

10. UTILITIES



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10.1 SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

Structure Plan Context

Key Objective	Relevant Policy or Proposal
To work closely with utility providers to ensure service infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of development.	Policy SP/U1 - Service Infrastructure

Local Plan Policy

POLICY LP/U1

SITE INFRASTRUCTURE

a) Co-ordination of Infrastructure Provision

In order to facilitate development and provide effective housing land supply, the Council as Roads and Planning Authority will liaise and co-operate with Scottish Water and other service and infrastructure providers in order to allow the co-ordinated development of housing sites where major off-site infrastructure requirements are required. Both Scottish Water and the Roads Authority will be encouraged to make appropriate and timely investment in infrastructure to remove service constraints to development sites. The Council, in consultation with Scottish Water, will approve a priority list of projects for investment in accordance with development proposals identified in the Local Plan.

b) Provision of off-site services

Proposals for development which are likely to result in a significant increase in demand for off-site services such as water supply, sewerage and drainage or road capacity will only be approved if they are accompanied by evidence from the responsible authority to prove that sufficient capacity already exists, or that provision is to be made to increase capacity to serve the development.

Background and Issues

10.1.1 National planning guidance recognises that the planning system is an integral part of a much wider process of selecting investment priorities and service delivery. Other agencies and Council departments prepare plans and strategies with land use implications. There should be interaction and co-ordination between the planning authority, other Council departments and the utilities in selecting investment priorities, such as those that allow development constraints to be lifted. The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that development in accordance with the Development Plan is not constrained by a lack of service infrastructure.

10.1.2 The Local Plan strategy directs the majority of new development towards the main towns and villages. The timing of land release is however constrained in a number of instances by a lack of infrastructure, including lack of drainage capacity, or roads requiring upgrade or junction improvements. There are a number of housing sites in the towns and villages, where further development is constrained without significant public and/or private sector investment. In allocating areas for development the Local Plan provides a framework to guide investment in infrastructure.

10.1.3 The purpose of this policy is to assist in the long-term co-ordination of infrastructure provision for housing development sites. Servicing of sites identified in the Local Plan requires a co-ordination of effort between the planning authority, the roads authority and Scottish Water in order to provide the necessary infrastructure which will allow development to take place. An indication of the priority attached to the development of identified sites will assist the roads and water authorities in prioritising them in their own expenditure plans.

10.1.4 The Roads Authority is responsible for public road improvements and storm water drainage. Road and storm water developments within development sites is the responsibility of the developer but responsibility for works off-site should be undertaken in advance to facilitate development of the identified sites.

10.1.5 Scottish Water is responsible for achieving water quality standards, through the provision of service reservoirs, distribution networks and treatment works. They also have responsibility for providing, replacing or upgrading wastewater treatment plants under the Urban Wastewater regulations, including the provision of adequate pipework to collect wastewater.

10.1.6 When new developments are being considered it is important to consider all potential constraints and impacts. The provision of services to and from sites is very important, and it is therefore necessary to ensure that correct and adequate servicing provisions are made prior to development being approved.

Implementation and Monitoring

10.1.7 To ensure that the five-year housing supply is maintained it will be necessary for the utilities and Roads Authority to programme the required infrastructure improvements, following consultation with the Planning Authority. A priority list of projects for investment in accordance with development proposals identified in the Local Plan will be approved by the Council in consultation with Scottish Water.

10.1.8 Submissions for new developments will be required to demonstrate that adequate service provision have, or will be, provided. This will usually take the form of confirmatory letters from the relevant authorities.

10.1.9 Annual take-up of residential land will be monitored to ensure that development is not impeded by constraints on the development of the allocated sites. The number of major developments applied for but constrained by infrastructure inadequacies will be used to monitor this policy.

