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Farm scale renewables within protected landscapes
The Chilterns AONB

- Designated 1965
- 833 sq kms 322 sq miles
- 80,000 population
- Complex administration
- Purpose – conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area (S. 82 CRoW Act 2000)
- Landscape quality same as National Parks
Chilterns Conservation Board

- Legally independent body set up on the instructions of parliament (S. 86 CRoW Act 2000)
- Two purposes:
  - Conserve and enhance natural beauty
  - Increase understanding and enjoyment
- and a duty:
  - Seek to foster economic and social well-being (in partnership with local authorities)
Development principles

- Have regard to the purpose of the AONB in making decisions that affect the AONB (S. 85 of CRoW Act 2000)
- AONBs are not ‘no go’ areas
- Right thing in the right place
- Local context and distinctiveness
- NPPF – 115 and 116
Targets

- Purpose of the AONB should take priority over other considerations as contribution from the AONB to targets will be small whilst harm to landscape of national importance could be great.
Energy use

- Reduce energy demand
- Conserve energy
- Use what is already generated as efficiently as possible
  - Reduce need to travel
  - Better insulation
  - Energy efficient appliances
Renewable energy

- Many forms – mostly appropriate
  - Wind turbines
  - Biofuel, biomass and anaerobic digestion
  - Solar photovoltaic and solar hot water
  - Hydro-electric
  - Ground, water and air source heat pumps
Wind

- Topography, land cover and landscape impact
- Less than 25m
- Exposed locations not appropriate
- Form, design and scale
- Heritage and biodiversity impacts
- Cumulative impacts
- Setting of the AONB
Wood fuel and biomass

- Control feedstock – can be local in the Chilterns
- Small-scale
- Replacement planting
- Landscape change with other energy crops
- Heritage impacts
- Design and materials of any new buildings (Chilterns Buildings Design Guide)
Anaerobic digestion

- Small-scale
- Local source of material
- Scale
- Not visually intrusive
- Noise, light and odour
- Materials and design
- Landscaping (not hiding)
- Land use change with crops being grown
- Grid connections
Solar

- PV and hot water
- Permitted development
- Heritage impacts
- Utilise existing buildings
- Solar farms – 1ha or above major development (NPPF)
- Landscape impacts
Hydro-electric

- Acceptable at smaller scales
- River Thames key resource
- Will be limited opportunities for farm based schemes
- Use existing buildings where possible, not affect river flow or ecology, consider flood risk and abstraction
Heat pumps

- Ground, water and air source
- Permitted development
- Small-scale
- Reinstatement of land
- Heritage impacts
- Siting, design and materials for any buildings key
Key principles

- Landscape impacts – LVIA
- Not dominant, set back from: scarp top; hill top edges; skylines; summits and distinctive features
- Use existing buildings and infrastructure
- Cumulative impacts, remove when obsolete
- Mitigate landscape and visual impacts
- Biodiversity gains
- Heritage impacts
- Small-scale, local and community based
- Conserve and enhance the AONB
Things that may not work
Things that may not work
Things that may not work
Things that do work
Things that do work
Try something different?