Policy Title:

LP27 - Community Energy

Existing Policies Which adopted Core Strategy or Policies Sites and Places (PSP) policy would eventually be replaced	**Policy CS3 – Renewable and low carbon energy generation**
Non-Strategic / Strategic	**Non-Strategic**

Purpose

Community developed energy schemes contribute towards carbon reduction and renewable energy generation targets, but they also offer wider benefits. They can bring greater awareness of energy and climate issues to communities and the money raised by renewables schemes can be utilised within the community for further energy saving measures. Some organisations also use the money raised from community energy for other wellbeing projects. Communities themselves are becoming more aware and starting to look at how they can develop schemes.

It is considered that all communities, including those within the Cotswold National Landscape and Green Belt, should be able to benefit from, and bring forward, community led renewable energy schemes; as communities live within their local landscape and will be most impacted by both the benefits and impact of any scheme.

Policy wording

1. **In the case of community energy proposals within the Cotswolds National Landscape, where community benefits are proposed to meet the 'exceptional circumstances' test; or, the Green Belt, where community benefits are proposed to meet the 'very special circumstances' test, an exception to policies of constraint will be considered favourably where:**
   a. **The majority of the benefit is directed to the host community or communities, and:**
   b. **The host community, or communities, maintain an enduring legal interest in the operation and governance of such proposals, and:**
   c. **Robust and compelling evidence of the host community, or communities, broad support for the proposal is provided.**

Supporting text

1. All applications for community proposals including wind turbines will be assessed against the detailed policy criteria set out in policy LP26 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Systems, all other relevant policies in this Local Plan, as well as policies in any relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Community developed energy schemes contribute towards carbon reduction and renewable energy generation targets, but they also offer wider benefits. They can bring wider awareness of energy and climate issues to communities and the money raised by renewables schemes can be utilised within the community for further energy saving measures. Some organisations also use the money raised from community energy for other wellbeing projects. Communities themselves are becoming more aware and starting to look at how they can develop schemes.

3. It is considered that all communities, including those within the Cotswold National Landscape and Green Belt, should be able to benefit from, and bring forward, community led renewable energy schemes; as communities live within their local landscape and will be most impacted by both the benefits and impact of any scheme.

4. For flexibility, the policy does not set out specifically what is meant by a community-led scheme, but it is considered that it should be led by and directly meet the needs of the local community putting it forward and the majority of the benefit should be for the local community.

5. Communities are likely to be defined at Parish level, or a geographical area defined by a neighbourhood plan, and should have a suitable legal mechanism already in place defining the community group prior to submission of an application.

6. For example, the project could be part or fully owned by a local community group or social enterprise; local community members could have a significant governance stake in the project or organisation e.g. with voting rights, or a community could work alongside a commercial developer, ensuring the development is meeting the needs of the community.

7. We would also expect that the local community most significantly impacted by the proposals are involved in a scheme put forward as a community led scheme.

Additions	
Key evidence	
Other relevant policies to cross-reference?	LP26 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Systems