

CLIMATE CHANGE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

Executive Summary

The Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides updated guidance on the application of policies within the Core Strategy relating to climate change (particularly policies CS22 ‘Sustainable Construction’ and CS23 ‘Renewable and low carbon energy generation’). Since the first SPD was adopted in 2013, there have been significant changes to building practice and guidance relating to sustainability standards within development. The theme of ‘sustainability’ is embedded within the strategic vision of the Core Strategy and so it is important that supporting guidance is able to respond to changes which impact on this, particularly in light of the Council’s climate and ecological emergency declaration in 2019.

The draft revised SPD was approved by the Executive for a six-week consultation at its meeting on 23rd March 2023. The consultation period was between 18th May and 30th June 2023. The report outlines the various responses to the consultation and requests the Executive to recommend to Council to adopt the SPD for the purposes of ensuring guidance remains up to date and enables development to meet the challenge of climate change through adaptation and mitigation.

A total of 17 representations were received from individuals and organisations. A summary of the representations and how they have been taken into account is attached in Appendix 1. Where Officers have proposed modifications, they are incorporated in the revised SPD, which is attached in Appendix 2. Overall, the proposed modifications are considered to add supplementary detail and guidance, which does not change the overall impact of the Draft SPD that was approved by the Executive for consultation.

The outcomes and responses from consultation will be considered by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Working Group and Greener Working Group.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That

- (i) the various representations to the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) consultation together with Officer’s responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted;**
- (ii) the revised Climate Change SPD included in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted as Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of managing development across the Borough and other planning decisions; and**
- (iii) the requirements of the SPD should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 30th November 2023.**

Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Reasons for Decision

Reason: To ensure that there is up to date guidance on the implementation of policies within the Core Strategy relating to climate change and ensuring development can contribute towards the vision of a sustainable Woking.

The item(s) above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.

Background Papers: None.

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Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The report outlines the various responses to the consultation on the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and requests the Executive to recommend to Council to adopt the SPD for the purposes of supplementing the application of policies within the Core Strategy relating to Climate Change, most notably CS22 'Sustainable Construction' and CS23 'Renewable and low carbon energy generation'. The draft SPD was considered by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Working Group on 1st February 2023 and by the Greener Woking Working Group on 8th February 2023. On 23rd March 2023, the draft SPD was approved by Executive for six-week consultation. Consultation commenced on 18th May and concluded 30th June 2023. A total of 17 individuals and organisations made representations. A summary of the representations and how they have been taken into account is in Appendix 1. Where Officers have proposed modifications, they are incorporated into the revised SPD, which is attached in Appendix 2. Overall, the modifications are considered minor and do not detract from the ambitions of the draft SPD originally presented before Executive for consultation.
- 1.2 The adoption of the Climate Change SPD will consolidate significant changes made to sustainable building practice, in addition to setting out how developers should best evidence meeting the requirements of policies within the Core Strategy relating to climate change, particularly CS22 and CS23. The current Climate Change SPD was adopted in 2013, following the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012, and sets out a very different policy context. For instance, the 'Code for Sustainable Homes' and 'Allowable Solutions' have been scrapped. In their place the government announced the 'Future Homes Standards' which will commence from 2025 and will likely have transitional arrangements to enable developers to respond to the new requirements. Until then updates to Building Regulations will act as interim guidance and facilitate the progressive uplifts in sustainable building practice. The SPD recognises these changes and will enable development to respond positively and proactively to the challenge of climate change through mitigation and adaptation.
- 1.3 Given its significance as set out above, Members of the Executive are requested to recommend to Council to adopt the SPD. In adopting the SPD, the Council is also responding to concerns expressed by members of the general public and Members to ensure the Council remains committed to tackling climate change within the built environment.
- 1.4 The SPD will be used by:
 - Planning Officers as guidance against which to assess the minimum requirements of policies within the Core Strategy relating to climate change, in addition, to uplifts in national standards.
 - Council Members when assessing development proposals in advance of and at Planning Committee meetings.
 - Applicants and developers when preparing their development schemes, as guidance to indicate ways in which high quality and exceptional sustainable design can be achieved.
- 1.5 Officers are satisfied that the contents of the revised SPD including the proposed amendments are sufficiently robust and at the same time allow scope for flexibility to apply its key principles to the merits of individual applications and should therefore be supported for adoption. Overall, it will guide improvements in the provision of development in Woking that is adaptable and able to mitigate against the challenge of climate change.

Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

2.0 Summary analysis of the representations

2.1 A total of 17 representations were received from individuals and organisations. Of these, 3 had no comment to make. A variety of issues were raised including, among others:

- The extent to which the Council is driving ambitions to become climate conscious.
- Concerns regarding the scope of the SPD i.e., longevity of the guidance, enforcement of the measures proposed, weight in advocating for higher standards.
- Wording of the SPD is considered too 'relaxed' and could be interpreted as optional.
- Additional guidance is suggested from other organisations which will enhance the breadth of guidance available.
- Noting the importance of infrastructure assets within Woking such as the decentralised energy network (DEN) and supporting the growth of this asset.
- Impact of the ageing population and enabling development to reasonably accommodate changes in people's lifestyles.
- Support for the measures outlined within the SPD and hope that the Council will seek to achieve more benefits for the Borough.

2.2 The range of issues summarised above are by no means exhaustive. A full summary of the representations received and Officer's response with recommendations is included in Appendix 1. Members are encouraged to read this document in full.

3.0 Summary of the draft Climate Change SPD

3.1 The structure of the revised SPD has not changed from the draft that was presented to Executive before it was released for consultation. The proposed modifications have been made in response to representations which have been considered by Officers. These modifications are highlighted within Appendix 1 of the report. For the avoidance of doubt, the key topics covered in the SPD are listed below. The SPD is structured as follows:

- Introduction: Purpose. How to use this document. Sustainability Appraisals.
- Legislative and Policy Context: Overview. Borough Context.
- Sustainability through Standards: Building Regulations. BREEAM. Complying with the Standards.
- Carbon and Sustainable Energy: Energy Efficiency. Renewable or Low Carbon Energy. Stand-alone Sustainable Energy Generation. Low Carbon Heat and Decentralised Energy Networks.
- Design, Materials and Waste: Design and Layout. Waste.
- Sustainable Transport: Prioritising Walking, Cycling and Public Transport. Electric Vehicle Charging Points.
- Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation: Introduction. Adaptation through Design.

3.2 Summary and checklist pages within the SPD remain unaltered and have been amended where necessary to ensure wording remains cohesive throughout the document.

Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 3.3 Please note that all references made to the draft climate change strategy 'Net Zero Woking' have been removed. This is in light of the Council's financial situation and commitments made within the strategy which requires further review. Please see Appendix 1 of the report for information.

4.0 Next stages of the process

- 4.1 Subject to the recommendations of the Executive it is expected that the report will be considered by Council for adoption at its meeting on 30th November 2023. Once adopted, the SPD will take immediate effect from the date of adoption.

5.0 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The SPD will support the delivery of aims set out within the climate emergency action plan (CEAP) following on from the Council's most recent climate change strategy 'Woking 2050' adopted in 2015. The SPD will work in parallel with Woking 2050 to achieve the wider vision of a sustainable Woking, as outlined within the Core Strategy.

6.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 6.1 The Core Strategy was adopted in October 2012 and reviewed. Planning applications will continue to be submitted to deliver their requirements. It is important that the revised Climate Change SPD is adopted to ensure development remains able to mitigate and adapt according to the challenges of climate change. This means advocating for the delivery of development which achieves above national standards and recognising that there will be further uplift in the near future. Failure to support the recommendations of the report may delay the adoption of the SPD.
- 6.2 The SPD was prepared by consultants until the point of public consultation whereby Officers continued the necessary delivery of the SPD. There are no additional financial implications for preparing the SPD.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 6.3 There are no human resources implications for preparing the SPD. The SPD will support the mitigation and adaptation of development to meet the challenge of climate change. This will have a positive impact on equalities, particularly relating to health and wellbeing.

Legal

- 6.4 Under reg 11-16 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) supplementary planning documents are intended to build upon and provide more detailed advice and guidance upon how to implement policies within the adopted local plan. Officers will continue to ensure that the SPD continues to remain in conformity with the local plan to ensure that this requirement is met to avoid risk of legal challenge.

7.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 7.1 The revised SPD has been prepared with the active involvement of the relevant sections of the Council, particularly those who contribute toward climate change mitigation and/or adaption. The document was presented to the Development Management and Green Infrastructure Teams during its production. The Draft SPD was published for consultation between 18th May and 30th June 2023. The comments made by organisations and individuals during that period were collected and have been taken into account in finalising the SPD.

REPORT ENDS