10.2 WATER SUPPLY

Structure Plan Context

Key Objectives	Relevant Policy or Proposal
<p>To work closely with utility providers to ensure service infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of development.</p> <p>To encourage the maintenance of a high standard of air, water and land quality.</p>	<p>Policy SP/U1 - Service Infrastructure</p> <p>Policy SP/U2 - Air and Water Resources</p>

Local Plan Policy

POLICY LP/U2

WATER SUPPLY

a) Public Supply Infrastructure

The Council will encourage Scottish Water to make appropriate and timely investment in Orkney, to remove constraints to development, and to maintain a high standard of water supply and treatment.

b) Private Supply

Outwith areas served by a public water supply, a development proposal requiring connection to a private water supply must ensure it is certified as fit for human consumption, and that it does not result in contamination, or depletion of supply to other users. All applicants requiring a private connection must provide the Council with detailed proposals for works associated with the supply to the site, in order that the appropriate authorities can advise on the adequacy of the proposal.

c) Development Affecting a Water Supply

There will be a presumption against development where there may be a possibility of a public or private water supply, well or groundwater source becoming contaminated.

Background and Issues

10.2.1 The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that water resources are safeguarded from developments that would result in adverse effects on their quality. Scottish Water's Investment Plan for 2001/02 indicated that 25% of expenditure throughout its area will be concentrated on improving drinking water quality standards to satisfy Drinking Water Quality Regulations. In Orkney, the main expenditure will be at Boardhouse and Kirbister Water Treatment Works, with substantial investment already made on a new water main between Kirkwall and Finstown.

10.2.2 As a result of past and current investment, the water supply network (sources, reservoirs, treatment plants and distribution network) in Orkney is of a generally high standard, but there remain a number of cases where an inadequate water supply is constraining development.

10.2.3 Not all developments are served by public water supplies, and in Orkney there are a number of properties/developments served by private water supplies. The Council as environmental health authority is the regulating authority for the drinking water quality of private water supplies. It is essential that these sources, together with water catchment areas which are the source of water supply to the public system are protected from development which might affect the quality of the water supply. The development of new private water supplies can also result in problems, such as a reduction in the quantity of water being supplied to neighbouring properties, or potential contamination by neighbouring sources of pollution, such as septic tanks.

Implementation and Monitoring

10.2.4 In order to assist the implementation of the Local Plan, the Council will encourage Scottish Water to relieve development constraints by the allocation of resources in their Investment Plan as soon as possible. Before permission is given for a development to be served by a new private water supply, careful assessment will be necessary to ensure that there is no risk to public health or the environment. Private water supplies will not be acceptable in areas served by public water supplies.

10.2.5 The policy will be assessed through recording where water supply constraints to development have been lifted, and monitoring the numbers and locations of new private water supplies.

10.3 WASTEWATER TREATMENT

Structure Plan Context

Key Objectives	Relevant Policy or Proposal
<p>To work closely with utility providers to ensure service infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of development.</p> <p>To encourage the maintenance of a high standard of air, water and land quality.</p>	<p>Policy SP/U1 - Service Infrastructure</p> <p>Policy SP/U2 - Air and Water Resources</p> <p>Policy SP/U3 - Sewerage</p>

Local Plan Policy

<p>POLICY LP/U3</p> <p>WASTEWATER TREATMENT</p> <p>Development will not be permitted unless proposals for wastewater treatment facilities associated with development have been approved where necessary by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, that the water quality objectives of SEPA have been taken into account, and appropriate facilities are in place or will be completed before the development is occupied.</p> <p>a) <u>Public Supply Infrastructure</u></p> <p>The Council will encourage Scottish Water to make appropriate and timely investment in Orkney, to remove constraints to development, and to provide a high standard of waste treatment.</p> <p>b) <u>Private Supply</u></p> <p>Outwith areas served by a public sewerage system, a development proposal requiring connection to a private sewage treatment system will require to satisfy the Council in consultation with Scottish Water and SEPA that the proposal provides for the efficient treatment of effluent and can be implemented without adverse impact on groundwater and watercourses.</p>
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Background and Issues

10.3.1 The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that water resources are safeguarded from developments that would result in adverse effects on their quality. Scottish Water's recent Investment Plan indicated that 60% of expenditure throughout its area will be concentrated on cleaning up rivers, lochs and beaches to meet Urban Wastewater Treatment Regulations and other legal requirements. In Orkney, the main expenditures have been at Kirkwall and Stromness where the provision of wastewater treatment plants are nearing completion.

