



Local Plan Committee

Item
7

7 August 2023

Report of

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Planning Service**

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Title

Draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document

Wards

All wards affected

affected

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Planning Policy Team are preparing three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to address the climate emergency. These SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity and Climate Change. This report presents the draft Climate Change SPD and the Committee are asked to approve publishing this draft for public consultation.
- 1.2 The Climate Change SPD aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by delivering sustainable buildings, which are highly energy efficient, include renewable energy and incorporate green infrastructure. This SPD is ambitious and explains how applicants can successfully integrate a best-practice approach towards the climate emergency in their development proposals.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Local Plan Committee (LPC) approve publishing the draft Climate Change SPD for public consultation in accordance with the Planning Regulations and Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.2 It is recommended that minor changes to the draft Climate Change SPD can be approved by the Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair of the Committee prior to the consultation commencing.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Council has declared a climate emergency and the climate emergency SPDs provide guidance to supplement relevant policies in the Local Plan and encourage applicants to go further than Local Plan requirements.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The alternative option is to not produce a Climate Change SPD and rely on Local Plan policies.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) build upon and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. As they do not form part of the development plan, they cannot introduce new planning policies. They are a material consideration in decision-making but should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.
- 5.2 The Council has adopted the Biodiversity SPD and is drafting two other SPDs to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency for all development within the city. The three climate emergency SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.
- 5.3 The most relevant Local Plan policies to the Climate Change SPD are Policies CC1 (Climate Change) and DM25. These policies are set out below.

Policy CC1: Climate Change

Colchester Borough Council made a Climate Emergency declaration in 2019. A Climate Challenge and Sustainability Strategy and a Carbon Management Plan will support the Climate Emergency Action Plan and will set out detailed specific carbon reduction projects. In addressing the move to a low carbon future for Colchester, the Local Planning Authority will plan for new development in locations and ways that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adopt the principles set out in the energy hierarchy and provide resilience to the impacts of a changing climate.

A low carbon future for Colchester will be achieved by:

- (i) Encouraging and supporting the provision of renewable and low carbon technologies.*
- (ii) Encouraging new development to provide a proportion of the energy demand through renewable or low carbon sources.*
- (iii) Encouraging design and construction techniques which contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation by using landform, layout, building orientation, massing, tree planting and landscaping to minimise energy consumption and provide resilience to a changing climate.*
- (iv) A Canopy Cover Assessment will be required for all major applications. Development proposals should seek where appropriate to increase the level of canopy cover on site by a minimum of 10%. In circumstances, where this is not possible or desirable, compensatory provision should be identified and secured through a legal obligation.*
- (v) Requiring both innovative design and technologies that reduce the impacts of climate change within the garden community.*
- (vi) Supporting opportunities to deliver decentralised energy systems, particularly those which are powered by a renewable or low carbon source. Supporting connection to an existing decentralised energy supply system where there is capacity to supply the proposed development, or design for future connection where there are proposals for such a system.*
- (vii) Requiring development in the Northern Gateway to connect to or be capable of connecting to the district heating scheme where there is capacity to supply the proposed development and where it is appropriate and viable to do so.*
- (viii) Supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings in the Borough where appropriate.*

(ix) Minimising waste and improving reuse and recycling rates.

(x) Development will be directed to locations with the least impact on flooding or water resources. All development should consider the impact of and promotion of design responses to flood risk for the lifetime of the development and the availability of water and wastewater infrastructure for the lifetime of the development.

(xi) Green infrastructure should be used to manage and enhance existing habitats.

Opportunities should be taken to create new habitats and assist with species migration. Consideration should be given to the use of green infrastructure to provide shade during higher temperatures and for flood mitigation. The potential role of green infrastructure as 'productive landscapes' should also be considered.

Policy DM25: Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling

The Local Planning Authority's commitment to carbon reduction includes the promotion of efficient use of energy and resources, alongside waste minimisation and recycling. The Local Planning Authority will support residential developments that help reduce carbon emissions in accordance with national Building Regulations. The use of the Home Quality Mark will be supported. Non-residential developments will be encouraged to achieve a minimum BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.

