

CLIMATE CHANGE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

Executive Summary

The report describes the draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and recommends the Executive to publish the SPD for public consultation.

The last SPD was adopted in 2013 and is in need of review to keep up to date with changes to building practice which has seen uplifts in emissions and a variety of other standards. The SPD outlines changes to building efficiency standards and provides guidance on best practise in support of adopted strategic policies within the Development Plan, Policies CS22 and CS23 in particular.

To enable the Council to reach net-zero targets across the Borough it is important that this SPD is released and reviewed in conjunction with the emerging Climate Change Strategy. Both documents provide a vision for a sustainable Woking and will enable all members of the public to contribute toward reducing carbon emissions.

The draft SPD has been considered by both the LDF Working Group and Greener Woking Working Group at meetings 1st/8th February. It has also been circulated to WBC officers, and feedback has been consolidated within the draft document. It is proposed to publish the document for public consultation post-election period, from 15th May 2023, for a period of 6 weeks and in parallel with the draft Strategy. Comments received (i.e. consultation statement) and the updated SPD will be presented to Executive and Full Council in late 2023 with a view to adoption.

In summary, the objectives of the SPD are:

- To set out in detail how the requirements of the development plan, in particular, policies CS22 and CS23 would apply to day-to-day planning decisions;
- To review and take into account changes in national policy and legislation on climate change since the adoption of the existing SPD;
- To provide guidance for Planning Officers that sets out the minimum expectations for development in the Borough, and provides examples of best practice that goes beyond this;
- To provide guidance for Council Members when assessing planning applications at Planning Committee; and
- To set out guidance for applicants/developers to utilise when preparing applications for development, that also makes clear the Council's intentions to reduce carbon emissions across the built environment.

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Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- (i) the contents of the draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted and approved for public consultation for a period of 6 weeks; and
- (ii) delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director - Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulation, to approve any minor amendments to the SPD before it is published for public consultation.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To give the public an opportunity to comment on the draft revised Climate Change SPD, and for their comments to be considered before the SPD is adopted.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers:	None.
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Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council adopted the current Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2013. The SPD sets out guidance to support the implementation of the Core Strategy and provides detail on how the requirements of the development plan apply to day-to-day planning decisions. Policies CS22 'Sustainable construction' and CS23 'Renewable and low carbon energy generation' provide the most applicable strategic policy context on how development within the Borough should help to reduce carbon emissions and manage the use of local resources such e.g., water and energy.
- 1.2 Since 2013 there have been significant changes to the planning system in wake of national ambitions to decarbonise all sectors of the UK economy and reach net zero by 2050. In addition, the Council's own ambitions around Climate Change have developed at pace, with the Council declaring a 'climate and ecological emergency' in July 2019 and putting in place a climate emergency action plan (CEAP) to help mitigate and reduce the carbon footprint of Council assets. The revised SPD will cement and bring together the relevant changes, particularly in light of recent changes to Building Regulations in June 2022 which saw uplift in minimum standards for development across the UK. These changes are in response to the Code for Sustainable Homes being scrapped and replaced by the Future Homes Standard (FHS). Current standards are therefore an interim to make way for further uplifts anticipated upon release of the FHS in 2025.
- 1.3 Given the breadth of change since the last SPD, this review will also provide a platform to endorse more recent building practice and promote further sustainable technologies. The Council remains supportive of schemes which evidence conformity with guidance and go beyond the minimum requirements. For a summary of changes from June 2022 see Appendix 2 of this report.
- 1.4 It should be noted that this SPD is supplementary planning guidance to existing Development Plan Policy (Core Strategy Policies CS22 and CS23), and as stated under national planning policy guidance, adds detailed guidance on the application of policy. SPDs are considered a 'material consideration' for decision-makers which 'should not add unnecessarily to the financial burdens on development'. CS22 recognises that in some cases, meeting the requirements of CS22 are unviable. In these cases, evidence should be demonstrated, and financial contribution should be given to the Council to offset the equivalent energy/water savings elsewhere in the Borough.
- 1.5 In parallel to the SPD update, the Council is also conducting a review of their **Climate Change Strategy**. The draft Climate Change Strategy outlines the objective for the Borough to become net-zero by 2050 (or earlier). To meet this objective, it will require all sectors of the Borough to contribute towards reducing carbon emissions. It is noted that 40% of greenhouse gases (GHG) come from the built environment both from usage of buildings and from the embodied carbon associated with construction. Therefore, it is important the supplementary planning document is updated to endorse best sustainable practice and encourage all types of development to go beyond minimum national standards. Both the draft SPD and draft Strategy will be subject to public consultation in 2023.

