

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT: PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the Cabinet agree that the draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) “Planning for Climate Change” be published for a six-week public consultation in May 2023.
- 1.2 That any final editorial changes to the draft document (attached in Appendix 1 to this report) prior to publication be agreed by the Executive Head for Planning, Regeneration, and the Economy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, and Infrastructure.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to publish the draft supplementary planning document (SPD) Planning for Climate Change for public consultation.
- 2.2 The SPD will be used in the determination of planning applications for the construction of new homes, commercial and community buildings. The SPD provides guidance on the interpretation and implementation of policies in the adopted Local Plan 2016-2036 Part 1: Planning Strategy. In particular, parts of Policies STR1: Achieving sustainable development and ENV3: Design quality and local distinctiveness. Taken together these policies require that new development is future-proofed for climate change and incorporates design measures that improve resource efficiency, climate change resilience and reduce environmental impacts.
- 2.3 The key objectives of this SPD are to encourage the development industry to take all reasonable steps to minimise expected carbon emissions when designing and constructing new buildings, and to make new development more sustainable and climate change adapted. A ‘future homes now’ commitment not to install gas or oil-fired boilers in new development is a priority objective.
- 2.4 More detailed climate change policies and standards will continue to be developed through future Local Plan Reviews and/or as national policy evolves.

3. NATIONAL AND CORPORATE CONTEXT

- 3.1 On 11 October 2021 New Forest District Council declared a Climate and Nature Emergency. The Climate and Nature Emergency declaration reflects the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended 2019), which commits the UK government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels by 2050. In 2021 the UK committed a ‘world leading’ 78% reduction target by 2035, set out in the Climate Change Committee’s Sixth Carbon Budget.
- 3.2 The Planning for Climate Change SPD sits in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021). Pursuant to the Climate Change Act, this sets out that the overarching environmental objectives of the planning system include ‘using natural

resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy¹.

- 3.3 This SPD is part of the wider set of actions previously agreed by the Council to deliver on the Declaration, outlined in a Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan². It also responds to the Community Matters Corporate Plan 2020-2024³ commitment to 'ensuring sustainability is at the centre of our decisions to preserve resources and the environment for future generations'.
- 3.4 The SPD focuses on new development. Taking new homes as an example, a representative 3-bed terraced house built in the last decade consumes 124 KWh of energy per square meter per annum, of which 95 KWh as gas, and emits about 2 tonnes of CO₂ per annum from gas consumption alone (mostly for water and space heating)⁴. Best practice energy efficient homes consume around 15 KWh/m²/year for heating, do not use gas (or oil) boilers, and are carbon neutral in operation if their electricity is provided from renewable or nuclear sources.
- 3.5 To put a dwelling figure in context, of the New Forest district carbon dioxide emissions that are within the scope of influence of Local Authorities, 25% arise from natural gas use - 20% from domestic heating and 5% from commercial and other uses⁵.
- 3.6 The SPD complements the Council's Greener Housing Strategy⁶ which addresses decarbonising the Council's own affordable house building programme and affordable housing stock, and working with private owners and landlords to help decarbonise existing homes. As part of the Greener Housing Strategy it is intended that new affordable housing schemes designed and built by the Council will be constructed to the draft Future Homes standard⁷.

4. THE PLANNING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE SPD DOCUMENT

- 4.1 The draft SPD document is attached at Appendix 1. The main sections and their contents are as follows.
- 4.2 Part A, the introduction, briefly sets out the implications of climate change locally, defines key terms and provides the international and national policy context. It also summarises the costs and benefits to developers and occupiers of achieving zero carbon development.
- 4.3 Part B sets out information requirements⁸ for planning applications, supported by diagram summaries. The aim is to ensure that Local Plan requirements are addressed by identifying and encouraging developers to follow best practice, challenging

¹ NPPF paragraph 8

² [Climate change - New Forest District Council](#)

³ [Corporate_plan_17.11.21.pdf \(newforest.gov.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Energy consumption in new domestic buildings 2015 to 2017](#), BEIS 2019, and [Greenhouse gas reporting: conversion factors](#), BEIS 2021. Based on an EPC B-rated new build home with a gas boiler in 2017, sample size 93,967 homes.

⁵ [UK local authority and regional greenhouse gas emissions national statistics](#), 2020 data (ONS 2022)

⁶ [Greener Housing Strategy, Item 11, Cabinet report 6 July 2022](#)

⁷ The future Homes Standard sets out envisaged changes to the Building Regulations proposed to come into effect in 2025, including 75-80% lower CO₂ emissions than 2020 standards, and a proposed ban on the installation of gas boilers in new homes.

⁸ Commensurate changes are proposed to be made to the list of Local Information Requirements, information applicants must provide when submitting a planning application. These changes will be reported and consulted on separately.

'business as usual' in the construction sector. Recognising that it will not always be possible to achieve some best practice standards, developers are asked to make best endeavours to achieve them and to ensure that new buildings are at least future proofed for convenient future heat pump installation. If best practice cannot be achieved, developers are asked to explain and justify the steps they are able to take decarbonise development and to mitigate and adapt to climate change effects.

- 4.4 Part C provides best practice guidance on climate change mitigation and carbon reductions for new development, in particular for new housing. Parts of this section are reproduced or adapted from The Net Zero Carbon Toolkit (2021)⁹. Part C also provides best practice guidance on climate change adaptation, for example on sustainable drainage to manage flood risk, drought resilience and water efficiency.
- 4.5 The appendices provide supporting information.
- 4.6 The remaining technical sections of the original Net Zero Carbon Toolkit document are proposed to be published separately as a companion reference document supporting this SPD.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 After any final editing the draft SPD will be published for at least 6 weeks public consultation in May 2023. It is envisaged that the results of the consultation and the SPD in final form (taking into account consultation feedback) would be reported to the Cabinet and to the Council for formal adoption in the late summer of 2023.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council. However, development viability may be affected as the achievement of more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable buildings may impact on development costs whilst supply chains and processes transition to higher standards and expectations. Equally development with lower energy running costs and improved environmental credentials is likely to be more attractive to occupiers and may command a price premium.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The draft Supplementary Planning Document sets out proposals which aim to ensure that all new development:
 - Reduces its impact on the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change; and
 - Is resilient to the projected future effects of climate change on the environment.

8. CRIME & DISORDER, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY AND DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none.

⁹ Authors: Levitt Bernstein, Elementa, Passivhaus Trust and Etude commissioned by West Oxfordshire, Cotswold and Forest of Dean District Councils, funded by the LGA Housing Advisers Programme, licensed under Creative Commons Licence 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

9. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 9.1 The Climate Change SPD has an important role to play supporting the implementation of climate change policies in the adopted Local Plan, and it is an important part of the Council's Climate Emergency action plan. I encourage the community and development industry to respond to the consultation.

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Background Papers:

Published documents