

## 14. Onshore Wind, Solar, and Battery Energy Storage

### 14.1. Introduction

- 14.1.1. Dorset Council declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019, and our Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Strategy (NECES) sets a clear vision for the council and wider Dorset to rapidly become carbon neutral, nature positive and resilient. Providing a positive strategy for renewable energy development through the Local Plan whilst ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed appropriately is key and can help tackle climate change.
- 14.1.2. There are many renewable energy resources that could be harnessed in Dorset, both through stand-alone schemes and as part of other built development. The Local Plan will include appropriate policy for guiding development proposals and securing renewable energy that is integrated into new developments, supported by the Dorset Design Code referenced in Section 1.6.
- 14.1.3. National policy suggests that local plans should consider identifying suitable areas for renewable energy and low carbon development, where this would help secure their development. Additionally, our NECES includes an objective to identify suitable sites in the Local Plan, whilst having regard to landscape, the historic environment, amenity, ecology, productive farmland impacts and other constraints. Responses to our consultation in January 2021 suggested the Local Plan should go further to address the climate crisis. Identifying opportunities for renewable energy infrastructure is one step towards responding to this feedback.

### 14.2. Identifying suitable areas

- 14.2.1. Taking into account the characteristics of Dorset and the renewable energy projects already delivered in the area, we have looked at where there may be potential for wind turbines, ground-mounted solar farms and battery energy storage systems (BESS) development. We have carried out a strategic assessment of the potential for these three types of development, including technical considerations such as wind speed and grid connection, and excluding areas of land with physical constraints such as built-up areas. We

have also undertaken an assessment of landscape sensitivity to these types of development at various scales.<sup>35</sup>

- 14.2.2. We propose to identify areas that are broadly suitable for onshore wind turbines, ground-mounted solar and battery energy storage development in the new Local Plan. These broad areas will direct individual proposals to the locations that we consider to be most appropriate whilst still allowing for flexibility in planning for future renewable energy development. Flexibility is needed because many proposals for renewable energy are informed by site specific considerations, availability of a connection to the national grid and the specific technology being used.
- 14.2.3. The broad areas of opportunity proposed are based on the two strategic level assessments outlined above. We have combined what is considered technically feasible with areas that are not of higher landscape sensitivity.<sup>36</sup>
- 14.2.4. Detailed evidence would need to be provided the time of a planning application in order to determine the suitability of individual sites or proposals.
- 14.2.5. The broad areas of opportunity are based on a wide range of considerations including:
- Excluding land within designated ecological sites, designated heritage assets<sup>37</sup>, existing and future development, watercourses and woodland
  - Landscape sensitivity
  - Minimum development sizes, to reflect the practicalities of large scale developments
  - For wind, technical considerations such as wind speed, turbine sizing and spacing; and consideration of noise impacts
  - For solar, exclusion of higher quality agricultural land
  - For battery storage, exclusion of land more than 4km from a transmission substation
- 14.2.6. As development of these technologies can come forward in different scales, broad areas of opportunity are identified for each of the following categories:

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<sup>35</sup> [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/renewable-energy-strategic-assessments](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/renewable-energy-strategic-assessments)

<sup>36</sup> More detail on the method undertaken is available in the background paper: Wind, Solar and Battery Energy Storage Systems (available on our website).

<sup>37</sup> World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, and Conservation areas

- Wind energy development in size categories between 25 and 220 metres in height (to blade tip)
- Ground mounted solar development in site area categories up to 120 hectares
- Battery storage development in site area categories up to 10 hectares

14.2.7. At this stage we do not have detailed evidence of land availability for renewable energy development. Identifying broad areas of opportunity gives a positive approach in line with national policy, providing flexibility for future provision of renewable energy and enabling landowners and developers to pursue sites that are the most suitable.

14.2.8. The areas of opportunity for onshore wind, solar and battery storage are shown on the online consultation and in Appendix D.

Question 41: We have outlined some areas which could be appropriate for wind turbines, ground mounted solar panels and battery energy storage. To what extent do you agree or disagree with identifying broad areas of opportunity for wind, solar and battery energy storage?

- a. Agree
- b. Partially agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Partially disagree
- e. Disagree

Please provide any further comments or reasoning