The Local Planning Authority will encourage the use of sustainable construction techniques in tandem with high quality design and materials to reduce energy demand, waste and the use of natural resources, including the sustainable management of the Borough's water resources.

To achieve greater water efficiencies new residential developments will be required to meet the Building Regulation optional higher water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day, as set out in Building Regulations part G2.

To help meet waste reduction and recycling targets, the Local Planning Authority will support proposals for sustainable waste management facilities identified in the Waste Management Plan which minimise impacts on the communities living close to the sites (noise, pollution, traffic) and on the local environment and landscape. New developments will be expected to support this objective by employing best practice technology to optimise the opportunities for recycling and minimising waste and by providing better recycling facilities.

The Local Planning Authority will support proposals for renewable energy projects including micro-generation, offshore wind farms (plus land based ancillary infrastructure) solar farms, solar panels on buildings, wind farms, District Heating Networks and community led renewable energy initiatives at appropriate locations in the Borough, which will need to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment and if necessary an Appropriate Assessment, to help reduce Colchester's carbon footprint.

Renewable energy schemes with potential for adverse effects on internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites, sites or nationally designated landscapes (Dedham Vale AONB) and heritage assets, will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that the designation objectives for the area will not be compromised, that adverse impacts can be adequately mitigated or where it can be demonstrated that any adverse impacts are clearly outweighed by the social and economic benefits provided by the energy proposal.

All applications for renewable energy proposals should be located and designed in such a way to minimise increases in ambient noise levels. Landscape and visual impacts

should be mitigated through good design, careful siting and layout and landscaping measures. Transport Assessments covering the construction, operation and decommissioning of any wind farm or solar farm proposal will be required and should be produced at the pre-application stage so acceptability can be determined and mitigation measures identified. A condition will be attached to planning consents for wind turbines and solar farm proposals to ensure that the site is restored when the turbines or panels are taken out of service.

- 5.4 The Draft SPD is appended to this Report as Appendix A. Chapter 1 of the SPD introduces the climate emergency and the SPD. Chapter 2 sets out the background and context and provides a summary and links to relevant reports.
- 5.5 Chapter 3 sets out the Colchester context. It includes relevant Local Plan policies and discusses Colchester City Council's climate emergency declaration. Reference is made to the [Net Zero Carbon Toolkit](#) developed by 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. This resource was prepared by leading technical experts from Etude, the Passivhaus Trust, Levitt Bernstein and Elementa Consulting. It contains the very latest design approach and good practice within the field of Net Zero buildings. The Council encourages applicants to follow this good practice and elements of the toolkit have been included in this SPD.
- 5.6 Chapter 4 includes guidance on improving layout and building design. Topics covered in this chapter include passive design, building orientation and massing, overshadowing, windows, building fabric and materials, ventilation and air tightness, reducing overheating, working from home space, and green-blue infrastructure.
- 5.7 Chapter 5 provides advice on renewable and low carbon energy. The Council's ambition is that development should be fossil free and residual energy demand for heating, hot water and other uses is met from renewable or low carbon energy sources.
- 5.8 Chapter 6 explains the LETI standard, which the Council supports to achieve net zero carbon buildings. The LETI standard of net zero carbon includes energy use targets rather than a reduction in emissions.
- 5.9 Chapter 7 includes advice on electric vehicle charging, which is included in the Essex Design Guide. Chapter 8 sets out the water efficiency measures that the Council encourages. Reducing the risk of drought is crucial in adapting to a changing climate. Finally, chapter 9 provides advice for householder applications.
- 5.10 This SPD is ambitious – it recommends that development proposals go further than adopted planning policies. The SPD sets out how applicants can successfully integrate a best-practice approach towards the climate emergency in their development proposals. The Council recommends that applicants follow the good practice set out in the [Net Zero Carbon Toolkit](#), which contains the very latest design approach and good practice within the field of net zero buildings. With the advent of extremely high energy costs the ongoing, relatively low running costs of net zero homes may become a positive sales point.
- 5.11 The ambition is that all development should achieve an energy balance on-site and should seek to achieve [LETI's](#) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Achieving an energy balance on-site means that renewable energy generation should be equal to or greater than the development's energy consumption (or energy use intensity) over the course of a year. The aim should be to provide renewable or low carbon heating systems for

