

The Eden Local Plan - Wind Energy

The Examination of the Local Plan regarding the Wind Energy Suitable Areas

**A Report on the 'Wind Energy Suitable Areas' and how these relate to the setting
of the National Parks and the
North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

for

Eden District Council

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1. The Brief and Background to the report

- 1.1 In May 2016, Philip Megson, Principal Planning Officer (Policy), invited Derek Woolerton, Director of Woolerton Dodwell Associates, to assist the Council with the Local Plan Examination process with regard to Wind Energy.
- 1.2 After publication of the pre –submission draft Local Plan and following a Public Inquiry, the Government announced on October 15, 2015 that extensions to the Yorkshire Dales National Park (northwards) and the Lake District National Park (eastwards) would be located within Eden District. As a consequence, the council has proposed Main Modification 39 – Amendments to the Suitable Areas for Wind Energy map following the Regulation 19 Publication Stage.
- 1.3 Having considered the Eden Local Plan 2014 -32 Wind Energy Background and Topic Papers–Submission Draft, the relevant emerging Policy ENV6 – Renewable Energy and Eden Local Plan 2014 – 32 Policies Map which indicates ‘Suitable Areas for Wind Energy’, and in the light of the more recent National Park extensions, the Examiner has asked the Council to respond to the following specific question that has been posed:

“Does the designated area (i.e. Wind Energy Suitable Area) avoid the potential for proposals being formulated that would affect the setting of the National Parks or the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?”

- 1.4 This report has been prepared in order to meet the requirement of the Examiner.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 A raft of existing background information which has underpinned the existing Wind Energy Policy in the County and Eden District has been considered. This has included :
 - Cumbria Wind Energy SPD (2007) (CWESPD)
 - Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and toolkit (2011) (CLCGT)
 - Cumbria Renewable Energy Capacity and Deployment Study (2011) (CRECDS)
- 2.2 More recently, the process of planning for Wind Energy in Eden District has been informed by
 - The Cumbria Cumulative Impacts of Vertical Infrastructure Study (2013) (CIVI)

which has resulted in the

- Eden Local Plan 2014 – 32 Wind Energy Policy Background Paper (WEPBP)

and Eden Local Plan Submission Draft Policy ENV6 Renewable Energy and a map of ‘Wind Energy Suitable Areas’. Both are reproduced below for reference purposes:

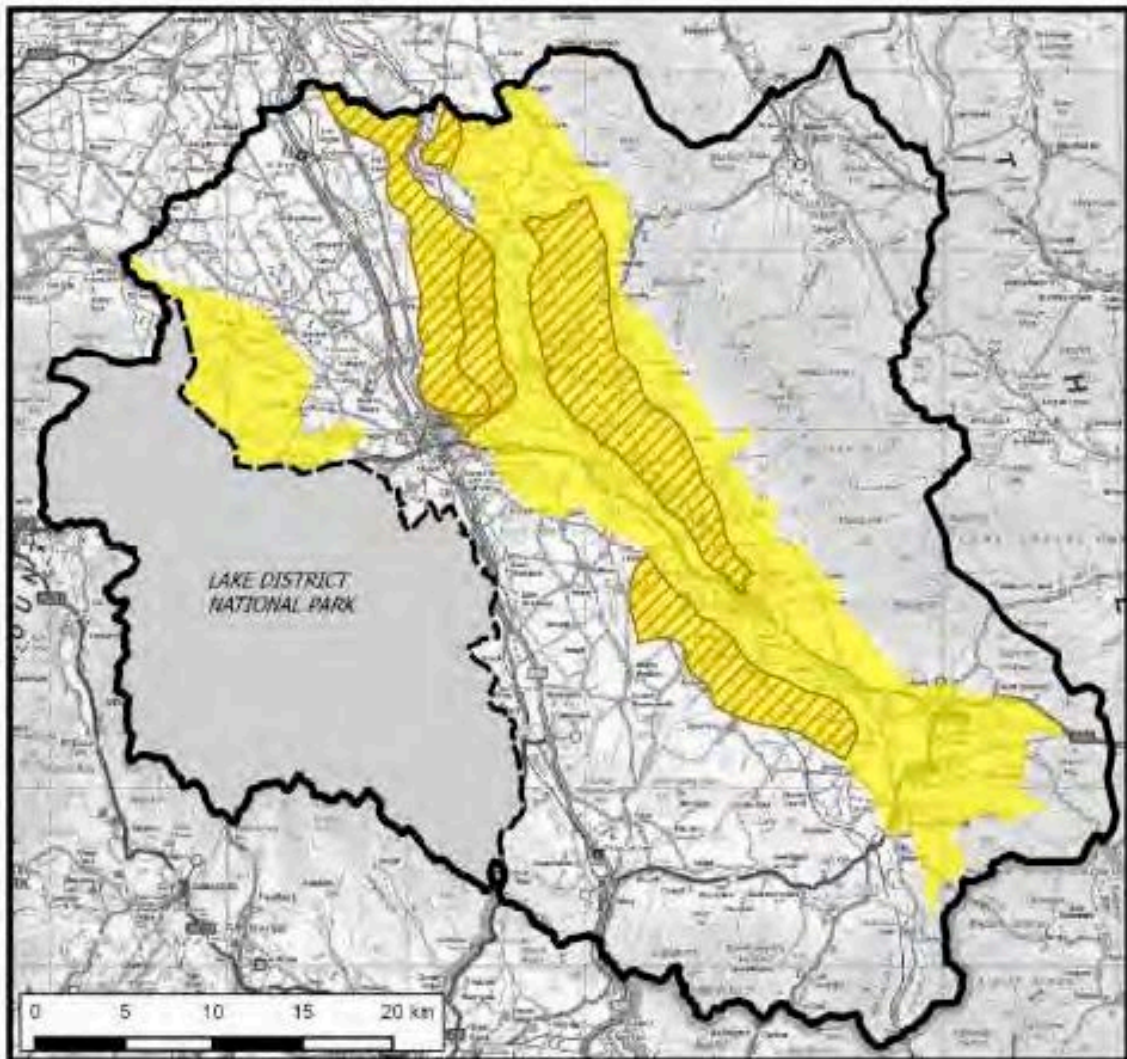
‘Eden Local Plan Submission Draft – Policy ENV6 – Renewable Energy

