was established in early 2021, comprising officers from each of the constituent authorities to deliver this workstream. The Sub-Group has been meeting on a three weekly basis and is chaired by an officer from the DCC. One of the priorities identified by the Sub-Group is the need for new and up-to-date evidence on renewable energy to support plan making and planning policy, particularly given that a number of local plans are currently in a review process.
- 2.8 In carrying out their duties for development plan-making, local planning authorities are bound a requirement set out in Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Planning Act 2008), for development plan documents (taken as a whole) to include policies designed to secure that the development and the use of land in their areas contribute to the mitigation of, and

adaptation to, climate change. This outcome-focused requirement for plan-making clearly signals the priority to be given to climate change in local planning.

- 2.9 In planning for renewable energy, paragraphs 155, 156 and 158 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourage local authorities to take a positive approach by identifying suitable areas for renewable energy generation and its supporting infrastructure, and by maximising the opportunities for community-led and decentralised energy production.
- 2.10 The national planning policy imperatives for identifying suitable locations for renewable energy generation reinforce the need for up-to-date evidence. This need has been highlighted by recent speculative planning applications for large scale solar farms in the county, with little or no policy advice set out in current local plans to inform their consideration.
- 2.11 In the context of the above, in the Autumn 2021, Council officers initiated an open tender process for commissioning a renewable energy study on behalf of all the Derby, Derbyshire and the Peak District National Park local authorities. To conclude the tender process, a report was presented to the Cabinet Member - Infrastructure and Environment on 22 December 2021 seeking approval to award a contract for the study and appoint following tender appraisal. The Cabinet member duly authorised the award of a contract, based on the most economically advantageous tender, to Scene Connec. These consultants subsequently commenced work on the study in early January 2022.

Aims of the study

- 2.12 The key aims of the study were agreed by the Climate Change and Planning Sub-Group as follows:
- Provide local planning authorities with an understanding of the overall energy requirement and how this development might be planned for and managed through the planning system.
 - Provision of robust evidence to underpin the development of effective renewable energy and climate change local plans policies in line with the NPPF paragraphs 155 and 158(b).
 - To ensure the right typology of renewable energy is delivered in the right location, given the degree of landscape sensitivity in Derby and Derbyshire and the Peak District National Park, using landscape character types as a spatial framework.

Funding

- 2.13 To fund the study, successful grant applications have been made as follows:

- Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) £25,000
- D2N2 Energy Board £12,500 (as match funding to MNZH)
- D2 Business Rates Fund £12,500 (as match funding to MNZH)

2.14 In addition to match funding, MNZH also requires that project outcomes are promoted across the Midlands, which covers the nine Midland LEPs (see further details below under Learning).

2.15 The study also covers the Peak District National Park area outside Derbyshire, which was requested by the Peak District National Park Authority and who has agreed to fund this element of the study.

Form of Study

2.16 The study is set out under a number of topic areas and considers:

- current domestic and non-domestic energy demand (heat and electricity).
- future energy demand scenarios.
- Renewable energy opportunities in Derbyshire based on:
 - Typology of renewable
 - Landscape constraints (landscape sensitivity and designations)
 - Physical constraints (i.e. grid connection availability, headroom at substations) - critical for the integration of larger scales of energy generation development
 - Scale of renewables
 - Planning regulations
- Viability of renewable energy developments.
- Suggested policy recommendations.

Energy Developments - Typologies Considered

2.17 Energy developments considered within the scope of the assessment cover demand, generation, storage and supply. In particular, the renewables considered include:

- Electricity Generation:
 - Wind turbines
 - Solar photovoltaics (PV), including ground-mounted and roof-mounted installations
 - Hydroelectric power
- Heat Generation:
 - Solar Thermal

- Heat pumps, including ground, water, and air-source variants
- Energy from waste (EfW), including solid waste and biogas
- Bioenergy, including biomass and anaerobic digestion
- Energy storage
- Energy networks:
 - Electricity networks
 - Heat networks
- Low Carbon Mobility:
 - Electric vehicles
 - Electric charging network

Learning

- 2.18 Since January 2022, the consultants have held regular progress update meetings with the Climate Change and Planning Sub-Group. As each stage of the study has been progressed, the consultants have provided drafts for comment by officers of the Sub-Group, which have been taken into account.
- 2.19 A final draft of the study report is due for completion at the end of May 2022. This will then be provided to the Climate Change and Planning Sub-Group for final comments prior to full completion of the study expected mid-June.
- 2.20 As noted above, as part of the funding that has been provided by MNZH, it requires that the project outcomes are promoted across the whole of the MNZH area. It has been agreed, therefore, that presentations will be given by Scene on the study methodology to the MNZH and D2N2 LEP to provide information on best practice and how the study could be replicated. Dates for these presentations is currently being finalised.
- 2.21 Furthermore, it is proposed that a Derbyshire event will be organised for all local authorities planning officers and members with responsibility for planning and climate change at which Scene will present details of the study, its conclusions and recommendations. A date for the event is currently being investigated but is likely to take place in the early Autumn.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Public consultation is not required to take place in the completion of this study. However, as noted above, the Planning and Climate Change Sub-Group was established to oversee the study, comprising officers of

the constituent local authorities in the study area. Inter- authority consultation on the findings and draft report has taken place at regular intervals through the Sub-Group to ensure that a good range of suggestions from officers of the relevant authorities from across the county has been taken on board.

