



---

**To: Planning and Property Policy Board**

**On: 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

---

**Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services**

---

**Heading: Solar Farms Development**

---

**1. Summary**

- 1.1. Renfrewshire Council has experienced an increase in interest from developers seeking to take forward proposals for solar farms.
  - 1.2. In this respect, while the Renfrewshire Local Development Plan and New Development Supplementary Guidance provide a general and positive policy framework for consideration of all forms of renewable technologies. However in order to allow an appropriate assessment of the land use planning implications of these proposals, further advice and guidance is required on matters such as visual amenity, local landscape character and the cumulative impact of solar farms given the extent of the areas that could be affected.
  - 1.3. As such Members are asked to agree that in order to ensure that applications for solar farms are appropriately considered in Renfrewshire, a criteria based Planning Advice Note relating to Solar Farms should be prepared and presented to the next meeting of the Planning and Property Policy Board.
- 

**2. Recommendations**

2.1 It is recommended that the Board:

- (i) Authorises the Director of Development and Housing Services to prepare a Planning Advice Note relating specifically to the development of Solar Farms.
-

### 3. Background

- 3.1. Scottish Government has set an ambitious target of generating the equivalent of 100% of Scotland's electricity demand from renewable resources by 2020. Within this context the development of solar farms has been supported by the UK and Scottish Government through financial subsidies provided through the Renewables Obligation (RO).
  - 3.2. Whilst noting that the regime on financial subsidies is under review, Renfrewshire Council and a number of planning authorities across Scotland are experiencing an increase in formal applications and enquiries for solar farms.
  - 3.3. The Adopted Renfrewshire Local Development Plan supports, in principle, the development of all types of renewable and low carbon energy generating technologies. However this generic policy does not provide sufficient detail to assess the land use planning impact of developments such as solar farms which can cover sites of around 25 acres.
  - 3.4. The increase in the scale and volume of interest in the potential development of solar farms over short period of time was not anticipated when the policy was developed in the Local Development Plan. Therefore in order to address this it is proposed to develop specific criteria based advice relating to the development of solar farms which can then be used to assess Planning Applications in Renfrewshire.
- 

### 4. Next Steps

- 4.1. A Planning Advice Note relating to solar farms will be developed to provide further detail to allow a full and appropriate consideration of the particular issues relating to solar farm developments. The Solar Farms Planning Advice Note will be presented to the next Planning and Property Policy Board.
- 

### Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - None
3. **Community Planning**

#### **Empowering our Communities –**

**Greener** – The development of energy from solar farms provides a sustainable, renewable source.

4. **Legal** - None
  5. **Property/Assets** - None
  6. **Information Technology** - None
  7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.
  8. **Health & Safety** - None
  9. **Procurement** – None
  10. **Risk** – None
  11. **Privacy Impact** - None
- 

**Author:** The contact officer within the service is Fraser Carlin, Head of Planning and Housing Services