

What is PPS22?

PPS22 is the national Planning Policy Statement on renewable energy, taking forward the Government's commitment to renewable energy set out in the Energy White Paper at a planning policy level.

Planning consent is the key permit required for any form of renewable energy development to proceed, and planning applications are assessed against a set of policies at national, regional, county and ultimately local level. PPS22 sets the bedrock of planning policy against which other tiers of plans must conform.

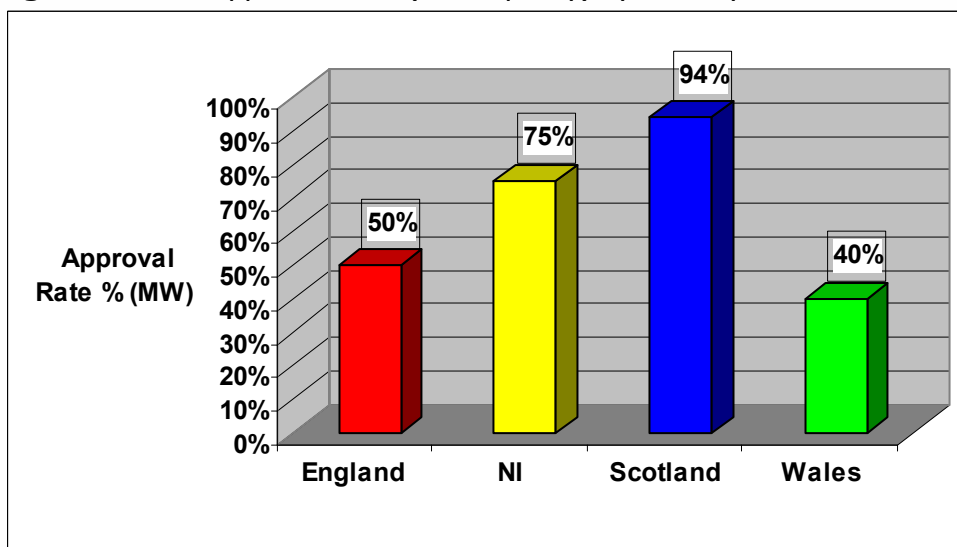
PPS22 is a short and focussed document outlining key principles, renewable energy targets, policy development requirements and more specifically locational considerations for renewable energy development.

Why is it needed?

To date, there has been a radical difference between planning approval rates for wind farm development between countries in the UK and within England. This has led to uncertainty for developers and ultimately poses a threat to the Government's renewable energy targets of meeting 10% of electricity supply from renewable energy sources by 2010.

Over the last 5 years, England has had an average approval rate at local level of just 50% compared to 90+% in Scotland (see Figure 1). This is testament to the strong policy guidance set out in NPPG6 in Scotland in 2000, and to the commitment of the Scottish Executive who recognise both the need for renewable energy generation, and the benefits for the Scottish economy in creating a new and vibrant renewables industry.