Renewable and low carbon energy schemes will be supported where:

- 1. Proposals can be incorporated into the local landscape without significant adverse impact; particular attention will be paid to the landscape impact of proposed developments which are located close to or within the North Pennines AONB and the National Parks;*
- 2. Proposals respect the form of the built environment, including settlement character and heritage assets, with particular attention paid not only to the potential impact on the heritage asset itself, but also to its wider setting;*
- 3. The development proposed will not have an unacceptable impact on the amenity of local residents and can demonstrate that there is sufficient mitigation measures to minimise the impact of noise, smell or other nuisance or pollutants likely to affect nearby occupiers and neighbouring land uses;*
- 4. It can be demonstrated that the natural environment, including designated sites will not be adversely affected (and where possible enhanced);*
- 5. The local road network can satisfactorily accommodate the development proposed;*
- 6. The proposed scheme will provide significant direct benefits to the community through their involvement with the proposal;*
- 7. Where necessary, an assessment of the cumulative impacts of renewable energy developments has been undertaken, and there is found to be no significant adverse impact;*
- 8. For proposals involving Wind Energy developments, the development is located in a ‘suitable area’ (identified on the Policies Map) and following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing;*

9. *The proposed scheme will not have an unacceptable effect on civil or military aviation and/or other defence related installations;*
10. *The proposed scheme will not have an unacceptable effect on existing telecommunications infrastructure;*
11. *Suitable measures have been included for the removal of redundant structures or equipment and for the restoration of the site, should the site become non-operational.*
12. *Where mitigation is required to make any identified impacts acceptable these will, where necessary, be secured through condition or planning obligations.'*

Suitable Areas for Small Scale Wind Energy (up to 50m) and Medium/Large Scale Wind Energy (over 50m)



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Key

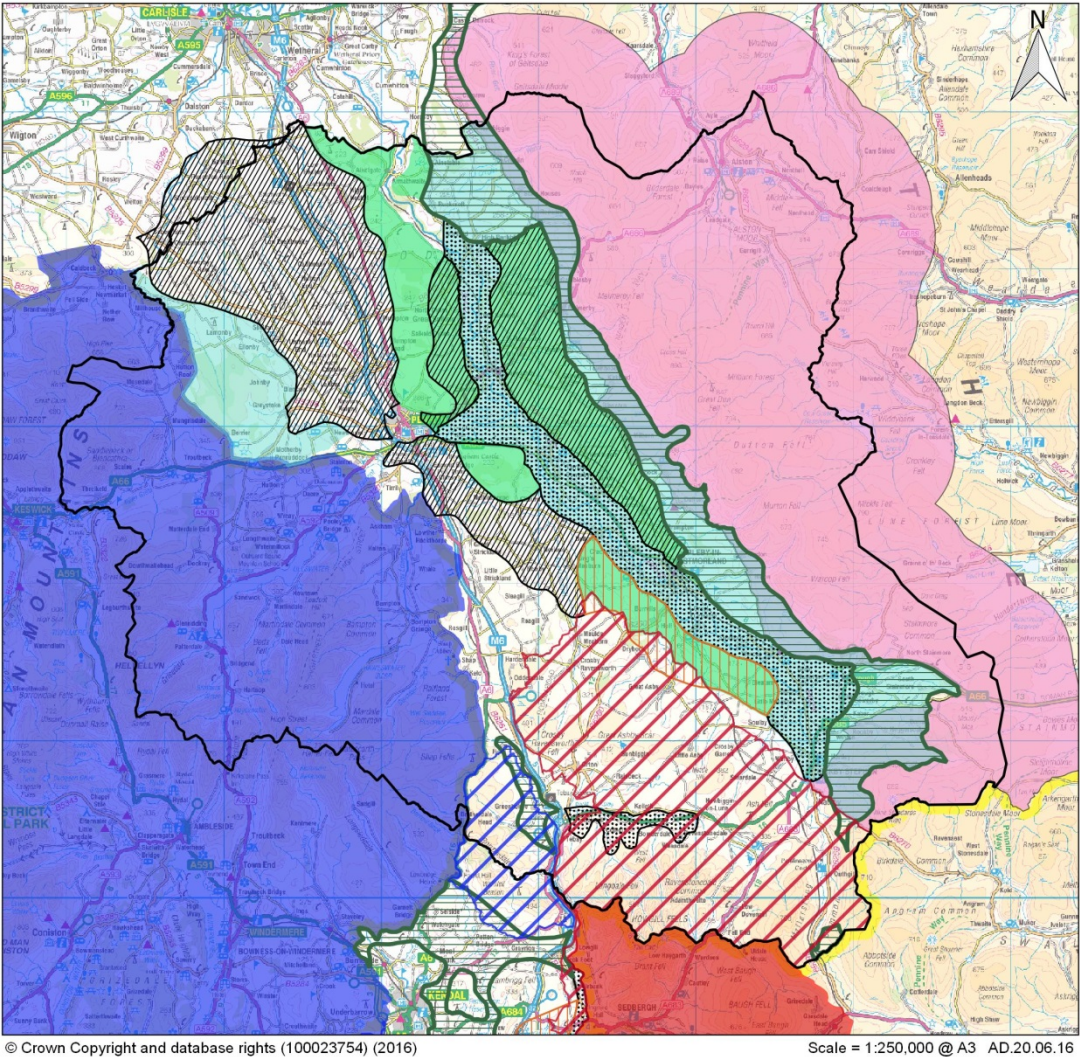
- Small Scale Suitable Area
- Medium/Large Scale Suitable Area
- Eden Boundary
- Lake District National Park

