

D. Developments of 2 or more wind turbines and/or any turbine with a hub height in excess of 15 metres and Solar PV sites over 1 Ha.

For these renewable energy developments the Council will expect that there has been an appropriate level of community engagement, including the opportunity to help shape the development.

To validate a planning application for this type of development, the applicant must bear in mind that the Authority will require particulars of the pre application consultation process, showing:

- (a) how the applicant complied with section 61W(1) of the 1990 Act;
- (b) any responses to the consultation that were received by the applicant; and
- (c) account taken of those responses.

In complying with (c) above, details will be required of consultation responses received and how the applicant has addressed issues and concerns, in particular whether/ in what way the proposed application was altered following consultation and prior to formal submission.

This is a statutory requirement for wind turbine proposals. The Council will strongly encourage Solar PV proposals to follow the same consultation process.

The following process is a preferred approach, but each proposal should be consulted upon on the basis of its scale, location and relationship with others, particularly local residents and public places. Providing the formal pre application process has been entered into, the Council will advise the developer what level of community engagement would be most appropriate.

If the developer carries out engagement outside of this guidance, the Council may decline to validate an application if it considers that the engagement is not to a satisfactory standard.

Following the process of community consultation/ publicity below, a statement of community engagement must then be compiled detailing the feedback received and how the developer has responded to it. This is a validation requirement for all applications of this nature.

D.1. A local parish/town council exhibition, display or presentation

The developer should advise the Town or Parish Council that they have commenced discussions with the Council on the site. At this stage, a suitable time, date and venue should be established in consultation with the Parish or Town Council and Council Planning Officers. The method of publicising this event must also be agreed in advance.

Any exhibition, display or presentation should explain the proposal in detail and provide meaningful and easy to understand details of the turbine/s and its/their location. In most cases, it will be advisable to agree the details to be presented to the community with the Council first.

The developer must provide an accurate way of collating and feeding back the views of the community being consulted. This feedback must be recorded and analysed to see if concerns and objections can be pragmatically addressed. It is best if these concerns are discussed as part of the pre application process with Council officers with a mind to making improvements to the proposals. For example, better alternative locations for the turbine may be suggested by local people and it is important that developers properly consider these and explain why they are, or are not, appropriate.

A statement of community consultation must then be compiled detailing the feedback received and how the developer has responded to it. This is a validation requirement for all applications of this nature.

D.2. Additional community consultation/ engagement

Other methods of consultation that may be requested, depending on the scale, location and nature of those affected nearby, include posting site notices, advertising the proposal in the local press or mailing local properties. In such cases, providing details of the development on a website or in a publicly accessible location will be necessary to allow the community to scrutinise the plans.

Larger wind turbine and Solar PV proposals may present so much interest or so many issues that a further community feedback event/s may be necessary. Similarly, larger scale proposals may affect more than one community and there may be a need to hold geographically separate events.