

# The Balancing Act: Planning for Renewables in South East England

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## Outline of presentation

- Progress (?) since TVE Conference June 2002
  - Changes in planning regime
  - ODPM advice on The Planning Response to Climate Change
  - Progress with SEA requirements
  - Decision on Oxfordshire wind turbine application
- Understanding the planning system
- Comments on causes of “confrontation”
- Lessons from off-shore and Solar City
- Recommendations for better decision-making

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## Progress (?) since TVE conference summer 2002

- Changes in the planning regime:
  - Draft PPS 11 Regional Spatial Plans
  - Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill
  - Draft PPS22 Renewable Energy:

“Councils asked to think carefully on green power”  
(10, Downing Street)

“RPG and development plans should contain policies designed to promote and encourage, rather than restrict, the development of renewable energy sources....the Government may intervene...” (Key principles 2/3)

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## Progress contd

- ODPM advice on Planning Response to Climate Change:
  - some delay! – now going forward for ministerial approval
  - due for publication within first quarter of 2004
- SEA: Guidance for LPAs published October 2003
- Oxfordshire wind turbine application refused
  
- So....
- Hesitant progress

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# Understanding the Planning System

- Renewable Energy proposals in wider picture of planning system
- Conception of environment has enlarged
  - - wider spatial interactions
  - - longer planning horizons at regional scale
  - - flows and processes not static designations
- Planning has signed up to sustainable development
- Evidence of some resulting tensions for members and communities
  - - eg PPG3 and PPG 13
- Other challenging developments
  - - eg low-impact sustainable small-holdings
- Modernising agenda: change in member-officer relations
- Executive members/portfolio holders drafting policy

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# Understanding Renewables as “confrontation”

- “Confrontation” between national need and local environmental impact (Beddoe and Chamberlin, 2003)
- Qualitative assessment of information
- Processes:
  - uncertainty in EIA process
  - varying approaches to decision-making
  - representation of local views
- Information provision:
  - lack of centralised information
  - lack of LPA experience
  - lack of monitoring

# Learning from Off-shore Developments



- Study by OBU of socio-economic impacts of a Round 2 proposal
- Experience of ex ante SEA
- Study by OBU of socio-economic impacts of construction of a Round 1 scheme (North Hoyle)
- Monitoring and auditing
- Learning from experience

# Learning from Oxford Solar Initiative



- Carbon Trust scheme
- OBU, City Council, ESD and TVE involvement
- Aims to instal solar systems on 10% roofs by 2010
- Subsidies
- Dissemination
- Solar Fair

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# Recommendations

- Learn from experience:
  - monitoring and auditing of current renewable energy schemes
- Understand other pressures on planning system
- Use SEA processes to consider alternatives systematically
- Adopt policies for Sustainable Energy Systems
- Promote early community involvement
  - understand multi-layered communities
- Promote climate-change awareness amongst planning professionals
- Promote climate-change awareness amongst elected members
  - Role for South East Climate Change Partnership (SECCP)