

Inspector's Question 99

I would welcome the Council's observations on the representations which question the viability and effectiveness of policy C3; 669 Colin Wilkinson of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, 802 Mark Rose of Define on behalf of Bovis Homes, 1600 Neil Tiley of Pegasus Group on behalf of the Waldridge Garden Village Consortium, 1709 Cameron Austin-Fell of RPS Planning and Development on behalf of Richborough Estates, 2071 Steven Brown of Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of Persimmon Homes North London.

AVDC Response

The Council's initial general observation is that the wording surrounding the requirements of the feasibility assessment for district heating and cooling technologies has been misinterpreted. The current wording of the policy only encourages a feasibility assessment for the stated thresholds of development. The representations addressing this section of the policy appear to have interpreted it as requiring both the assessment as well as the implementation of 10% of a development's energy through decentralised sources where deliverable and viable.

The Council suggests a change of wording to make the feasibility assessment a requirement of the validation checklist for developments over the stated thresholds and to remove the requirement to implement decentralised energy, instead encouraging this through application negotiations during the Development Management process. This is supported by the recommendation to require the feasibility assessment in paragraph 10.3.6 of the [Sustainability Assessment Report](#) from September 2017 and the Council believes this is financially viable for developments above the stated thresholds. Paragraph 10.3.5 of this same report also recommends adding a requirement for energy statements for major developments (over 10 homes) and so the Council is proposing this as a further suggested policy amendment.

The key issues raised in the specified representations have been extracted and the Council's response to them is set out in the table below.

Key Issues	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>(RSPB) (Mr Colin Wilkinson): It is questioned whether the policy will achieve any significant renewable energy scheme within the plan period. An approach should be used based on spatial planning to identify areas where renewable energy will be positively welcomed. RSPB's 2050 Energy Vision promotes a</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The policy focusses on district heating for renewable energy scheme as this was selected as the best option based on other research conducted by the Carbon Trust for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which proves it to be deliverable and viable. Overall the policy takes a broad approach to options for more sustainable

<p><i>model.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neil Tiley of Pegasus Group on behalf of the Waldrige Garden Village Consortium: <i>Policy C3 fails to recognise other mechanisms to reduce the carbon footprint of a development, outside of district heating and CHP.</i> 	<p>production and use of energy for example in the use of the energy hierarchy.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Rose of Define on behalf of Bovis Homes: <i>The policy requirements should not compromise the deliverability and viability of sustainable development. The Council should demonstrate the policy's achievability but there is no evidence the policy requirement has been considered in the Viability Report.</i> • Cameron Austin-Fell of RPS Planning and Development on behalf of Richborough Estates: <i>There is no support for such a stringent policy and no viability testing as to the implications of it. The feasibility assessment for CHP should be omitted.</i> • Steven Brown of Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of Persimmon Homes North London: <i>Policy C3 does not provide evidence for encouraging a feasibility assessment for district heating for residential developments of 100 dwellings.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy is supported by national policy in paragraph 97 of the NPPF, which is referred to in paragraph 10.53 of the VALP. • The aim of the feasibility assessment is to ensure the decentralised renewable energy/ low carbon requirement is only implemented where it is proven to be deliverable and viable, thus ensuring the sustainability of the development. • As mentioned above, the Sustainability Appraisal of the VALP (CD.SUB.004), in paragraph 10.3.6, goes as far as recommending the feasibility assessment be a firm requirement for all applications. • Paragraph 6.2.5 of the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (2015)(CD.SUB.006) references the cost implications of climate change on the district explored in the Local Climate Impact Profile (2008) and the national indicators (NI186) which suggest that CO₂ emissions in the Vale are higher than average. Paragraph 12.2.3 of the report also states that renewable energy only accounts for 3.2% of Buckinghamshire's energy needs, which is below the Government's national target of 15% by 2020. The report stresses the importance of the Plan's role to encourage sustainable development and construction and encourage low carbon energy sources. • The figure of 100 homes is considered

	<p>to be a reasonable one for determining when an assessment will be encouraged in terms of energy usage for larger developments.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Steven Brown of Woolf Bond Planning on behalf of Persimmon Homes North London: The Ministerial Statement from 25th March 2015 has abolished the Code for Sustainable Homes making it clear that all energy requirements for homes will be contained within the Building Regulations. However, Local Authorities can apply technical standards through the Local Plan making process. But to do so, the evidence on need, viability and deliverability of such standards has to be clearly demonstrated and form a part of the wider evidence base.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>The representation appears to insinuate that the technical standards referenced in the Ministerial Statement relate specifically to energy when in fact they relate to housing. The optional technical standards which must demonstrate clearly evidenced need and consider the viability impact relate to access, water consumption and space standards, as clarified in the guidance published 27th March 2015.</p> <p>Policy C3 sets a higher standard of water efficiency at a limit of 110 litres/ person/ day. Aylesbury Vale is served by Thames Water, which was classified as an area of current and future water stress in the July 2013 report 'Water stressed areas – final classification' developed by the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales. The higher requirement is therefore clearly justified by evidence. The impact of this standard was also considered in the VALP Viability Assessment (CD.INF.002).</p>