10.3.2 In terms of the villages identified in the Local Plan for growth, Burray, Evie, Lady, Longhope, Pierowall, Stenness, St Mary's and Whitehall are only partially catered for by public sewers, and Kettletoft and The Palace have no public systems at all. Scottish Water's Investment Plan has identified a first time provision plant at Stenness, a need for new public Wastewater Collection and Treatment Works at Longhope, Pierowall, St. Margaret's Hope, St. Mary's and Lady, and septic Tank upgrades for Evie. No timescales have as yet been set for these schemes and it is important to note that growth is not seen as a driver for investment.

10.3.3 Of the rural settlements, only Greenfield, Hamar, Hillhead, Orphir Village and Quoyloo are currently served by public sewers. In some instances, the existing systems and septic tanks cannot adequately accommodate any additional development. In the other cases no public sewerage exists, and these locations would only be likely to obtain first time provision of these facilities, once improvements in the villages have been accommodated.

Herston, The Palace, Kettletoft and Orphir have been identified in the Scottish Water Investment Plan for upgrades although no timescales have been set.

10.3.4 Waste treatment facilities do not only describe wastewater treatment plants or sewage works, but also wastewater pumping stations and public septic tanks. As such, facilities can give rise to reductions in public amenity through odour, noise, vibration and other nuisances. It is recommended that when new plant is erected, it is surrounded by a '*cordon sanitaire*' the exact radius of which being dependent on local circumstances, such as the type of facility, nature of the effluent, topography, and nature of the operations occurring. It is recommended that this radius should be no less than 15m for a public septic tank and 100m for a wastewater treatment plant. The nuisance caused by wastewater pumping stations is proportional to its capacity and separation distances of between 10m and 50m are appropriate.

10.3.5 Traditionally, private drainage systems, especially septic tanks, have been important for new development in locations outwith public sewerage areas. Their use will continue, although there are concerns regarding the maintenance of, in particular communal systems, and regarding the potential for pollution and environmental hazard.

10.3.6 While many wastewater treatment facilities require approval or consent from SEPA, not all do. A considerable number of private septic tanks and land soakaway systems for example, may be approved by the Council without consultation or approval from SEPA being required.

Implementation and Monitoring

10.3.7 In order to assist the implementation of the Local Plan, the Council will encourage Scottish Water to relieve development constraints by the allocation of resources in their Investment Plan as soon as possible. The general approach adopted by this Local Plan will be to discourage private sewerage systems in areas served by a public system, regardless of whether or not there is capacity within the system. The Council welcomes any opportunity for partnership working between Scottish Water and developers to resolve development constraints. Developer contributions should be sought, if required, to upgrade sewerage infrastructure, in order to service proposed developments. In more general terms, there should be a presumption against a proliferation of septic tanks in any rural area and particularly in areas adjacent to settlements.

10.3.8 The policy will be assessed through recording where sewage supply constraints to development have been lifted, and monitoring the numbers and locations of new private waste treatment facilities.

10.4 SURFACE WATER

Structure Plan Context

<i>Key Objective</i>	<i>Relevant Policy or Proposal</i>
<i>To work closely with utility providers to ensure service infrastructure is provided to meet the needs of development.</i>	<i>Policy SP/U1 - Service Infrastructure</i> <i>Policy SP/U2 - Air and Water Resources</i>
<i>To encourage the maintenance of a high standard of air, water and land quality.</i>	<i>Policy SP/U3 - Sewerage</i>

Local Plan Policy

POLICY LP/U4

SURFACE WATER DISPOSAL

The use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be encouraged in dealing with surface water drainage. The Council will, in consultation with SEPA, Scottish Water and prospective developers, ensure that appropriate methods of surface water run off collection, treatment and disposal are promoted to minimise the pollution of watercourses and groundwater.

Development briefs will identify sites where an explicit surface water management plan requires to be submitted and approved as part of the planning application.

Where the use of soft engineering solutions to deal with surface water are proposed, applicants must specify provisions for their long-term maintenance to the satisfaction of the Council and other regulating authorities.

