

AONB GUIDANCE – Small-scale Wind Turbines

Introduction

The Government has set targets to increase energy generation from renewable sources. This is due to growing concerns over the impacts of climate change and the future decline in the supply of fossil fuels. More small-scale generation of heat and power is being encouraged. This 'microgeneration' is generally considered to be an installation with a capacity of less than 45kW of heat or 50kw of electricity.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are nationally designated areas of great distinctive character and natural beauty. Management Plans for the Wye Valley and Malvern Hills AONBs support the considered use of renewable energy through microgeneration.

Landscape

- Even small wind turbines can have visual impacts on special landscapes. If you are proposing to install a turbine you could identify local and distant views and then choose the least prominent location in the landscape. There may be important views to consider from settlements, public access land, public rights of way etc.
- Consider the backdrop to the turbine. Landscape impacts can be reduced by the choice of a suitable colour for the turbine and its pole. Examples are the use of semi-matt white, off white or grey to blend with the sky or green or black to blend with hills and trees
- Where there are other installations in the area consider a turbine of a similar design and size. However, be aware that a number of small-scale developments can lead to a cumulative impact on a sensitive landscape. It may be useful to discuss this with your Local Planning Authority.
- Developments that break skylines can have more significant landscape impacts. Consider siting a turbine in lowland landscapes and on downslopes rather than on hill tops. Impacts can also be minimised if a turbine is set against a backdrop of trees.

Planning Requirements

Wind turbines are, in planning terms, considered to be a form of development. In all cases, we recommend that you contact your Local Planning Authority to discuss whether planning permission is required for your specific proposal and to discuss details of any measures that could be incorporated to mitigate the environmental impacts of turbines

The Purpose of this Guidance

The purpose of this guidance is to help you to plan for installing a small wind turbine in an AONB. Specifically, it provides simple advice on ways in which you could help to reduce any impacts on the special features of the area.

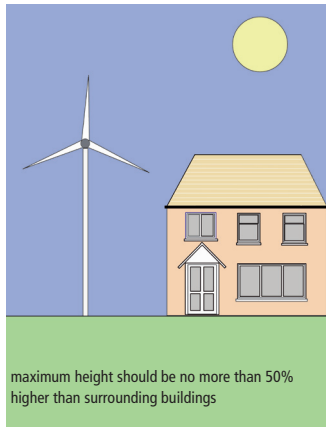


- Turbines will be less conspicuous in the landscape if you can locate them so that they are associated with settlements or existing groups of buildings or structures.
- If possible cables connecting your turbine to the grid or dwelling should be buried.
- Consider the likely noise that a turbine will make so that any impacts on the tranquillity of neighbouring properties and the open countryside can be assessed.
- Check to make sure that the turbine shadow won't cause a 'flicker effect' on neighbouring windows.

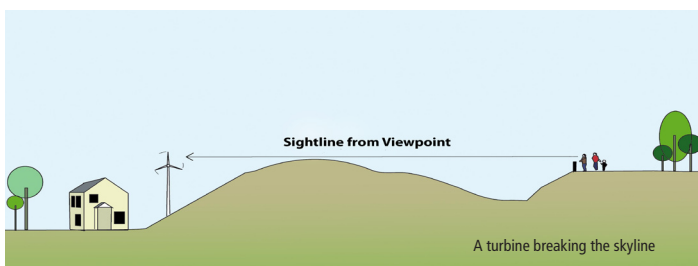
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Built Heritage

Consider the height of the turbine in relation to any adjoining buildings and try to ensure that it is in proportion. This is especially important if the location is in more open countryside, near Listed Buildings or a Conservation Area in which case you may want to consider a smaller turbine



- Consider design issues such as fixings, colour, reflectivity and size – advice should be sought from the Local Authority Conservation Officer in relation to historic buildings.
- You will need to comply with the Building Regulations. Your local planning authority will be able to advise you.
- If you propose to attach a turbine to a building the pole should be fixed to gable end rather than other walls in order to minimise the length of the pole.



- Also consider the height of the turbine in relation to nearby buildings or structures. As a general rule it should be no more 50% higher.
- If a turbine will affect a Listed Building or Conservation Area you will need to contact your local planning authority as you may need Listed Building Consent and/or planning permission.



Useful Contacts

PPS22 Companion Guide – www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/147447.pdf

Low Carbon Buildings Programme
www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk/about/

Planning Portal – www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/genpub/en/1115315124458.html

Energy Saving Trust – www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/

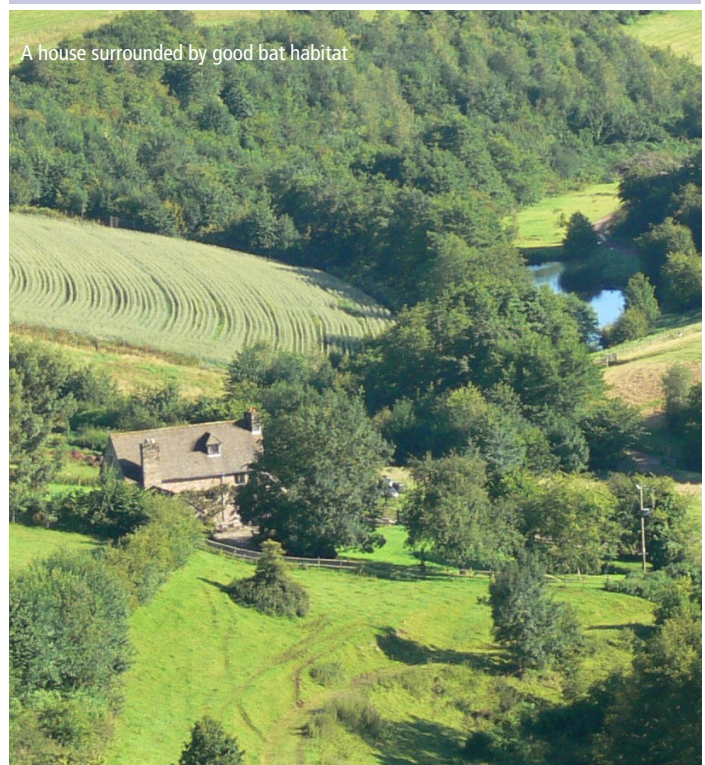
British Wind Energy Association – www.bwea.com

Natural England – www.naturalengland.org.uk

Countryside Council for Wales - www.ccw.gov.uk

Biodiversity

- The main species likely to be affected by turbines are birds and bats. Many species of bird and all species of bat are protected by law.
- If you know that bats are present you should seek specialist advice and it may be that a wind turbine is not the best option. Bats tend to occupy old buildings and trees and will often fly along hedgerows and other corridors. You should consider avoiding turbines in these locations.
- If the turbine you are proposing is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) you should seek advice from Natural England or the Countryside Council for Wales.



malvern hills
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Wye Valley Dyffryn Gŵy
AREA of OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY
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