

Steeple Renewables Project

Chapter 5 : Planning Policy

Environmental Statement - Volume 1

April 2025

Document Reference: EN010163/APP/6.2.5

Revision: 1

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure)

Regulations 2009 - Regulation 5(2)(a)



Chapter 5: Planning Policy

Document Properties		
Prepared By	The Steeple Renewables Project Consultant Team	
Version History		
Version	Date	Version Status
Application Version	April 2025	Rev 1

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5. Planning Policy Context

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter sets out an overview of the planning policy context relevant to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and the Environmental Statement (ES). In addition, each technical chapter and associated appendices of this ES sets out the policy relevant to that topic.

5.1.2 The ES does not consider the planning balance of the Proposed Development in line with planning policy. Instead, this is set out in the **Planning Statement [EN010163/APP/7.1]** which is submitted as a standalone document as part of the DCO Application.

5.1.3 The purpose of considering planning policy in this ES is two- fold:

- To identify policies that could influence the sensitivity of receptors, and therefore the significance of effects, and any requirements for mitigation; and
- To identify planning policies that could influence the methodology of the EIA. For example, a planning policy might require the assessment of an impact or the use of a specific methodology

National Policy Statements (NPS) for Energy, Renewable Energy and Electricity Networks Infrastructure

5.1.4 The Planning Act 2008 requires that in deciding nationally significant infrastructure applications for development consent, regard must be had to any National Policy Statement which has ‘effect’ in relation to development of the description to which the application relates (a ‘relevant national policy statement’). Applicants should ensure that their applications are consistent with the instructions and guidance within the NPSs.

5.1.5 In 2011 the Government published the NPSs for Energy (EN-1)¹, Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)², and Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)³. The 2020 Energy White Paper⁴ comprised a review of the 2011 NPSs, pursuant to section 6 of

¹ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)

² Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3)

³ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023) National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure

⁴ HM Government (2020) Energy White paper: Powering our Net Zero Future

- the Planning Act 2008. That review resulted in a number of amendments to the NPSs.
- 5.1.6 Following their designation on 17 January 2024, there are three NPSs which are considered to be ‘relevant NPS’ under Section 104 of the Planning Act 2008:
- Overarching NPS for Energy (NPS EN-1);
 - NPS for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3); and
 - NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (NPS EN-5).
- Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (NPS EN-1)*
- 5.1.7 The ‘Overarching’ NPS for Energy EN-1 sets out how the energy sector can help deliver the Government’s climate change objectives by clearly stating the need for new low carbon energy infrastructure to contribute to climate change mitigation.
- 5.1.8 NPS EN-1 sets out the UK Government’s commitments to delivering its 2050 net zero target with respect to the energy sector, stating that:
- “Given the urgent need for new electricity infrastructure and the time it takes for electricity NSIPs to move from design conception to operation, there is an urgent need for new (and particularly low carbon) electricity NSIPs to be brought forward as soon as possible, given the crucial role of electricity as the UK decarbonises its economy.”* (Paragraph 3.3.58)
- 5.1.9 Further, NPS EN-1 explains that the Government’s objective is to ensure the UK’s supply of energy always remains secure, reliable, affordable and consistent with meeting the target to cut greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, stating that:
- “we need to transform the energy system, tackling emissions while continuing to ensure secure and reliable supply, and affordable bills for households and businesses. This includes increasing our supply of clean energy from renewables, nuclear and hydrogen manufactured using low carbon processes”* (Paragraph 2.3.6).
- 5.1.10 With fossil fuels accounting for approximately 76% of the UK’s energy supply in 2020, NPS EN-1 states that the country will *“need to dramatically increase the volume of energy supplied from low carbon sources”* (Paragraph 2.3.5). With wind and solar comprising the lowest cost ways of generating electricity, NPS EN-1 concludes that *“a secure, reliable, affordable, net zero consistent system in 2050 is likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar”* (Paragraph 3.3.20).

- 5.1.11 NPS EN-1 sets out the general policies for the submission and assessment of energy infrastructure applications under the Planning Act 2008, including the generic impacts which arise from the development of all types of energy infrastructure covered by the energy NPSs, which should be considered.

Overarching National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (NPS EN-3)

- 5.1.12 NPS EN-3 should be read in conjunction with NPS EN-1, which provides the primary policy for decisions by the Secretary of State (SoS) on applications for nationally significant renewable energy infrastructure and emphasises the Government's commitment to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that the UK is 'on a pathway' that allows it to meet net zero emissions. NPS EN-3 affirms at paragraph 2.10.9 that:

"The Government has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions by 2050. As such, solar is a key part of the government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector."

- 5.1.13 Paragraphs 2.10.18 to 2.10.72 of NPS EN-3 set out the factors and technical considerations influencing site selection and design. These are considered further in **Chapter 3 - Site Description, Site Selection and Iterative Design Process [EN010163/APP/6.2.3]** of this ES as to how they have informed the location and design of the Proposed Development and the factors and technical considerations influencing site selection.

- 5.1.14 Paragraph 2.10.73 to 2.10.126 of NPS EN-3 set out relevant factors to be assessed in relation to (noting the list is not intended to be exhaustive):

- Biodiversity, ecological, geological conservation and water management;
- Landscape, visual and residential amenity;
- Glint and glare;
- Cultural Heritage; and
- Construction including traffic and transport noise and vibration.