Background and Issues

10.4.1 National planning advice requires local plans to set out the planning authority's expectations in relation to the use of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems), including setting out in general policy terms how the SUDS approach will be applied to smaller sites. It is the policy of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency to promote SUDS as the preferred solution for drainage of surface water run-off, including roof water, for all proposed development, greenfield and brownfield. In the term SUDS, the use of the term 'urban' is intended only to convey that it is concerned with surface water run-off from man-made buildings and ground surfaces. It is equally applicable to rural areas.

10.4.2 SUDS aims to deal in an integrated way with the issues of water quantity, water quality and amenity. The overall objective is to return excess surface water to the natural water cycle with minimal adverse impact on people and the environment.

10.4.3 Within the curtilage of private properties, responsibility for surface water drainage lies with the owner. Outwith private properties, unless the site is served by a private sewer, statutory responsibility for surface water drainage is split between the roads authority, who are responsible for the drainage of adopted roads, and Scottish Water, who are responsible for the drainage of other land. The Roads Authority, Scottish Water and SEPA are all, in defined circumstances, statutory consultees to the planning application process, and are responsible for giving approval to the design and technical content of proposed surface water drainage for any new development proposed. The planning process can therefore be used to co-ordinate SUDS in new developments.

10.4.4 The aim of this policy is to address the pollution problems that result from directly discharging surface water to watercourses. Storm water drainage is an integral part of all development and it is important that facilities to cope with these elements are in place prior to

the occupation of the development, to avoid potential flooding, or environmental pollution problems. The use of soft engineering solutions e.g. the use of permeable surfaces, or the routing of drainage to grass swales, allows surface water run-off to be treated without damage to the environment.

10.4.5 Planning applications for new developments will be required to demonstrate that adequate surface water disposal provision has been made. Prospective developers will be encouraged to discuss the potential use of 'sustainable urban drainage systems' through early consultation with the Council as Planning and Roads Authority, and Scottish Water and SEPA. The Council in consultation with Scottish Water and SEPA will also identify sites where soft engineering techniques for disposing of surface water would be appropriate, for inclusion in development briefs.

10.4.6 The policy will be assessed through monitoring the numbers of developments where sustainable drainage techniques have been used to deal with the disposal of surface water.

10.5 WASTE MANAGEMENT

Structure Plan Context

Key Objective	Relevant Policy or Proposal
To provide a planning framework for effective waste management.	Policy SP/U4 - Waste Management

Local Plan Policy

POLICY LP/U5

WASTE MANAGEMENT, DISPOSAL AND TREATMENT

All applications for waste management, disposal or treatment facilities will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i. it conforms to national and area waste plans and the requirement for such a facility has been identified in the local waste strategy;
- ii. the development will not have an adverse impact on a site of importance to nature conservation (Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area, RAMSAR site, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Nature Reserve or Site of local nature conservation importance) or a site of archaeological interest;
- iii. it would not compromise public health and safety, and adequate separation distances from inhabited dwellings are maintained;
- iv. where applicable, the development can be shown to have no adverse affect on groundwater or any surface water feature; and,
- v. where applicable, land restoration, aftercare and afteruse details are satisfactory.

In addition the following will apply:

a) **Waste Management Facilities**

Planning applications for sites for facilities necessary to sort, process or transfer waste must be carried out in a building or enclosure, and should be suitably located in areas of an appropriate character, such as existing or former industrial areas, quarries or landfill sites.

b) **Environmental Assessment**

Environmental Assessments will be required to identify the impacts of proposed developments and works to ameliorate potential adverse impacts.

c) **Planning Conditions**

Planning consents will usually be time limited, and conditions and agreements will be used to secure an appropriate level of land reinstatement and suitable after-use of sites. Financial bonds may be required to secure land reinstatement.

Background and Issues

10.5.1 A National Waste Strategy for Scotland was published by the Scottish Executive during 1999, its purpose, to set out a framework by which Scotland can begin a move towards a more sustainable and integrated approach to waste management. The national strategy establishes a Waste Strategy Area for Orkney and Shetland, for which an Area Waste Plan will be prepared. The preparation of this strategy is being co-ordinated by SEPA, and a draft strategy will be published by the end of 2001. National planning guidance requires Local Plans to indicate how new developments for waste treatment and disposal will be

provided for and controlled. The Structure Plan identifies the general criteria which the Council will have regard to in identifying sites.

