

CHELTENHAM LOCAL PLAN 2011 – 2031 EXAMINATION

Matter 9: Other matters: Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Development

Representor ID 093; Comment No 391

CPRE Gloucestershire, in its earlier submission, expressed concern at the lack of any Policy in the Plan to promote renewable energy, in particular the lost opportunity for encouraging the use of solar photovoltaic arrays on buildings. This additional statement elaborates on this point.

The current Plan refers only to wind energy because, it maintains, other renewable sources of energy are adequately covered by the JCS under Policy INF5. However, as the JCS makes clear, this Policy is directed at self-contained medium to large scale energy generation such as anaerobic digesters and ground-based solar farms. It assumes that smaller scale opportunities will be covered under Policy SD3. This latter Policy, however, is more concerned with standards of construction mainly of new developments.

CPRE feels that this is a missed opportunity, notably given the continuing technological advances made in photovoltaic arrays that can be sited on, or integrated into both existing and new buildings. This is of especial relevance in a largely urban environment such as Cheltenham. Sitings of arrays on medium to large commercial buildings provide particularly good opportunities because, as a rule, the premises' energy requirements are higher, the available roof areas are sizeable and there is less negative impact on the visual appearance of the building. The cumulative result would be a major reduction in carbon footprint and a contribution toward the reduction of global warming and thence the extent of climate change.

In 2016, CPRE commissioned a Good Practice Guide for designers, manufacturers and installers of solar arrays on buildings. This work was undertaken by BRE National Solar Centre and has been endorsed by the principle industry bodies concerned. Its contents have also been condensed into a short lay-persons guide. Both documents are available to the Examination.

CPRE invites the addition to the Plan of a Policy promoting the use of solar arrays, and other appropriate low carbon technologies. This might take the following form:

POLICY ... - RENEWABLE ENERGY/LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT

Support will be given to residential, commercial and agricultural development that generates energy from renewable and low carbon sources, such as through the use of solar photovoltaic roof tiles or panels subject to consideration of potential impacts on local planning designations, the historic environment and the residential amenity of the local area. The retro-fitting of micro-generation technologies in existing developments will also be encouraged.