2.0 Summary of changes since the last Climate Change SPD was adopted

- 2.1 Executive Summary: the summary highlights the importance of responding to climate change as a means encourage development that is adaptable and mitigates future onset challenges. This section also makes reference to the emerging Climate Change Strategy which details the Council's aims to reach net-zero across the Council estate (by 2030) and the wider Borough (by 2045/2050). It is also important to highlight that while the Strategy outlines ambitions to reach net-zero, due to the nature of the SPD, guidance suggests development should aim to achieve carbon-neutrality as supported by CS22. As explained later in the SPD, viability is increasingly becoming a critical issue in determining applications for new development and the

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incorporation of low carbon/renewable requirements. Under CS22 there is leeway for developers to make 'provision for compensatory energy and CO² and water savings elsewhere in the Borough equivalent to the carbon savings which would have been made by applying this policy'.

- 2.2 (Page5-6) The revised SPD provides two summary pages that list the key measures for addressing climate change according to residential and non-residential development. These summary pages are intended to be an aid to both DM officers, developers, and members when making decisions at Planning committee.
- 2.3 The revised SPD expands on the themes of the 2013 SPD and details a new contents page. To note 'Sustainable energy' has expanded to 'Carbon and sustainable energy', 'Sustainable transport' to 'Sustainable transport and EV', and 'Adapting to Climate Change' has expanded to different three themes i.e., 'Water efficiency', 'Climate change resilience and adaptation....', 'Green and blue infrastructure'.
- 2.4 A glossary is provided to clarify terminology used throughout the SPD.
- 2.5 Introduction: this chapter follows much of the same format as the 2013 SPD i.e., setting out the purpose of the SPD and how to navigate the guidance provided. Relevant core strategic policies which support the SDP are set out with details on how they contribute towards climate change objectives.
- 2.6 Legislative and Policy context: this chapter details changes to local policy. The most significant policy changes relate to updates to the Development Plan following 2013 and changes to national strategy, which has set out new targets for net-zero; most notably the goal for all sectors of the UK to become net-zero by 2050.
- 2.7 Sustainability Through Standards: The UK-wide net-zero target has given ground for the interim uplifts to building standards in June 2022 (page 7). These standards will increase again upon adoption of the Future Homes Standard in 2025. Progressive uplifts are seen as necessary to achieve net-zero across the built environment.
- 2.8 Complying with the Standards sets out the key points during the planning process applicants should be prepared to engage with DM officers and demonstrate compliance with the core strategy, national standards, and this SPD. There is an additional note on viability/feasibility and meeting the requirements of CS22. It is expected that a detailed technical and financial appraisal is provided by the applicant to evidence why a development cannot meet core policy.
- 2.9 Carbon and Sustainable Energy
- 2.10 Energy Efficiency: proposals for development should evidence implementing the energy hierarchy and adopting a 'fabric first' approach. Uplifts in Building Regs, regarding the fabric efficiency standard should be followed. There is the requirement for non-domestic developments with high-energy consumption to achieve a 10% reduction in carbon emissions via BREEAM Ene04 credits.
- 2.11 Renewable or Low Carbon Energy: Development should consider using LZC technologies and demonstrate this within the Design and Access Statement. LZC technologies should have minimal impact on heritage assets in line with technical guidance on building regs.
- 2.12 Stand-alone Sustainable Energy Generation: as under CS23, development should make use of opportunities to capitalise on renewable energy in the Borough. These opportunities can be identified within Neighbourhood Development Plans. Attention should be paid to the effect of such energy generation initiatives on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