- 2.3 The announcement by Government on October 23 2015 that extensions to the Yorkshire Dales National Park and to the Lake District National Park had been approved post-dated much of the core work in preparing the Wind Energy Background Paper. It is clear in the Paper that the National Park extension areas were not afforded the particular consideration that might have been appropriate had they received National Park designation. In contrast, the North Pennines AONB was acknowledged – in the CIVI study

-as having a higher sensitivity than other landscapes to vertical structures by virtue of its AONB status. I refer to that matter later in this report.

- 2.4 The map which is included below has been prepared to show the spatial relationship between the new extended boundaries of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks, the North Pennines AONB and the 'Wind Energy Suitable Areas' (shaded green and blue) identified in the Wind Energy Policy Background Paper.

Wind Energy Suitable Area including National Park and AONB designations and selected Landscape Character Types



2.5 The map also shows the various Landscape Character Types identified in CLCGT.

- 2.6 It is notable that the areas designated as suitable for medium – large scale wind energy developments (defined by CIVI and accepted by the Council as larger than 50m to blade tip and shaded green on the map) are located within approximately 5km of the Lake District National Park to the north east of Penrith, directly adjacent to the confirmed extension areas of the Yorkshire Dales National Park in the vicinity of Drybeck south west of Appleby and within the North Pennines AONB near to Blencarn and the Conservation Area villages of Milburn and Dufton.
- 2.7 Areas deemed suitable for small-scale wind energy development (less than 50m to blade tip and shaded green and light blue on the map) are located within a relatively narrow corridor orientated approximately south-south-east and north-north-west and varying in width between approximately 6 and 12 km. The corridor stretches for some 50kms through virtually the whole length of the District. In strategic terms, the corridor is sandwiched between the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks to the south and west and the North Pennines AONB to the east and north and effectively bisects the whole of Eden District into two distinct halves.
- 2.8 It is understandable therefore that the Local Plan Examiner now needs to receive clarification that the designated areas (i.e. Wind Energy Suitable Areas)

‘ avoid the potential for proposals being formulated that would affect the setting of the National Parks or the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’,

particular in light of the increased sensitivity and value associated with National Parks and AONBs (NPPF paragraph 115) and the first condition attached to Draft Policy ENV 6 (above) which is concerned with the

‘ landscape impact of proposed developments which are located close to or within the North Pennines AONB and the National Parks.’

- 2.9 In order to assess whether the potential location of turbines within the Wind Energy Suitable Areas (WESA) might affect the settings of the National Park extensions or the North Pennines AONB this assessment has also considered
- the key elements which determine the landscape character of the National Parks and AONB within Eden District
 - the effects of wind energy developments on the landscape character of the landscape types in which they are located (host landscapes) and
 - the effects of wind energy developments on the perceived character of the National Parks and AONB (non-host landscapes). This includes the character of the landscape as perceived by receptors that are within the National Parks or AONB and looking outwards together with the perceptions of receptors in views towards the National Parks or AONB from other parts of the District.

2.10 Resources that have been considered include:

- The Decision letter of Inspector Roy Foster, dated October 15 2013 reporting to the Secretary of State on the Public Inquiry into the extension areas,
- Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan (Saved policies 2012)
- Lake District National Park LDF Core Strategy (Adopted 2010)
- North Pennines AONB Management Plans (2009-2014 and 2014-2109)

3. An appraisal of the potential landscape and visual impact of Wind Energy Development within areas that are considered to be 'suitable' in the Eden Local Plan 2014 – 32 Wind Energy Policy Background Paper and the potential effects on the settings of the National Parks and the North Pennines AONB within the District.

3.1 It is clear from the Inspector's Report on the possibility of issuing Variation Orders that the extension areas merited inclusion as integral parts of Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks because the landscapes met the rigorous criteria of Section 5(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 concerning 'natural beauty and open air recreation'.

The extension areas were all considered to exhibit landscape elements that were consistent with the special landscape character and 'natural beauty' of the National Parks and offered opportunities for 'open-air recreation'.

