

Kirklees Planning Services

Renewable Energy

Advice for Householders

WHY SHOULD I READ THIS?

If you want to install renewable energy systems you may need planning permission, and should contact the Council's Planning Service to find out whether what you want to do is 'permitted' by Planning Regulations ('permitted development'), or whether you will need to submit a planning application. See the 'contacts' list at the end of the leaflet.

WHAT IS RENEWABLE ENERGY?

Renewable energy is derived from sources which will not run out, like the sun and the wind. It does not produce harmful greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide, which contribute to climate change. Renewable energy generation on a small scale is called 'microgeneration'.

Types of renewable energy:

Wind energy

Wind energy is generated when the wind rotates the turbine blades which drive a generator to produce electricity. Wind turbines vary in size, they can be micro in scale and attached to a building, they can be larger and power a school or hospital, or they can be over 100m tall based off-shore generating mega watts of electricity.

Solar hot water heating (also called solar thermal)

Solar thermal systems capture the energy from the sun's radiation and use it to heat water. The hot water can then be used immediately or stored in a cylinder for later use. Some solar thermal systems can be linked to underfloor-heating systems.

Solar electricity

Solar electricity systems capture the energy from the sun's radiation and convert it into electricity. They will work in any weather, as long as there is daylight, and the electricity is available for use in the building immediately.

Ground or air source heat pumps

There are two types of heat pumps: ground source and air source. Ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) use the constant temperature of the soil at 1m below the surface as their heat source. Air source heat pumps (ASHPs) heat is extracted from the air by a unit that is sited outside the property.

Wood fuel heating systems (biomass)

Biomass falls into two broad categories: woody (forest residues and energy crops like willow) and non-woody (animal waste and high energy crops like rape). For small scale domestic applications of biomass the fuel usually takes the form of wood pellets, wood chips and wood logs. As the whole of Kirklees is designated as a Smoke Control Area, it is an offence to emit smoke from a chimney of a building. Wood is not a smokeless fuel; it can be burned only on specifically approved stoves or appliances. For further details please contact Environmental Services on 01484 226436.

In recognition of the increasing need to reduce CO₂ emissions targets for renewable energy generation have been set by central, regional government and Kirklees, including:

- Central: 10% target of total electricity generation to come from renewables by 2010.
- Regional: the RSS includes targets for renewable electricity generation for 2010 and 2020. Policy S6 indicates these as 9.4% of the region's electricity consumption in 2010 and 22.5% by 2020.
- Locally Kirklees has been at the forefront since the early 1990's on energy matters with clearly defined targets for carbon dioxide reduction and generation of renewable energy.

The Kirklees Local Development Framework, the new plan for Kirklees, is currently investigating the possibility for the inclusion of a number of policies to encourage renewable energy within the district. If you want to know more about the Local Development Framework visit the Kirklees planning website or telephone 01484 221627.

If we are to achieve these targets individuals, as well as public bodies and businesses, will play an important role.

DO RENEWABLE ENERGY INSTALLATIONS NEED PLANNING PERMISSION?

Solar hot water heating, solar electricity systems, air source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps

Solar hot water heating systems (panels or tubes) and solar electricity systems (panels) may not require planning permission. However, this will depend on the scale of the installation and its position on the house. If the property is in a conservation area or is a listed building, planning approval and/or listed building consent may be required.

Air source and ground source heat pumps should also fall within permitted development parameters. However, in all cases, you should contact planning for advice on the need for an application.

Small wind turbines

In time, we are expecting changes to Planning Legislation to allow various 'microgeneration' schemes to be allowed without having to apply for planning permission. This was a recommendation of the Government's 'Householder Development Consents review' published in July 2006 (www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501259). However, at present there have been no changes or amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 in relation to domestic wind turbines and therefore the same rules apply to wind turbines as to householder extensions or outbuildings.

If the proposed wind turbine is to be located on the house or within 5 metres of the house the following rules apply;

- The turbine must not extend any closer to the highway than the nearest part of the original house
- The turbine must not exceed 4 metres in height if it is within 2 metres of the boundary of the curtilage of the house
- The turbine must not extend beyond the plane of the roof if it is on a frontage that faces a highway
- The turbine must not go above the original height of the roof

If the proposed wind turbine were to be located over 5 metres away from the house the following rules would apply;

- The turbine must not extend any closer to the highway than the nearest part of the original house
- The turbine must not exceed 3 metres in height

If the turbine is not 'Permitted Development' (the rules above), Planning Permission will be required. If however you feel that the wind turbine will fall inside these regulations, you can contact Planning with further information including the size and siting of the turbine to confirm whether planning permission will be required.