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- 2.13 Low Carbon Heat and Decentralised Energy Networks: low carbon heat for hot water and heating should be implemented across all developments. Development should connect to the Town Centre DEN if in proximity (i.e., within the connection zone). Development in the connection zone where the Town Centre DEN has not yet expanded to serve, should be designed to be 'connection-ready'.
- 2.14 Design, Material and Waste
- 2.15 Design and Layout: proposals should maximise on potential for solar gain, consider existing landform of site to benefit from shelter, utilise existing natural features on site, capture and use passive solar energy, consider measures to prevent over heating from solar gain in summer, and maximise potential for passive cooling/ventilation in summer.
- 2.16 Waste: development should follow Part H6 of Building regs, reduce waste and resource usage, provide high-quality waste facilities, use recycled (or reused) locally sources materials. Non-residential development is required to meet the 'waste and materials' targets for BREEAM and achieve 'Very Good' rating.
- 2.17 Sustainable Transport
- 2.18 Proposals should promote active travel, provide suitable pedestrian infrastructure, incorporate EV facilities in line with national/local standards, and provide a provision of secure storage for bikes and pushchairs in public areas.
- 2.19 Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation
- 2.20 Developers should provide an overheating assessment to future-proof development, design to anticipate flood-risk/allowances for climate change, implement SuDS/GBI, design for water efficiency of 110 l/p/d, for non-residential implement a min of 40% reduction in water consumption following BREEAM practice, and integrate GBI with NBS where possible to make best use of land for growth of local biodiversity.
- 2.21 Appendices: an updated 'Climate Neutral Checklist' will be provided at the end of the SPD and on Woking 2027 website upon adoption of the SPD.

3.0 Further considerations

- 3.1 A review of the Core Strategy is planned for 2023. This provides a platform to review policies within the Core Strategy. Dependent on the outcome of the review, it is expected that there will be potential to update existing policy to align better with the Council's ambitions on Climate Change alongside national guidance, and supported by a viability assessment. This provides a vehicle for policy evolution that can go further than the SPD's remit in adding detailed guidance on the application of existing policy.
- 3.2 The Environment Act (2021) has made 10% BNG mandatory for development from November 2023. Officers are working to draft the necessary guidance and establish procedure in response. While linked, this work is outside the scope of the Climate Change SPD.

4.0 Next Stages of the process

- 4.1 Subject to the decisions of the Executive, the draft SPD will be published for consultation between 15th May and 26th June 2023. It is intended that a revised version will be taken to Executive then Council for adoption in late 2023. When adopted, the SPD will take immediate effect from the date of adoption.

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5.0 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The revised SPD contributes towards the wider strategic vision of a sustainable Woking. This SPD, in addition to the revised Strategy, will enable all members of the public to become engaged in reducing environmental impact across the Borough and will make development more adaptable, sustainable and flexible in response to national targets to decarbonise.

6.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 6.1 The SPD work was completed via appointed consultant ('WSP'). The only financial implications stem from payment for completing the works as agreed at inception/upon raising the Purchase Order. It is not anticipated that further costs will be added due to further revisions made to the SPD.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 6.2 There are no human resources implications for preparing the SPD.

Legal

- 6.3 The SPD should be prepared to be in general conformity with the development plan for the area, in particular, the Core Strategy. Officers will continue to ensure that this requirement is met to avoid the risk of legal challenge.

7.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 7.1 The draft SPD will be subject to public consultation after the local elections starting 15th May 2023 and concluding 26th June 2023.
- 7.2 The details of the consultation programme and engagement methods for the draft Strategy and Climate Change SPD are to be determined by Green Infrastructure and Planning Policy in consultation with the Council's Lead Engagement Officer in Marketing and Communications.
- 7.3 The full draft SPD will be made available online via the Woking 2027 website, with full details on how the public can submit comments to WBC.
- 7.4 Following public consultation, comments received will be reviewed by officers and inform the final draft SPD for adoption. Once finalised the SPD will be taken to the same relevant Working Groups to seek approval to Exec and then full Council before adoption late 2023.

REPORT ENDS