3.2 From August 1st 2016, the areas will be protected and managed by the respective National Park authorities, who have two 'statutory purposes':

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the park's special qualities by the public.

3.3 The Environment Act 1995 introduced the concept of "special qualities" for National Parks. The special qualities help to define what is most important about the National Park, those qualities that should be conserved and enhanced, for the benefit of people today, and future generations living in and visiting the National Park

3.4 With regard the North Pennine AONB, it should be noted that it is one of the largest of 46 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland land and was designated in recognition of

its **national** importance and to ensure that its character and qualities are protected for all to enjoy.

- 3.5 The Government confirmed in 2000 that National Parks and AONBs are **equal** in planning terms, they merely differ in their core purposes of designation. The AONB designation is also of international importance -the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has confirmed that AONBs in the UK meet Category V status (in common with National Parks).
- 3.6 NPPF policies indicate that the presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) should be restricted in areas that need special protection such as AONBs (para115) where great weight is placed on conserving scenic beauty in protected areas including AONBs. Para 116 states that permission should be refused for major developments in designated areas except in exceptional circumstances that are in the public interest
- 3.7 In addition, it is considered important to recognise that protection and conservation of the **setting** of Britain's finest and most valued landscapes (National Parks and AONBs) is also essential if they are to conserve the unique landscape character within their boundaries.
- 3.8 It is noteworthy that the District Council clearly acknowledges in Draft Policy ENV6 not only the potential impact of wind energy development on protected landscapes but also the significance of the potential impact on 'setting' by direct reference to the

'...particular attention'
that

'will be paid to the landscape impact of proposed developments which are located close to or within the North Pennines AONB and the National Parks;'

(Condition 1 of Draft Policy ENV6 WEPBP)

- 3.9 In order to be able to assess the potential landscape effects that may result from development within the Wind Energy Suitable Areas on the landscape character of the National Parks and the North Pennines AONB, site visits have been made throughout the District.
- 3.10 These have specifically included
- the Wind Energy Suitable Areas as identified in the Wind Energy Policy Background Paper (WEPBP)
 - the National Park extension areas (essentially CLCGT Landscape Types 12a, 12b and 12d).
 - parts of the North Pennines AONB which are within Eden District including the west facing foothills (CLCGT Landscape Type 11a) scarps (LT13a) and moorlands (LT13b).

Eden Local Plan Wind Energy Policy Background Paper (WEPBP)

3.11 The study to identify Wind Energy Suitable Areas undertaken by the District Council has been based on a logical approach, guided by the NPPF and PPG, which considers, in broad terms, the largely theoretical renewable energy capacity of the District and the constraining effects of the sensitive, high quality landscape resources within the District.

3.12 Paragraph 3.7 of WEPBP confirms that:

‘.....The identification of suitable areas has been undertaken in the following broad stages:

- *An assessment of the potential capacity in Eden for wind energy development, taking account of the technical requirements of the technology. This assessment has been based on the Cumbria Renewable Energy Capacity and Deployment Study.(CRECDS)*
- *A consideration of the capacity of Eden’s landscape and visual receptors to accommodate wind energy development. This has been based on the Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document (2007) (CWESPD) ,Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit (2011) (CLCGT) and the Cumbria Cumulative Impacts of Vertical Infrastructure (CIVI)*

3.13 Although the application of these studies in the form of a sieve analysis exercise to the District would appear to offer a balanced approach to identifying suitable areas for wind energy development, each has a number of shortcomings which, without careful use, can result in skewed or distorted results.

3.14 CRECDS omitted the constrained designated landscapes and applied a formula to other areas to arrive at figures for the potential delivery of wind energy within Eden District. This involving calculating the average densities of wind turbines on a reducing scale according to the capacity (high/medium/low) of different landscape types gleaned from CLCGT. Although a laudable theoretic study, the overall approach is considered to be crude and insensitive to the actual capacity of different landscapes types none of which were considered in CWESPD or CLCGT to be able to accommodate turbines throughout any one tract. It also fails to account for the proper protection of the settings of designated landscape which depend on an understanding of the concepts of intervisibility and cumulative impacts and they actually affect a particular landscape or area.

3.15 Although the CIVI study has focussed on a measure of the cumulative impacts caused by existing vertical infrastructures and attempts to provide guidance on the acceptable location of additional structures, this GIS study is also crude, fairly coarse grained and

results in significant anomalies. Indeed, the 'Truthing Studies ' undertaken as part of the project (Appendix 3) makes clear at 1.2 that:

4 The differences highlighted do however identify that more detailed work is required in these areas and should a vertical infrastructure development be proposed within the vicinity of the viewpoints, the variation to the significance suggested in the ground truthing exercise should be taken into consideration (see CIVI Part 1 Key Findings and Guidance)'.

3.16 For instance, within Eden District, a tract of Landscape Character Type 6 'Intermediate Farmland' to the north west of Penrith is 'discounted' by WEDBP as a potential 'Wind Energy Suitable Area' on the basis that the areas is already affected by Vertical Infrastructure - the Skelton Transmission Station.

3.17 The truthing exercise (Appendix 3) has used a viewpoint of this tract (Viewpoint 13) as part of the 'quality assurance' process and the notes reveal that:

'Only VI (vertical infrastructure) visible at this point is the Skelton Transmitting Station. Clear significant local impact. Otherwise, generally undeveloped rural landscape.'