- 3.2 This study will form the evidence base for the consideration of renewable energy within local plans therefore the Planning and Climate Change Sub-Group will need to consider the approach to publicising this study. As this study is an impartial technical analysis using existing designations and constraints to identify the most appropriate locations for different typologies of renewable energy, no public consultation is proposed or necessary.
- 3.3 The study also needs to be viewed in the context of the County Council's wider approach to tackling climate change. It is proposed to work with the County Council's Climate Change team to determine the most appropriate forum in which to share this study and seek confirmation of this approach from the Vision Derbyshire Governance Board.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 **Option 1:** Allow each of the local planning authorities to commission their own study.

Reason for Rejection: this would not benefit from the economies of scale which can be achieved for a Derby and Derbyshire wide study; it would not consider cross boundary issues or allow for a consistency of approach across the County.

- 4.2 **Option 2:** Do nothing.

Reason for Rejection: Severe weather events are increasing, and it is the impact of our emissions causing these changes. Action is needed now to keep UK temperatures and rainfall close to manageable levels and avoid further, potentially more catastrophic, impacts. With global emissions set to rise by as much as 16% by 2030, our actions must be both ambitious and innovative if they are to achieve the UK's 78% reduction by 2035 and net zero by 2050. Derbyshire must play its part in this by reducing emissions and increasing renewable energy generation.

- 4.3 Doing nothing would not be consistent with the County Council's Derbyshire Climate Change Strategy, the Derbyshire Climate and Carbon Reduction Manifesto (May 2019), the Derbyshire Environment

and Climate Change Framework and the Vision Derbyshire Planning Policy and Climate Change workstream.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 Confidential report of the Executive Director Place to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Environment on 22 December 2021.
Note: this confidentiality relates to the commercial sensitivity of financial information associated with tendering.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.

8. Recommendation

That the Committee:

- a) notes the commissioning of the Derby, Derbyshire and Peak District National Park Renewable Energy Study and its relevance to the constituent local authorities in the study area in informing the development of planning policies for the provision of renewable energy technologies in their areas, as referred to in this report.

9. Reason for Recommendation

- 9.1 To understand the progress that has been made to date on the Renewable Energy Study and how the study and its recommendations can contribute to meeting carbon reduction targets at the national and local level within Derbyshire.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 The commissioning of the study has no direct financial implications for the Council. Funding for the study has been provided by the Midlands Net Zero Hub (£25,000), D2N2 Energy Board (£12,500) and D2 Retained Business Rate Fund (£12,500).

Legal

- 2.1 Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the 2008 Planning Act, includes the following requirement (at subsection 19A) that applies to all local planning authorities in preparing development plans: *“Development plan documents must (taken as a whole) include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change”*.
- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the Government's policies for town and country planning, in respect of the Development Plan making process as well as decision taking on individual applications, to which all local planning authorities must have regard.
- 2.3 In planning for renewable energy, paragraphs 155, 156 and 158 of the NPPF encourage local authorities to take a positive approach by identifying suitable areas for renewable energy generation and its supporting infrastructure, and by maximising the opportunities for community-led and decentralised energy production.

Human Resources

- 3.1 The key resource implication has been the contribution of Derbyshire County Council's officers' time in coordinating the commissioning of the study and the chairing and membership of the Climate Change and Planning Sub-Group

Information Technology

- 4.1 There are no direct information technology implications of the study.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Some of the final conclusions and recommendations of the study may have equalities impact implications. These will become clearer on final completion of the study.
- 5.2 One expected impact is with regard to fuel poverty, which is a significant issue. Stand alone renewable energy solutions (e.g. rooftop solar photovoltaic and small scale wind systems) may offer cleaner options, but they still have a significant upfront cost, beyond the reach of segments of the population. The delivery of commercial renewable energy schemes and the incorporation of renewable energy schemes into new development, however, can contribute to alleviating fuel poverty.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 The study supports the Council's ambition to be a net zero organisation by 2032, or sooner, and for the county to be net zero by 2050, as set out in the Council Plan and informs the action that needs to be taken to achieve these ambitions.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

- 7.1 The study itself has no direct implications on the above. However, in guiding the suitable location of renewable energy technologies in Derbyshire, the outcomes of the study could have considerable environmental sustainability benefits for the County.