heating and hot water so that new development does not connect to the gas grid. Rather than a focus on carbon reduction, the SPD supports the metric of energy use rather than a carbon reduction target. The SPD supports the LETI approach, which is best practice and is in line with climate change targets. The LETI approach has recently been found sound as part of the local plan examinations of Bath and North East Somerset, Cornwall, and Central Lincolnshire's Local Plans.

- 5.12 This SPD sets out the direction we need to take to build sustainable, future proofed buildings. New buildings in Colchester city should reflect the direction of travel and be future proofed so that people and businesses can save money and people can live, work, and play in more liveable and comfortable buildings. LETI believes that to meet our national climate change targets, by 2025 all new buildings must be designed to deliver net zero carbon.
- 5.13 There is a wealth of information, guidance, toolkits, and best practice available. This SPD is intended to be concise and does not attempt to distill all this information and guidance into one document. Links are provided throughout the SPD to more detailed guidance for those who want to read more.
- 5.14 The Climate Change SPD has been designed by the Council's Corporate and Improvement Service and uses the same design as the Biodiversity SPD. The design is intended to make the SPD user friendly and easier to read.
- 5.15 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) screening has been carried out, which has concluded that SEA is not required.

Engagement

- 5.16 As part of the process of drafting this SPD, Planning Policy Officers engaged with Development Management Officers, the cross-service Climate Opportunities Working Group, Members and Essex County Council's Climate and Planning Unit. In November 2022, all Members were invited to give thoughts and ideas for matters which they wish to see addressed in the climate emergency SPDs. The key points raised in relation to the Climate Change SPD were:
- Include any relevant elements in respect of the marine environment.
 - Look at opportunities to require / encourage solar panels in all new developments.
 - Include EV charging points in all new development.
 - Encourage the greenest building standard.
 - Look at opportunities to encourage innovative low carbon building techniques such as straw bale housing construction (North Kesteven Strawbale Council Housing).

6. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for the Local Plan, and is available to view by clicking on this link:

<https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/Equality%20Impact%20Assessment%20June%20202017.pdf>

7. Strategic Plan References

- 7.1 'Tackling the climate challenge and leading sustainability' is a Strategic Plan theme. 'Respond to the climate emergency' is one of the priorities and is relevant to this SPD. The purpose of this SPD is to respond to the climate emergency. Other priorities in this theme are relevant to the Biodiversity and Active Travel SPDs.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 It is a requirement of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 to consult on draft SPDs for a minimum of 4 weeks and to prepare a statement setting out who was consulted, a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues have been addressed in the SPD.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The SPD consultation will be publicised through written / email consultations with statutory consultees, general consultees on our database, other relevant stakeholders, individuals and organisations who have expressed a wish to be consulted or have previously made comments as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1 There are no financial implications.

11. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 11.1 The three climate emergency SPDs will bring multiple benefits including benefits to health and wellbeing. A healthy environment plays a role in improving health and wellbeing.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 No direct implications.

13. Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 No direct implications.

14. Environmental and Sustainability Implications

- 14.1 The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral by 2030. The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has

three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are economic, social and environmental objectives.

- 14.2 The Council is drafting three SPDs to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency for all development within the city. SPDs are material considerations in planning decisions. They build on adopted planning policy and provide guidance on how policy requirements should be implemented. The three climate emergency SPDs build on the adopted Local Plan and explain how development proposals should respond to the climate and ecological emergency. The SPDs are: Active Travel, Biodiversity, and Climate Change. All development proposals should strive to achieve ambitious carbon reductions, biodiversity enhancement and promotion of active travel to contribute towards Colchester becoming a greener city that is resilient to the climate and ecological emergency.

Appendices

Appendix A Draft Climate Change SPD