*Landscape – Questionable whether LCT 6 in its entirety warrants a 'S' rating based upon this viewpoint. Would seek clarification on this.
Visual – Yes'*

3.18 It seems difficult to reconcile that a very large tract of land despoiled by the corridor of the M6 and the industrial development on the edge of the major settlement in the District and is deemed to be less suitable for vertical infrastructure than a relatively unspoilt tract of similar Landscape Type 6 Intermediate Farmland located to the north west of Appleby and north east of Penrith and extending almost as far as Kirkoswald.

3.19 The notes confirm that the existing Skelton Transmission Station has a clear, significant impact locally but suggests that this effect is hard to justify the GIS based outcome which overplays the influence of the masts over the whole tract of Intermediate Farmland which covers approximately 60 square kms

3.20 This example illustrates how the application of the CIVI study could result (and has done so in this case) in an unbalanced approach in which the presence of existing vertical infrastructures is overplayed and results in directing vertical infrastructure to similar but less despoiled landscapes in which vertical infrastructure plays little or no part in influencing its character.

3.21 With regard to the capacity of Eden's Landscape to accommodate wind energy development without unacceptable effects on landscape character and visual amenity,

the appropriate use of CWESPD and CLCGT is a useful starting point. However, the documents are less useful in providing guidance on the effects of development which may be perceived from within a designated landscape looking outwards or when looking towards a designated landscape from elsewhere.

- 3.22 In each case, perceptions of the unique character, quality and value of a designated landscape can be affected by the presence of wind energy development by altering a sense of quiet solitude or remoteness and of wildness that is commonly sought by visitors to the National Parks and AONBs.
- 3.23 Some generic guidance on the landscape and visual effects of wind turbines is contained in CWESPD at Part 2 Section 1. In paragraph 1.37. With reference to medium to large turbines up 120m to blade tip it was concluded that;

‘It is likely that ‘turbines can be seen as:

- Dominant as a key focus in close range views up to 2.4km
- Prominent as a key element in close range views of the landscape between 2.4-6km
- Conspicuous as a noticeable feature in mid to long range views of the wider landscape, with blade movement perceptible, between 6-12km
- Apparent as a visible feature in long range views of a wide landscape, turbines being perceived as a group rather than individual entities and blade movement only perceptible in clear weather conditions, between 12-18km
- Inconspicuous as a minor feature in distant views of a broad landscape only seen in very clear visibility, between 18-30km’

Wind Energy Suitable Area (medium – large scale)

WESA to the south west of Appleby

- 3.24 A Wind Energy Suitable Area (medium – large scale), located to the south west of Appleby and largely consistent with the Landscape Character Type 9b – Intermediate Moorland and Plateau **directly abuts** the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is clear from this generic guidance above that medium to large turbines
- will be **dominant** in some important views from the National Park towards the north east up to 2.4 km away.

- **prominent** in views between 2.4 km to 6km
- **conspicuous** in views between 6 and 12 km .

As a consequence, large parts of the nationally designated landscape would be affected.

- 3.25 As the Yorkshire Dales National Park in this location consists of mainly Landscape Types 12a, 12b and 12d which are characterised by their limestone features, 'openness', expansive views and a sense of tranquillity, remoteness and solitude, it is considered that views of medium to large scale turbines would compromise the perceptions of these special qualities of the National Park.
- 3.26 Views towards the Yorkshire Dales National Park - from elevated land to the north east - between 5 and 8km away within the North Pennines AONB, would also be interrupted by the presence of medium to large scale turbines in the fore-ground and medium-ground of views.
- 3.27 Similarly, dramatic panoramic views of the silhouetted profiles of the Lake District peaks even at distances of 15-20 km would be seen in combination with the sight of turbines some 5km away in the fore-ground where they would appear as 'prominent' in the view.
- 3.28 In both these examples, the presence of medium-large scale turbines is considered to have a significantly detrimental effect on the setting of the National Park and

It is recommended that the Wind Energy Suitable Area for medium-large scale turbines located to the south west of Appleby is deleted as they would have a significant effect on the perceptions of the special qualities of the National Parks and compromise their settings.

Wind Energy Suitable Area (medium – large scale) to the north west of Appleby extending to the east of Kirkoswald.

- 3.29 This WESA varies between 1km and 6km in width, extends approximately 25km in length in a south-south-east to north-north-west orientation and is consistent with Landscape Character Type 6 –Intermediate Farmland.
- 3.30 It is located approximately 10km from the Lake District National Park but to the east, parts of the Wind Energy Suitable Area (WESA) are either within the North Pennines AONB or very close to its boundary.
- 3.31 Receptors at elevated views from the Lake District National Park towards the WESA would perceive turbines as 'conspicuous' man-made elements in the landscape and their presence would compromise the dramatic, panoramic vistas from west towards the east.
- 3.32 Dramatic views from the elevated parts of the North Pennines, including from within the Scarps (Landscape Types 13a) and Moorland and High Plateau (Landscape Type 13b)

towards the Lake District National Park would also be interrupted by turbines in the mid view. They would appear to be 'conspicuous' and distracting and reduce a sense of remoteness and tranquillity and the wilderness experience which are fundamental to the purposes of its designation.