10.5.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that landfill, waste disposal and waste treatment activities do not adversely impact on amenity, safety or the environment and, where possible, are used to positive advantage. Waste disposal is a potentially highly polluting and damaging activity and while strategies to achieve waste minimisation and incineration have been valuable in reducing demand for waste disposal sites, there is still a need for this kind of development.

10.5.3 Inert, non-combustible, material such as construction waste is the largest single waste type which requires landfill, often occurring close to the point of origin and sometimes carried out insensitively leading to the destruction of habitat and ground form. High transport costs for this bulky material requires landfill sites to be made available throughout the Islands to encourage legitimate and controlled disposal.

10.5.4 It is envisaged that there will be considerable activity in the waste treatment sector, in the life of the plan, as European legislation takes effect. It is important that such facilities are built to minimise impact on residential amenity.

Implementation and Monitoring

10.5.5 Applications for waste treatment and disposal facilities will be judged against the above policy. Environmental statements will usually be required for any application that does not require the formal submission of an Environmental Impact Statement. The scope of such statements will be a matter for pre-application discussion between the developer and the planning authority.

10.5.6 All applications for waste disposal will be considered on the balance of the need, availability of reasonable alternative uses for the waste and degree of environmental impact on nature conservation, water resources, residential amenity, etc. Within any required environmental statement, applicants will provide details of the existing use of the site, the nature of the wastes, an estimate of any gas likely to be generated, proposed methods of recovering the energy content of the waste if appropriate, proposals for vermin and other nuisance control and for long term monitoring. Any application for waste disposal will be expected to exhibit the highest standards of landscaping and reinstatement. Applicants may be required to submit further information, or carry out further investigations, at the discretion of the Planning Authority.

10.6 FLOODING

Structure Plan Context

<i>Key Objective</i>	<i>Relevant Policy or Proposal</i>
<i>None applicable.</i>	<i>None applicable</i>

Local Plan Policy

POLICY LP/U6

FLOOD PROTECTION

The Council will take cognisance of SEPA's recommendations on planning applications in areas where there is a suspected or known risk from flooding, and will refuse development if:

- a) it would increase the risk of flooding:**
 - i. by reducing the capacity or increasing the flows within natural water courses and land drainage systems; or,**
 - ii. through the discharge of additional surface water; or,**
 - iii. by harming flood or coastal defences.**
- b) it would be at risk itself from flooding; and**
- c) adequate provision is not made for access to watercourses for maintenance.**
- d) Where the development, if inundated, is likely to cause unacceptable levels of pollution or contamination of flood water.**

Background and Issues

10.6.1 National planning guidance, NPPG 7 – Planning and Flooding, requires that flood risk is taken properly into account in planning for new development and that the Local Plan defines areas where new development should be avoided, because of risk from flooding. Further advice on development issues and flooding is provided in the SEPA/COSLA Protocol – ‘Development at Risk of Flooding: Advice and Consultation’.

10.6.2 Local authorities have statutory powers under the Flood Prevention (Scotland) Act 1961 to prevent or mitigate flooding of non-agricultural land in their area. The 1961 Act as amended by the Flood Prevention and Land Drainage (Scotland) Act 1997 places a duty on local authorities to assess, maintain and report on watercourses and instances of flooding. Records of all watercourses and the extent of flooding are held by the Council's Department of Technical Services. There are no major watercourses in Orkney liable to cause extensive flooding of non-agricultural land and therefore areas known to have periodic flooding are well defined.

10.6.3 Under the Environment Act 1995, SEPA has a discretionary duty to undertake an assessment of the risk of flooding in any area of Scotland, and is obliged to provide the Planning Authority with any information it holds in respect of flooding in its area. SEPA's hydrology section also provides an expert flood warning and advice service.

10.6.4 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that development and occupiers are not at risk from flooding, development does not adversely affect the functions of the natural watercourse and land drainage systems, or that additional surface water run-off from development does not exceed the capacity of watercourses downstream. In many cases this can be achieved by using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) – see policy LP/U4. New development can have a significant impact on the drainage characteristics of an area, increasing the speed of water throughput and increasing the peak volume of water within the drainage system.