Figure 1: Local approval rates (MW capacity) by Country 1999-2003

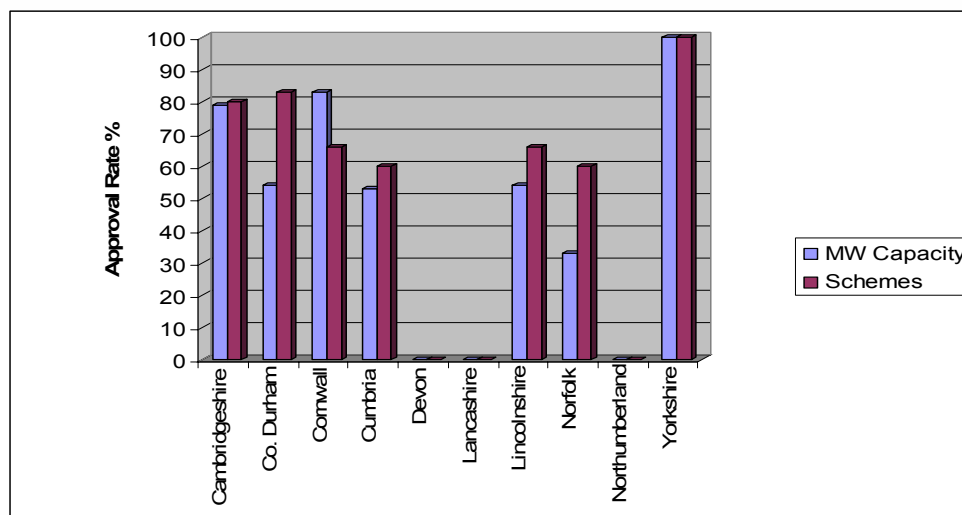


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Not only has the English approval rate been below average, but there has been massive inconsistency in decisions made between different parts of England. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 2 below which shows approval rates for those counties where most applications have been submitted over the last 5 years. At a local planning authority level, Devon, Lancashire and Northumberland have turned down all the applications for wind farm development, meanwhile the majority of others have approval rates ranging from 50% to 80% of schemes. However, in meeting Government renewable energy targets it is MW capacity approved that ultimately counts, and Figure 2 also shows that just 3 of the 9 counties (Cambridgeshire, Cornwall & Yorkshire) have a MW approval rate similar to most land use developments.

Figure 2: Local Approval Rates by county performance 1999-2003



It is unlikely that there are any other forms of development which produce such an inconsistency of planning response across England and this needs to be addressed. What is more, the Government's energy policy set out in the Energy White Paper *requires* planning to be '*streamlined and simplified*' to remove it as one of the key obstacles to renewable energy development.

What does it say?

The **key principles** set out that:

- i) regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should accommodate renewable energy developments and that their plans should contain criteria based policies designed to '*promote and encourage*', rather than restrict, the development of renewable energy resources. There will be no place for planning policies that rule out or place constraints on the development of renewable energy technologies;
- ii) regional renewable energy targets should be introduced in regional plans as *minimum* targets to be monitored and increased if and when they are met;

- iii) when assessing proposals for renewable energy, the wider environmental and economic benefits are material considerations that should be given significant weight in determining whether proposals should be granted planning permission.
- iv) planning authorities should foster community involvement in renewable energy projects and seek to promote knowledge of and greater acceptance by the public of prospective renewable energy developments that are appropriately located.

For renewable energy developers and planning authorities, **locational considerations** have been clarified for sites in the following designated areas:

- i) **International and national designations:** Developers will need to demonstrate that there are overriding social, economic or environmental reasons for development, which are over and above any potential adverse effect on the integrity of such sites. Planning authorities should introduce criteria based policies which set out the circumstances in which particular types and sizes of renewable energy developments will be acceptable in nationally designated areas.
- ii) **Green Belts:** Renewable energy projects will need to be carefully considered on green belt land, but will not be excluded if developers can demonstrate that the wider environmental benefits outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness.
- iii) **Buffer Zones and Local Designations:** Buffer zones around existing designations should not be introduced in regional or development plans. Nor should local designations be used in themselves to refuse planning permission.
- iv) **Other locational considerations:** Planning authorities should not apply a sequential approach to development as there are a range of other considerations and constraints to renewable energy development outside of the land use planning system.

What is the BWEA view?

BWEA warmly welcomes the new Planning Policy Statement on renewable energy (PPS22) (Consultation Draft). A clear and positive PPS22 in line with Government Energy Policy is long overdue, with wind energy developers facing a lottery of inconsistent planning decisions across England. PPS22 provides both the planning profession and the wind industry with a more sound footing from which to move forward in meeting the Government's renewable energy targets.

Chris Tomlinson, Head of Onshore Wind at BWEA said:

'This new policy statement makes clear that positive planning which facilitates renewable energy developments will help us achieve our common goals on climate change. We believe this new guidance will act as a positive shot in the arm for our industry, and provide local planning authorities with the makings of a policy framework upon which to make more informed and consistent decisions. At long last we have a clear national policy stance that sets out the importance of developing wind and other renewables at a regional, county and local level.'

Further Information

To view PPS22 see the planning section of the ODPM website www.odpm.gov.uk

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