- 3.33 Views from the M6/Eden Valley corridor which consists of generally lower land, towards the foothills and scarps of the North Pennines AONB in an easterly direction would be affected by the presence of medium - large scale turbines in the fore-ground.
- 3.34 Although it is acknowledged that a Draft North Pennine Management Plan 2014-19 is at the consultation stage, The North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2009-2014 confirmed in Part A that the special character of the North Pennines includes the Upland Fringe Foothills which are on SW edge of AONB.

The defining characteristics include;

'Rolling farmland with low hills • A transitional landscape, between the higher country of the Carboniferous limestones, sandstones and shales, (and in some places the older, more rounded, hills of the upland fringe pikes), and the Eden Valley to the west • Dispersed settlement pattern. Red sandstone villages reflecting underlying Permo-Triassic sandstones and served by narrow lanes • Field systems mainly the product of late enclosure and bounded mainly by stone walls with a small number of hedges • Pockets of semi-natural woodland in small valleys'.

- 3.35 In Part B: *Strategy of the North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2009-2014*, 'Issues' under a *Landscape and Geodiversity* theme include:

6. Pressure for commercial scale wind energy - *National and Regional Planning policy severely restricts the potential for commercial scale wind energy development in AONBs (PPS22) but pressure for the development of windfarms on the edge of the AONB remains strong. In some cases development in the setting of the AONB can be just as damaging to the character of the area as would development within the boundary, eroding the sense of wildness and remoteness of the AONB and creating a demarcation in landscape character where none was previously perceived.*

- 3.36 'Objectives' include.....

LG1- To ensure that new development within the AONB or its setting does not have a significant adverse impact on the purpose of AONB designation.

- 3.37 It is noted in the North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines 2011, page 61, that pertinent advice is offered regarding 'Development Outside the AONB'

‘In some circumstances development outside of a nationally designated area can have impacts on the special qualities that form the basis of its designation and underlie its purpose. In those cases the potential impact on the designated area will be a material consideration to be taken into account in determining planning applications.

This principle is enshrined within many existing development plan policies dealing with the AONB which consider both development within the AONB, informed by PPS7 21-23, and development ‘affecting’ the AONB as an additional criterion.

In respect of wind energy development PPS22 states that:

“Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should not create ‘buffer zones’ around international or nationally designated areas and apply policies to these zones that prevent the development of renewable energy projects. However, the potential impact on designated areas of renewable energy projects close to their boundaries will be a material consideration to be taken into account in determining planning applications”. PPS22 14

It is beyond the scope of this document to deal exhaustively with all of the potential effects on the AONB of development outside of it, which could include a very wide range of direct, indirect and secondary impacts. The focus of this guidance is on direct impacts. The key issue for development is the extent to which its effects impact upon the special qualities of the AONB. While biodiversity and cultural heritage contribute to those special qualities, impacts on those resources are likely to be dealt with under other policies in development plans and LDFs, rather than be considered in terms of impacts on the special qualities of the AONB. The most significant category of impact likely to affect the AONB, where the special qualities of the AONB are likely to be central to the discourse, is landscape and visual impact.’

- 3.38 Although it is acknowledged that the Regional Planning tier and Planning Policy Statements are no longer part of the planning process, the principles set out in the *North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines 2011* are still valid and relevant.
- 3.39 It is considered that the perceptions of the setting of the AONB, currently unspoilt by any significant vertical structures, would be compromised by the presence of medium to large scale wind energy proposals in the most easterly WESA in the District which would not meet Objective LG1 of the *North Pennines AONB Management Plan 2009-2014* or the advice contained in *North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines 2011* regarding *Development Outside the AONB*.
- 3.40 **It is recommended that the Wind Energy Suitable Area for medium-large scale turbines located to the north west of Appleby is deleted** as turbines would have a significant detrimental effect on the perceptions of the special qualities of the Lake District National Park and on the North Pennines AONB and on their settings.

- 3.41 Two other WESAs are located within the corridor between the Lake District National Park and the North Pennines AONB. The larger of the two is located to the north of Penrith within Landscape Types 10 Sandstone Ridge and 6 Intermediate Farmland and approximately parallels the A6 road before terminating at the District Council boundary.
- 3.42 The second and smaller area is located within a southern extension of the Landscape Type 10 Sandstone Ridge to the south of the A66 and west of Eamont Bridge and is approximately 3km from the boundary of the Lake District National Park.
- 3.43 Although these areas have 'dropped' through the CIVI sieve net largely because they have a moderate capacity to accommodate turbines and are not currently degraded by existing vertical infrastructure, the smaller WESA and the southern part of the larger WESA are close enough to the Lake District National Park and the North Pennines AONB for turbines to affect their settings.
- 3.44 The northern half of the larger WESA is likely to be sufficiently distant from the Lake District National Park and the North Pennines to make the area marginally acceptable as a WESA. A suitable division might be the B6413 road between Plumptre and Lazonby. Elsewhere, the two WESAs are recommended for omission.