10.6.5 Given projected climatic changes, additional care must be taken to ensure that new developments are not put at risk by building in areas known to have periodic flooding. Such events are likely to become more common in the future.

10.6.6 The propensity for flooding may be exacerbated by poor maintenance of watercourses. Care must be taken to ensure that adequate access is safeguarded for maintenance of drains and ditches.

Implementation and Monitoring

10.6.7 Where there is a suspected risk from flooding, or development is proposed in an area known to be prone to flooding, the Planning Authority will require expert information from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Council's Department of Technical Services on the likely impact of the proposed development. Reference should be made to SEPA/COSLA 'Development at Risk of Flooding: Advice and Consultation' document. Whilst SEPA hold information on historical flood events, this information is incomplete, and the Council encourages developers to enter early consultation with SEPA, when development is proposed in areas suspected, or known to be at risk from flooding. In some cases it may be appropriate to ask the developer to provide supplementary information in the form of a flood risk assessment and SUDS issues, in support of a planning application. This should be carried out in accordance with Annex B of the SEPA/COSLA protocol, and provide an independent professional opinion.

10.6.8 Correlation of flooding events and location of new development will be used to determine the efficacy of this policy.

10.7 WIND POWER

Structure Plan Context

Key Objective	Relevant Policy or Proposal
To encourage renewable energy developments where environmentally acceptable.	Policy SP/U6 - Renewable Energy Policy SP/U7 - Wind Energy

Local Plan Policy

POLICY LP/U7

WIND POWER

a) Safeguarding of Sites

The Council will normally seek to safeguard permitted or operational wind turbines generating power to the grid from development or land use which would prejudice their commercial viable operation.

b) Locational Guidance

The Council will support planning applications for the erection of well sited and designed individual wind turbines, community wind farms or commercial and industrial scale wind farms provided that the developer can demonstrate there is no adverse impact on:

- recognised sites of scientific or nature conservation interest and habitats or species of local or higher importance (SPA's, SAC's, SSSI's and NSA);
- the impact on landscape character; and visual impact with particular account being taken of how the landscape is experienced from dwellings and other forms of settlement, public roads, ferry routes, tourist destinations, established recreation routes or areas, and established viewpoints;
- residential dwellings and other noise sensitive developments;
- the sites and settings of features of archaeological and historic or cultural interest, including The World Heritage Site, Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes; and,
- aircraft activity and the effective transmission of other telecommunications.

Developers, in demonstrating no adverse impact, must take into account any cumulative impacts resulting from their own developments in combination with others.

c) Detailed Issues

In assessing any application for the erection of community, commercial or industrial scale wind turbines the Council will also consider issues relating to the social, economic and environmental impact of the development including:

- generation or protection of local employment;
- shadow flicker;
- electromagnetic effects;
- arrangements for decommissioning and reinstatement of the site when the site ceases to operate; and,
- access for construction, maintenance and decommissioning.

d) Erection of domestic or small scale wind turbines

The Council recognises that the impact of domestic scale turbines can be much less than for commercial scale turbines or multiple turbine windfarms. Without prejudice to the consideration of any issues detailed above there will be general presumption in favour of domestic scale turbines (i.e. single turbines under 30Kw-power output).

e) Planning Applications

Outline planning applications for the erection of individual wind turbines or wind farms will not be acceptable. All applications will be expected to provide full details of construction, supporting infrastructure such as access tracks and grid connection, and decommissioning. For windfarms, the Council will require a statement of operation and/or an Environmental Impact Assessment and in exceptional circumstances may require the same for individual wind turbines.

f) Planning Consent

Consent for the erection of commercial and industrial scale wind turbines will be given for a period of no more than 20 years. Section 75 Agreements and financial bonds will be used to secure decommissioning at the end of this period.

Background and Issues

10.7.1 National planning policy is based on the principle that renewable energy developments should be accommodated where the technology can operate efficiently and environmental impacts can be addressed satisfactorily. The Structure Plan supports the development of renewable energy sources, and indicates the criteria to be considered in assessing wind energy developments.

