

CHAPTER 9

ENERGY

9.1. PARA. 9.1.8 & CHANGE NO 247

Conditionally withdrawn objection

748	Environment Agency-South West Region
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Supporter of Change

2412	Environment Agency-South West Region
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Inspector's note

I concur with PC247 which satisfies objection 748 by inserting a requirement that the design of hydro power schemes avoid potentially adverse effects on the hydrological régime.

9.1.1. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Plan be modified by PC247.

9.2. PARA. 9.1.9

Objection

995	Somerset County Council
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Issue

The precision of the reference to the annual tonnage of waste arisings.

Inspector's reasoning and conclusions

The objector challenges the interpretation of the figures quoted in paragraph 9.1.9; the figure of 200,000 tonnes per annum relates only to the household waste generated by 500,000 people. I consider this should be made clear in the text in order to avoid misinterpretation.

9.2.1. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that paragraph 9.1.9 of the Plan be modified to clarify that the figure of 200,000 tonnes refers only to household waste.

9.3. PARA 9.1.6 AND POLICY OMISSION - RENEWABLES

Conditionally withdrawn objection

168	Council for the Protection of Rural England
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Supporter

2473	Council for the Protection of Rural England
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Inspector's note

Objection 168 is conditionally withdrawn in response to PC248 which inserts an additional paragraph relating to solar power. I support the change

9.3.1. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Plan be modified by PC248.

9.4. POLICY EN/1 & CHANGE NO 249

Objections

297	Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU)
749	Environment Agency-South West Region

Conditionally withdrawn objection

996	Somerset County Council
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Supporter

1105	Countryside Commission
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Inspector's note

Objection 996 is conditionally withdrawn in response to PC249.

Issues

- (i) Whether there is an inconsistency between the Policy and paragraph 9.1.21 in respect of small wind power installations.
- (ii) Whether the Policy should be positively expressed.

Inspector's reasoning and conclusions

Issue (i)

I consider that the alteration of the Policy by PC249, as amended in accordance with my recommendation below, is consistent with paragraph 9.1.21 in respect of small wind power installations.

Issue (ii)

I find that the Policy as changed by PC 249 permits the exploitation of wind energy in the Quantock Hills AONB, subject to stringent criteria. I accept that, given the physique of the Quantock landscape, any such developments are likely to be few in number and small in scale. I shall recommend an alteration rendering the wording of the change more appropriate.

9.4.1. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that Policy EN/1 be modified to read:

Proposals for the development of wind turbines within the Quantock Hills AONB will be permitted only where they would not have an unacceptable effect on:

- (i) the landscape (including the skyline) of the designated area;**
 - (ii) the amenities of nearby residents; and**
 - (iii) that they satisfy the requirements of criteria (iii), (iv), and (vi) of Policy EN/2.**
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9.5. POLICY EN/2 & CHANGE NO 250

Objections

298	Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU)
779	British Wind Energy Association
866	Government Office for the South West

Conditionally withdrawn objections

76	Exmoor National Park Authority
750	Environment Agency-South West Region
997	Somerset County Council

Supporter of PC250

2065	Exmoor National Park Authority
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Inspector's note

Objections 68, 750, and 997 are conditionally withdrawn in response to PC250. The change, which I support, distinguishes in a more positive mode than the deposit draft Plan policy the criteria for wind energy development outside the AONB from those applicable within it identified in Policy EN/1 as modified by PC249.

Issues

- (i) Whether the Policy is overly negative.
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- (ii) Whether the terminology of the introductory wording of the Policy 298 is appropriate and whether criterion (iii) should clarify that mitigation measures will be taken into account.
- (iii) Whether in view of the more stringent approach to wind energy development in the Special Landscape Areas than in the AONB there is need for a policy taking account of landscape character.

Inspector's reasoning and conclusions

Issue (i)

I consider PC250 provides an appropriately more positive approach to the derivation of energy from wind power.

Issue (ii)

The British Wind Energy Association object to the terminology of the introductory wording of Policy EN/2; pointing out that National Renewable Energy Policy is to encourage the exploitation of renewable resources 'wherever economically attractive and environmentally acceptable'. PC250 suitably amends the introductory wording. However, the reference to mitigation measures which is sought is not appropriate as the national guidance in PPG22 counsels no such precautions.