It is for this reason that **it is recommended that the southern WESA and the southern part of the more northerly WESA are deleted.**

Wind Energy Suitable Areas –small-scale

- 3.45 Areas identified as 'suitable' for small-scale wind energy projects (turbines with a height less than 50m to blade tip) are located on the Map at Figure 17 of the WEPBP and shaded blue and green.
- 3.46 The most extensive WESA includes the land in the vicinity of the junction of the A66 and the A685 in the south of the District, the corridor of the A66 Road north-westward to Appleby and parts of the Eden Valley north of Penrith as far as the northernmost boundary of Eden District.
- 3.47 This large tract stretching for approximately 50km includes Landscape Character Types
 - 8b Main Valleys - Broad Valleys
 - 11a Upland Fringe – Foothills
 - 12c Limestone Foothills
- 3.48 A smaller WESA is located to the west of the B5305 Penrith to Wigton road which is consistent with the Landscape Character Type 12c Limestone foothills land in that location.
- 3.49 The combination of low/moderate capacity, moderate sensitivity and the absence of existing vertical infrastructure have resulted in the identification and promotion of these

areas as WESAs. It is noteworthy that part of the Landscape Type 11a Upland Fringe - Foothills land is located within the North Pennines AONB and the Landscape Character Type 12c Limestone Foothills land is on the boundary of the Lake District National Park.

- 3.50 Both National Parks have Planning Policies which encourages the development of small turbines subject to conditions related to the need to maintain landscape character and the objectives of designation.

The Lake District National Park's Core Strategy Policy CS16 (Generating renewable and low carbon energy) has superseded the former Joint Structure Plan Policy R45 (Wind Energy) and the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Paragraph 4.2) explains that

'there is a presumption against large scale wind energy development in the National Park, as schemes of this scale will be incompatible with the objectives of National Park designation. However, the landscape in some parts of the National Park may have capacity for small scale wind energy schemes without adversely affecting the landscape character or other special qualities. This approach is consistent with the Cumbria Wind Energy Supplementary Planning Document (2007). We will assess renewable energy proposals in accordance with the Lake District National Park Landscape Character Assessment'.

- 3.51 The Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan (Submission Draft) includes the following policy (Policy CC1):

'Proposals for small scale renewable and low carbon technologies will be permitted where they contribute to meeting the energy needs of communities and businesses in the National Park. Particular encouragement will be given to designing renewable and low carbon technologies into new development.

Proposals must comply with Policy SP4 (Development quality) and not adversely affect local communities, businesses or the National Park's Special Qualities, having regard to impacts in isolation and in combination with other renewable energy schemes.

All technologies permitted will be required to be removed, and the site restored to its former condition, should they cease to be operational.

There will be a presumption against proposals for large scale low carbon and renewable energy development unless it can be clearly demonstrated that they will be compatible with the Special Qualities of the National Park, its communities and businesses. For the purposes of this policy, developments of more than one wind turbine, or a single turbine with a ground to hub height of 15 metres or more, or solar farms, will be deemed to be large scale.'

