



Basingstoke Transition Network
40 Warblington Close
Tadley RG26 3YW
16th January 2016

To: Councillors of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council;
CC: Councillors of Hampshire County Council with wards in the Borough;
selected officers of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

Dear Councillor,

Climate change is now affecting us all: our weather is changing, flooding is becoming commonplace and we have just had the warmest December on record.

The science is clear. Our world is warming largely because of emissions of carbon dioxide. In the UK 95% of **ALL** CO₂ emissions come from the burning of coal, gas and oil. Basingstoke is no different. On average every one of us in the borough produces nearly 8 tonnes of CO₂ every year. This is one of the highest per capita emission rates in the world.

Fortunately we are all beginning to accept our individual responsibilities to protect our environment both for ourselves and our future generations. The UK government has signed the historic Paris agreement to further reduce our overall greenhouse production: we as a nation have agreed to produce 15% of all our energy from renewable resources by 2020 and a 40% reduction in emissions by 2030.

Now, we all need to play our part, both at individual and local authority level. Individually we the people of Basingstoke have reduced our carbon dioxide emissions over the last 10 years, as has the Council. But we still have a substantial way to go.

Our borough produces no more than 3% of its energy needs from renewable sources; it is a long way from making any meaningful contribution to the UK's overall target of 15% in just 4 years' time.

If we are to accept responsibility for our actions as a borough then we need to "up our game". We cannot hope that others will do it for us. We need to ensure that collectively by 2020 15% or more of our energy needs are met from local renewable resources. There are many ways in which we can achieve this, but all require investment in new technology – solar, hydro, anaerobic digestion, biomass combustion and wind farms. We as a borough need to encourage this investment.

To date the Council's draft Local Plan has a supportive policy towards all forms of renewables. The current policy (EM8) on renewables is:

“Development proposals for commercial generation of energy from renewable and low carbon resources will be permitted....”

This is to be supported. BUT are you aware of a proposal to amend this policy to read:

“Development proposals for commercial generation of energy from renewable and low carbon resources (excluding wind turbines) will be permitted....”

Wind turbines are the cheapest, cleanest and most efficient means of generating renewable energy. The Council's own report (AECOM, 2010, “North Hampshire Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development Study”) has identified several areas in Basingstoke and Deane that are suitable for small scale wind farms. There is huge public support for wind farms in Basingstoke.

Basingstoke Transition as a group that campaigns locally for a more sustainable Basingstoke is dismayed at this proposed retrograde step. There has been no Council debate about it, and the only opportunity for public comment is the current consultation on modifications to the Local Plan (deadline 8th February) at

<http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/localplanmods>.

The proposed changes including the one above are logged here:

<http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/content/doclib/1383.pdf>

from about page 34. The specific changes to which we refer above are coded PM102 and PM103.

Unless the Local Plan is modified to permit wind turbines, local communities will not have the opportunity to decide for themselves whether they support a wind farm proposal. This is one of two prerequisites of the Government's Written Ministerial Statement on wind energy development that is cited as the reason for the change in the Plan. The other is that areas suitable for wind farm development should be identified in the Plan - this would be achieved instantly by the positive citation of the 2010 AECOM report in the Plan, a very simple change to make.

We are writing to you as Basingstoke and Deane Borough Councillors to ask:

1. Were you aware of the proposed change to planning policy?
2. Do you support it?
3. If so how do you propose Basingstoke will meet its responsibilities to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions?

4. If not how can you support us in getting this proposed change removed?

We look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

Sheila Peacock, Secretary,
Basingstoke Transition Network.