10.7.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide support for the alternative generation of electricity whilst ensuring that the natural environment is not endangered. Development of wind energy industry in Orkney is seen as a significant economic and generally benign development, and opportunities are afforded by the excellent wind regime found in the islands and good cable connections to mainland Scotland. Development may be constrained by the visual impacts within such a high quality landscape and environment and potential conflicts between the wind energy industry and nature conservation interests.

10.7.3 Areas of search have been identified within the Council's Wind Power and Wind Turbine Strategy where there are no human, natural environment or infrastructure constraints to the development of major wind farms. Areas are very limited reflecting the dispersed population and high quality of the environment. In other areas there is the potential for conflict which can only be assessed on an individual basis. The Council will seek to review and update this strategy making reference to the guidance provided in Orkney Landscape Character Assessment, Guidelines on the Environmental Impacts of Windfarms, and other relevant documents, to reflect changes in technology and information available.

10.7.4 The concept of a 'community windfarm' of multiple small turbines spread throughout the agricultural landscape has also been proposed. It is felt that this form of development is less constrained and more desirable than industrial scale development and as such is given support within the policy.

Implementation and Monitoring

10.7.5 Orkney Islands Council approved a Wind Power and Wind Turbines Strategy in October 1998. All applications for wind turbines will be considered in the light of the above policy and the guidance contained within the strategy document.

10.7.6 The effectiveness of the policy will be measured by recording the number of applications for turbines that are approved on sensitive sites.

10.8 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Structure Plan Context

<i>Key Objective</i>	<i>Relevant Policy or Proposal</i>
<i>To ensure that the most appropriate location is found for the development of telecommunications infrastructure.</i>	<i>Policy SP/U8 - Commercial Telecommunications</i>

Local Plan Policy

POLICY LP/U8

COMMERCIAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Proposals for the installation of radio masts and other commercial telecommunication's equipment will be favourably considered provided that:

- a) there is a demonstrated need for the development;**
- b) no possibility exists to share existing facilities or attach antenna to existing buildings or structures;**
- c) design, siting and installation will ensure minimal landscape and visual impacts. Particular care shall be taken in the World Heritage Site, National Scenic Area and scheduled ancient monument designations and their settings;**
- d) there are no adverse impacts on the residential amenity of neighbouring land uses; and,**
- e) redundant masts and equipment are removed.**

Applications for new telecommunication masts which are submitted without a reasoned justification for the proposed site, including evidence that they have sought to share existing masts, will not be considered until such information is forthcoming.

Background and Issues

10.8.1 National planning policy requires the sensitive expansion and diversification of the telecommunications industry. Local Plans are required to specify development control criteria for radio telecommunications development, including siting and design criteria.

10.8.2 In response to public concerns regarding the lack of planning control over the number, positioning and design of mobile phone masts, new regulations were introduced in July 2001 which brought all new ground based masts under full planning control and increased the level of planning control on masts on buildings.

10.8.3 Orkney's peripheral location together with its scattered distribution of populated islands means that the adoption of modern telecommunications systems is particularly beneficial for business, educational and commercial activities. It enables the islands to compete equally with other parts of the country and allows the development of work opportunities dependent on modern telecommunications.

10.8.4 However, a proliferation of telecommunication masts/equipment often require hilltop locations and are therefore highly visible and can have a detrimental effect on the landscape. It is important that the impact on the environment is minimised and where possible and appropriate, masts and equipment should be shared between the telecommunication providers.

10.8.5 The purpose of this policy is to find the most appropriate location for telecommunications development whilst respecting the environment. Advances in

telecommunications development are resulting in increasing numbers of telecommunication masts. It is important that customers in Orkney can take advantage of these developments while at the same time protecting the important landscape of the County.

Implementation and Monitoring

10.8.6 Applications submitted for telecommunication installations will be assessed against the criteria set out in the above policy. To maximise efficiency, preferred sites are often in sensitive landscapes such as hilltops and open countryside. The number of mast structures in the landscape can be minimised by sharing facilities or mounting telecommunications infrastructure on existing structures. Where no reasoned justification is provided to explain the proposed siting for a given proposal the application will be not be progressed until the developer has provided such justification.

10.8.7 The number and location of new telecommunication installations will be assessed to measure the success of this policy.