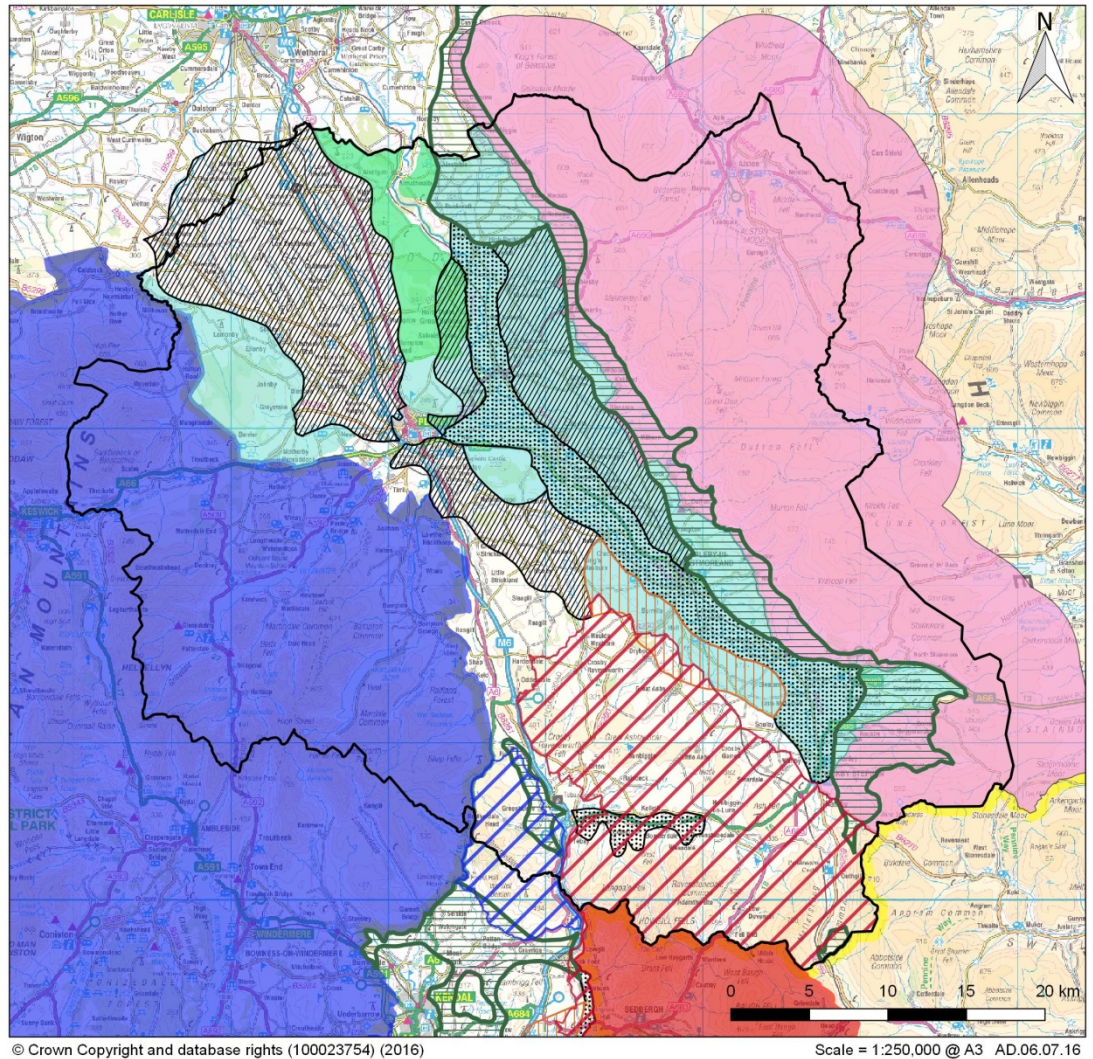
- 3.52 It is interesting to note that the Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan (Submission Draft) has set a threshold for small scale turbines at less than 15m to hub height which is substantially smaller than the criteria used by the CIVI study (less than 50 m to blade tip) and taken up by WEPBP. The Lake District National Park does not appear to define what a 'small turbines' is in the Core Strategy.
- 3.53 The North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines is also generally supportive of small scale wind energy proposals (Policy RE) subject to safeguarding the special character and quality of the AONB landscape. The Guidelines include 19 points (RE1 to RE17) which carefully describe the 'criteria' against which any scheme will be assessed.
- 3.54 The National Parks and the North Pennines AONB have adopted approaches which set the tests of acceptability of small turbine at a high level on a site by site basis which is quite different to actively **promoting** turbines in WESAs which, by definition, have already been examined in principle and are considered to be generally 'Suitable' for the location of wind turbines.
- 3.55 The backstop in planning terms is that small-scale wind energy schemes that are proposed within WESAs still need to be assessed in terms of their proximity to dwellings (greater than 800m), potential visual and noise impacts and a final test with regard to a potential development's acceptability to local communities. It is clear, however, that it will be more difficult for the Council to refuse an application that falls within a WESA unless the scheme is flawed in a significant way.
- 3.56 Although the support for small-scale wind turbines applications within WESAs which are located on the margins of the National Parks or the North Pennines AONB is appropriate, the actual **promotion** of wind turbines in a WESA that is located within a National Park or the North Pennines AONB is considered to be inappropriate. The location of even small scale turbines in these areas are likely to result in local impacts on the character of the protected landscapes or on their setting and it is considered an anathema to condone this by actively promoting the area as 'Suitable'. As a consequence, it is recommended that parts of the WESAs that are currently included within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North Pennines AONB should be omitted from the WESA map.
- 3.57 It is acknowledged that the WEPBP at paragraphs 3.40, 3.41 and 3.44 confirms that the application for wind energy scheme which are located within a WESA also have to be considered on a case by case basis and measured against other constraints including visual impact matters and residential property buffers. However, it is considered appropriate to emphasise that wind energy applications within or adjacent to designated landscapes will also be rigorously assessed to ensure that the essential qualities of these special areas or their settings are not compromised.

3.58 **Summary of Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

- the Wind Energy Suitable Area for medium-large scale turbines located to the south west of Appleby is deleted as turbines would have a significant effect on the perceptions of the special qualities of the National Parks and compromise their settings.
- the Wind Energy Suitable Area for medium-large scale turbines located to the north west of Appleby is deleted as turbines would have a significant detrimental effect on the perceptions of the special qualities of the Lake District National Park and on the North Pennines AONB and on their settings.
- the Wind Energy Suitable Area located within a southern extension of the Landscape Type 10 Sandstone Ridge to the south of the A66 and west of Eamont Bridge is deleted as turbines would have a detrimental effect on the settings of the Lake District National Park and the North Pennines AONB.
- the southern part of the WESA located north of Penrith (up to the B5305 road is deleted
- The Wind Energy Suitable Areas map for small-scale turbines (see below) is amended to exclude the areas within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the North Pennines AONB and that explanatory notes attached to Draft Policy ENV6 make it clear that proposals within and adjacent to the North Pennines AONB and areas adjacent to the Lake District National Park and the Yorkshire Dales National Park will be rigorously assessed to ensure that the special qualities and character of the designated landscapes or their settings are not compromised.

Suitable Areas for Small Scale Wind Energy (up to 50m) and Medium/Large Scale Wind Energy



Key	
	Eden District boundary
	Lake District National Park extension area
	Yorkshire Dales National Park extension area
	Lake District National Park
	Yorkshire Dales National Park
	North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
	Small Scale Wind Energy Suitable area
	Medium - Large Scale Wind Energy Suitable area
Cumbria Landscape Character Toolkit:	
	6: Intermediate Farmland
	8b: Main Valleys - Broad Valleys
	9b: Intermediate Moorland and Plateau - Rolling Farmland and Heath
	11a: Upland Fringe - Foothills

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