General planning issues for consideration of micro and small wind turbine applications are;

- Environmental and economic benefits of renewable energy schemes
- Visual amenity
- Noise
- Appropriateness within the greenbelt
- Other: wildlife and flicker

Summary

- Planning permission for wind turbines is required at the moment in most instances.
- Policy at national, regional and local level supports the generation of renewable energy from all technologies including wind turbines to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Kirklees Council is a leader in the field of renewable energy - Kirklees planning policy supports proposals for renewables unless they would have a serious adverse effect on occupiers of adjacent land

Hydro electricity

Planning approval may be required for hydro-electricity schemes. Please submit any proposals in writing to the Planning Enquiries Team for advice.

WHAT INFORMATION DO I NEED TO SUPPLY?

If you are unsure whether a planning application is required please submit the following information

SIZE AND SITING OF THE TURBINE

- Turbine size: height of the turbine mast, turbine blade diameter
- Site diagram: if possible to scale, identifying where the turbine will be located.
- Manufacturers brochure

If you need a planning application

Ask for a planning application pack from the Planning Service which will give you information about the plans/documents you need to provide. You will also need to provide details of the turbine size (height of the turbine mast, turbine blade diameter etc) and a manufacturers brochure if available.

NOISE

- It is important to ensure that the noise produced by your turbine does not have a harmful impact upon your neighbours. Many installers provide information on the noise created by their turbines and how the noise reduces with distance. When applying for your turbine you should look to place it far enough away from your neighbours so that it will not cause them disturbance. The distance this starts to happen should be in the documents supplied by the manufacturers. Failure to do this may result in refusal of your application.

VISUAL AMENITY

- Provide evidence that the turbine would have positive/neutral (i.e. not detrimental) visual impact. Include a good quality (to scale) photo montage of the turbines. Ask your installer or manufacturer for assistance with this. Include photos of the surrounding area including any towers, buildings to demonstrate the impact of the turbine on the landscape/skyline.

WILDLIFE

- Ensure the turbine is not sited near (distance will vary) woodland edges, as bats and birds feed in the lee of the trees on woodland edges. Aerial photographs could be used to identify woodland edge habitats. Aerial photographs can be found on the Kirklees Council website (are they?). It is likely that the turbine will be sited away from trees anyway to obtain 'clean wind', away from the turbulence created by trees.

FLICKER

- Turbine to be sited where there will be none or minimal flicker effect. Flicker or shadow effect is caused when the turning turbine blades cast a moving shadow and cause a flickering effect. Many factors affect the possibility of flicker (including the weather and time of year), in a situation where flicker effect is deemed likely to occur, general guidelines state that from a distance of 10 times the blade diameter flicker effect will not be perceived.

HOW DOES THE COUNCIL DECIDE PLANNING APPLICATIONS?

Any application submitted to the planning department should be decided in an 8 week period. After submission of the application there is a 3 week statutory consultation period in which members of the public and other bodies have the opportunity to comment on the proposals. Most applications are decided by planning officers under delegated powers. In some cases, Councillors decide applications at a Planning Committee.

Proposals will require individual assessment, but to minimise the likelihood of noise being a source of disturbance to occupiers of adjacent land, a separation distance of approximately 5 times the tower height between the turbine and neighbouring occupied buildings will normally be required.

The following policy is also used when assessing an application for small wind turbines.

EP7 small wind turbines will be permitted provided there will be no serious adverse effect on occupiers of adjoining land or on any conservation area or listed building.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Further information is available from the following sources:

Web Resources:

- Information on Renewable Energy Systems - UK Government Low Carbon Buildings Programme:
www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk

Kirklees Council Contacts:

Contact Kirklees Environment Unit on:

Tel: 01484 223568

Fax: 01484 223576

Email: environment.unit@kirklees.gov.uk

Planning Services

Phone 01484 221621

Email - planning.contactcentre@kirklees.gov.uk

Address – Planning Services, Civic Centre 3, High Street, Huddersfield HD1 2JR

Information on renewable energy systems

Contact Kirklees Environment Unit on:

Tel: 01484 223568

Fax: 01484 223576

Email: environment.unit@kirklees.gov.uk

Grants for small scale renewable energy systems

Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP)

The Government's Low Carbon Building Programme (LCBP) fund is now open to applications for grants for small to medium scale renewable energy systems. Householders, businesses, community groups and local authorities are eligible to apply. This is a 3 year fund; householders can apply at any time however there are submission deadlines for medium to large scale projects.

Please find below a summary of the funding streams:

Stream 1

Householders – available from early 2006, online application form available, all technologies, <5kWp, non-competitive process, apply any time

Communities - open, apply for a maximum of £30,000, all technologies, <5kWp, you must register to receive a full application pack

Stream 2 A

Communities - retrofit projects to a maximum of £100,000, all technologies, now open

Stream 2 B

Communities - retrofit & new build projects over £100,000 2 step application process to include building assessment, all technologies, now open to pre-register

In order to be eligible for a grant, it is necessary to use products and installers accredited to the Low Carbon Buildings Programme.

For more information on the Low Carbon Buildings Programme:

- Please visit the LCBP website www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk
- Call the LCBP helpline number 0800 915 7722
- Applications can be made online or in paper form.