- 5.1.15 Paragraphs 2.10.127 to 2.10.144 set out mitigation measures covering agriculture land classification and land type and the factors set out above at paragraph 5.1.14 of this ES chapter. The factors related to these topics in relation to the SoS's

decision making process are outlined from Paragraph 2.10.145 - 2.10.162 of NPS EN-3.

NPS EN-5 for Electricity Networks Infrastructure

- 5.1.16 NPS EN-5 should be read in conjunction with NPS EN-1 and NPS EN-3 and is concerned with the impacts and other matters that are specific to electricity networks infrastructure. It covers above ground electricity lines whose nominal voltage is expected to be 132kV or above. However, Paragraph 1.6.4 identifies that any other kind of electricity infrastructure (including underground cables at any voltage and associated infrastructure such as substations and converter stations) will be covered by this NPS if it constitutes associated development for which consent is sought along with an NSIP such as a generating station.
- 5.1.17 NPS-EN5 sets out required assessments and technology-specific matters for consideration further to the impact or issue covered in NPS EN-1. The policies set out in NPS EN-5 are additional to those on generic impacts set out in EN-1 and do not replace them.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.1.18 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied in relation to the determination of planning applications made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The NPPF was published in 2012 and updated most recently in February 2025.
- 5.1.19 Paragraph 5 of the NPPF states that the NPPF does not contain specific policies for NSIPs, which are to be determined in accordance with the decision-making framework set out in the Planning Act 2008 and relevant NPSs for nationally significant infrastructure. However, in determining NSIPs, the SoS can take account of any other matters that are considered both important and relevant, which may include the NPPF.
- 5.1.20 The NPPF does however state that the planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change (Paragraph 160) and that local planning authorities should, when determining planning applications for such development, approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

- 5.1.21 The NPSs provide the predominant policy context; whilst noting that the ES has had regard to NPPF and Guidance, where any inconsistencies may exist between them and the relevant NPSs, it is policies within the latter that prevail.

National Planning Practice Guidance

- 5.1.22 On 6 March 2014, the then Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, MHCLG) launched the planning practice guidance web-based resource to support the NPPF. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides guidance across a range of topic areas, including in relation to environmental topic areas relevant to the EIA process such as, climate change (which advises how to identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in the planning process to address the impacts of climate change).

Local Planning Policy

- 5.1.23 The Planning Act 2008 does not incorporate Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which provides the principal basis in legislation for the determination of planning applications under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, namely that they must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Applications for development consent made under the Planning Act 2008 are determined as set out above.
- 5.1.24 Paragraph 4.1.12 of NPS EN-1 acknowledges that the policies outlined in Development Plan documents and other Local Development Framework documents may hold significance and relevance in the decision-making process. However, in cases where conflicts arise, this paragraph reaffirms Section 104(3) of the Planning Act 2008 which requires that the NPS takes precedence for the purpose of the SoS's planning decision-making. The local development plan is not therefore the starting point for the consideration of an application for development consent. Nevertheless, local policy has been considered through the EIA process where relevant.
- 5.1.25 Table 5.1 below outlines the key local planning policy documents that are under consideration during the EIA process. Where relevant, emerging policy documents are also listed.

Table 5.1: Key Local Planning Policy

Policy Document	Adopted Policy
<p>Bassetlaw District Council's adopted Local Plan 2020 - 2038</p>	<p>Policy ST1: Bassetlaw's Spatial Strategy;</p> <p>Policy ST33: Design Quality;</p> <p>Policy ST35: Landscape Character</p> <p>Policy ST37: Green and Blue Infrastructure;</p> <p>Policy ST38: Biodiversity and Geodiversity;</p> <p>Policy 39: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows;</p> <p>Policy 41: Heritage Assets;</p> <p>Policy 46: Protecting Amenity;</p> <p>Policy 47: Contaminated and Unstable Land;</p> <p>Policy ST40: The Historic Environment;</p> <p>Policy ST49: Renewable Energy Generation;</p> <p>Policy ST50: Flood Risk and Drainage;</p> <p>Policy ST51: Protecting Water Quality and Management; and</p> <p>Policy ST56: Provision and Delivery of Infrastructure.</p>
<p>Sturton Ward Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2037</p>	<p>Policy 1: Sustainable Development, Infill and the Development Boundary;</p> <p>Policy 2a: Protecting the Landscape Character, Significant Green Gaps and Key Views;</p> <p>Policy 2b: Enhancing Biodiversity;</p> <p>Policy 4: Reducing the Risk of Flooding;</p> <p>Policy 5: Design Principles;</p> <p>Policy 6: Protecting the Historic Environment; and</p> <p>Policy 12: Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy and Climate Change</p>

Policy Document	Adopted Policy
Nottinghamshire Minerals Local Plan 2021 - 2036	Policy SP7: Minerals Safeguarding, Consultation Areas and Associated Minerals Infrastructure Policy MP2: Sand and Gravel Provision
Nottinghamshire and Nottingham Replacement Waste Local Plan Part 1: Waste Core Strategy – December 2013	Policy WCS2: Waste awareness, prevention and re-use

5.1.26 Each technical chapter (**Chapter 6 to 17 [EN010163/APP/6.2.6-EN010163/APP/6.2.17]**) of the ES will set out the relevant policies to their assessments.