Issue (iii)

GOSW points out that the approach to wind energy development in the Special Landscape Area appears to be more restrictive than that applied to the AONB, notwithstanding that the latter is of national importance. It considers Policy EN/2 should be redrafted to reflect the more local importance of the Special Landscape Area designation. In view of the objection to Policy LC/3, the Local Planning Authority should consider the need for a Policy that takes account of landscape character.

In my view PC250 mitigates the stridently restrictive wording of the deposit Draft Policy and, in the opening sentence and items (i) and (v), respects the character of different landscapes. In that general context the Special Landscape Designation is no longer relevant, having been removed by PCs 27 and 28.

9.5.1. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Plan be modified by PC250.

9.6. POLICY EN/3 & CHANGE NO 251

Conditionally withdrawn objection

867	Government Office for the South West
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Supporter

299	Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU)
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Inspector's note

Objection 867 is withdrawn in response to PC251. I consider that modification of Policy EN/2, which for any area outside the AONB introduces the criterion of the character of the landscape, renders Policy EN/3 redundant. I therefore support the deletion of Policy EN/3 by PC 251.

9.6.1. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Plan be modified by PC251.

9.7. POLICY EN/4 & CHANGE NO 252

Objections

300	Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU)
780	British Wind Energy Association

Conditionally withdrawn objections

751	Environment Agency-South West Region
868	Government Office for the South West
998	Somerset County Council

Supporters

2066	Exmoor National Park Authority
2414	Environment Agency - South West Region

Inspector's note

Objections 751, 868, and 998 are conditionally withdrawn in response to the more positive mood of PC252 and by the cross-reference therein to Policy EN/2 as modified by PC250 in respect of the identification of important rural or environmental interests.

Issues

- (i) The need to encourage the exploitation of small scale sustainable power sources.
- (ii) The identification of the interests the policy seeks to protect.

Inspector's reasoning and conclusions

I consider PC252 also appropriately satisfies objections 300 and 780. In sum, the positive and encouraging approach of PC 252, combined with its identification of the important interests it seeks to protect, suitably meets the outstanding objections. However, I shall recommend a small amendment to the change in order to avoid repetitious language.

9.7.1. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that Policy EN/4 be modified by PC 252 and renamed Policy EN/3, save for the deletion of 'individual' and the insertion of 'single' before 'dwellings'.

9.8. POLICY OMISSION & CHANGES 253 & 254

Objections

295	Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU)
296	Energy Technology Support Unit (ETSU)

Conditionally withdrawn objection

865	Government Office for the South West
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Supporter of PC253

2413	Environment Agency - South West Region
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Supporters of PC254

2414	Environment Agency - South West Region
2066	Exmoor National Park Authority

Inspector's note

Objections 295 and 296 are identical. Objection 865 is met by PC254 which inserts a new Policy EN/4 setting out general criteria for assessing proposals for the generation of energy from any renewable source.

Issues

Whether, in view of the need for a diversity of energy supply and the environmental benefits that can accrue from a range of renewable energy resources of any scale, the Plan should incorporate a Policy taking account of renewable energy that is not technology-specific.

Inspector's reasoning and conclusions

Objections 295 and 296 argue that the Plan fails to take account of renewable energy sources other than wind and that consequently a policy that is not technology-specific is required. It is fitting that, as the LPA states, it should take full account of the nationally designated areas and the balance to be struck between the exploitation of renewable energy sources and the wider environment. I consider the omission is satisfactorily repaired by the new Policy EN/4 inserted by PC254 and the explanatory text inserted by PC253, save for a necessary grammatical correction in PC 253. I also concur with the suggested replacement text for paragraph 9.1.22 which refers to the government's updated targets for the provision of renewable energy. However, I infer that 'meaningful' in that text refers to magnitude, in which case I do not find it a helpful description. Since the exploitation of renewable energy sources must be assessed against all relevant planning considerations I prefer 'appropriate'.

9.8.1. RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that the Plan be modified by:

- (i) **PC 253, subject to the deletion of 'resources' in the penultimate sentence and its replacement by 'resource';**
- (ii) **PC 254; and**

(iii) The insertion of the following paragraph before the new Policy EN/4:

The government has set a target of 10% of national electricity production to be derived from renewable sources by 2010. Following completion of a detailed appraisal of renewable energy potential in the South West Region (*Renewable Energy Assessments and Targets for the South West*, February 2001) a target of 11-15% provision for the same period is proposed by the Government Office for the South West. In recognition of the advice in Policy RE/6 of RPG10 the Council will support and encourage appropriate contributions to the regional target through the different modal technologies described in this section.