



11 December 2023

Report of	Shelley Blackaby Principal Planning Policy Officer (Environment) and Rachel Forkin Principal Planning Policy Officer	01206 508635 or 01206 282625
Title	Adoption of Active Travel and Climate Change Supplementary Planning Documents	
Wards affected	All wards affected	

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Planning Policy Team have prepared three Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to address the climate emergency. These SPDs are:
- Active Travel
 - Climate Change
 - Biodiversity (adopted June 2023).
- 1.2 This report summarises the comments received following consultation on the draft Active Travel and Climate Change SPDs and includes the amended SPDs. The Committee are asked to adopt the Active Travel SPD and Climate Change SPD.
- 1.3 The Active Travel SPD aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by delivering a high-quality cohesive network of active travel routes and support sustainable growth in line with the adopted Local Plan.
- 1.4 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 adopt the Active Travel SPD and revoke the existing Cycling Delivery Strategy SPD.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Local Plan Committee adopt the Climate Change SPD.

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 adopt the SPDs 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 and should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development.
- 5.2 Officers have drafted three SPDs to communicate Colchester City Council's ambitions in respect of the climate emergency and how they will apply to 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 these SPDs are:
- Policy ENV3: Green Infrastructure
 - Policy DM20: Promoting Sustainable Transport and Changing Travel Behaviour
 - Policy DM21: Sustainable Access to Development
 - Policy CC1: Climate Change
 - Policy DM25: Renewable Energy, Water, Waste and Recycling

Active Travel SPD

- 5.4 The Active Travel SPD is appended to this Report as Appendix A. It aims to clearly set out the principles the Council expects to ensure that development proposals respond to the climate emergency by delivering a high-quality cohesive network of active travel routes and support sustainable growth in line with the adopted Local Plan.
- 5.5 Chapter 1 of the SPD introduces the climate emergency and the SPD. Chapter 2 sets out the background, a definition of active travel and reasons why an active travel SPD has been drafted.
- 5.6 Chapter 3 sets out the national context and provides links to relevant reports. Chapter 4 sets out the Colchester context. It includes relevant Local Plan policies and relevant local strategies and documents. Chapter 5 provides details of the active travel infrastructure in Colchester.
- 5.7 Chapter 6 sets out the elements that should be considered as part of new development proposals to encourage and support journeys by active modes. The chapter includes information on providing good quality infrastructure; improvements to existing infrastructure; provision of sufficient and good quality cycle and wheel parking; and information about other sustainable travel measures, promotion and community projects that will all help to encourage

active travel. Following the Local Plan Committee on 2nd October 2023, it was requested that further information was provided on public transport. Amendments were included in Chapter 6 to include reference to the Essex Bus Strategy and Bus Service Improvement Plan prior to consultation. Chapter 7 sets out planning application expectations in relation to active travel modes.

Climate Change SPD

- 5.8 The Climate Change SPD is appended to this Report as Appendix B. This SPD is ambitious – it recommends that development proposals go further than adopted planning policies. 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.
- 5.9 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.
- 5.10 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.
- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 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.
- 5.13 Chapter 6 explains the low energy transformation initiative (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. The LETI standard is good practice and has been included in a number of recently examined Local Plans.

- 5.14 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.
- 5.15 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening has been carried out for each SPD, which has concluded that neither SEA nor HRA are required. Natural England agrees.

Engagement and Consultation

- 5.16 Engagement with DM Officers, the cross-service Climate Opportunities Working Group, and Members took place as part of the process of drafting these SPDs. In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the draft SPDs were published for a 4 week public consultation. Appended to this report is a statement for each SPD setting out who was consulted, a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues have been addressed in the SPDs.
- 5.17 Nine individuals and organisations made representations to the Active Travel SPD. These are summarised in the Statement of Representations in Appendix C. Overall, the responses were supportive of the ambitions in the SPD. Amendments have been made to the SPD in response to some of the representations and detail of these amendments are provided in the Appendix.

The key changes made to the draft Active Travel SPD include:

- Additional information relating to key national and local strategies, policies and guidance.
 - Additional detail on Public Rights of Way.
 - Further clarification that the SPD relates to the whole of the Colchester administrative area.
 - Reference to the design of public transport interchanges, ensuring that they are accessible for all.
 - Further detail on car clubs and mobility hubs.
 - Minor modifications for corrections, clarification, page numbers and date.
- 5.18 Seven organisations made representations to the Climate Change SPD. These are summarised in the Statement of Representations in Appendix D. Overall, the responses were supportive of the ambitions in the SPD and the provision of further guidance to help applicants meet and surpass the relevant climate change policies in the adopted Local Plan. Amendments requested to the SPD have been made and these include adding reference to Anglian Water Services Water Resources Management Plan and amending references to Essex Planning Officers Association documents.
- 5.19 Once the SPDs are adopted, Officers will incorporate the householder sections from all 3 climate emergency SPDs into one document, which will be added to the website as advice for householder applications. Officers will also prepare a

sustainability checklist, which will pull together the content of all 3 SPDs into a checklist to assist applicants and DM Officers.

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%202017.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 these SPDs as the purpose of these SPDs is to respond to the climate emergency.

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. A statement for each SPD is appended to this report.

9. Publicity Considerations

- 9.1 The SPDs consultation was 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 has drafted 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: Active Travel SPD

Appendix B: Climate Change SPD

Appendix C Statement of Representations to Active Travel SPD

Appendix D Statement of Representations to Climate Change SPD