



# Borough of Telford and Wrekin

## Cabinet

Thursday 13 July 2023

### Climate Change Guidance for Development - Supplementary Planning Document

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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Richard Overton - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes & Enforcement Cllr Carolyn Healy – Cabinet Member: Climate Action, Green Spaces, Heritage & Leisure
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Katherine Kynaston - Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure
<b>Service Area:</b>	Housing, Employment & Infrastructure
<b>Report Author:</b>	Gavin Ashford - Strategic Planning Team Leader
<b>Officer Contact Details:</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 01952 384260 <b>Email:</b> gavin.ashford@telford.gov.uk
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	14 June 2023
<b>Report considered by:</b>	SMT – 13 June 2023 Business Briefing - 22 June 2023 Cabinet – 13 July 2023

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#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:-

- 1.1 approve the use of the Climate Change Guidance for Developers Supplementary Planning Document for use in determining planning applications within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1. The purpose of this report is to recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the Climate Change Guidance for Developers - Supplementary Planning Document (Climate Change SPD).

## **3.0 Background**

- 3.1. Telford & Wrekin Council declared a climate emergency on 25 July 2019 in recognition of the climate crisis that is impacting every country across the globe. The Council are committed to ensuring all its operations are carbon neutral by 2030 and are actively supporting a wide partnership of stakeholders to reach a carbon neutral borough by 2030. The commitment of the Council is demonstrated by the following;

- being ranked in the top 3% of councils for tackling climate change;
- embedding sustainability into NuPlace developments;
- producing renewable energy through the Council's own solar farm;
- proactively working to reduce CO2 emissions from Council operations; and
- Supporting local climate change action including that being undertaken by businesses and parish councils.

- 3.2. As part of working towards a carbon neutral borough the Council published a Climate Change Action Plan (2020), this document is reviewed on regular basis. The action plan recognised the key role planning policy will play in reaching carbon neutrality by 2030. The Climate Change SPD is central to shaping new 'climate ready' development moving forward and builds upon existing Local Plan policy to provide residents and businesses with a clear set of guidance.

## **4.0 Summary of main proposals**

- 4.1 The Climate Change SPD provides a robust planning approach that will help the borough reach carbon neutrality by 2030 and reduce the impact of climate change from new development.
- 4.2 The SPD builds upon and provides guidance on policies in the adopted Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and on national standards including building regulations that relate to climate change. The Climate Change SPD sets out guidance on designing new housing, commercial and renewable energy developments. The Climate Change SPD sets a clear framework for development to address climate change by identifying which actions an applicant must, should and could take up to address climate change in their development proposals.
- 4.3 The implementation of the Climate Change SPD will provide a range of opportunities and benefits including;
- Community cohesion and reduction in loneliness from more accessible places and better quality open green spaces;

- Air quality improvements through better landscaping and more accessible neighbourhoods reducing instances of air pollution related illnesses such as asthma;
- Improved physical health and fitness through active travel and walkable neighbourhoods;
- Mental health improvements through greening of developments and improving access to green space;
- Improved access to locally grown, more affordable produce;
- Improved health from better ventilated homes and reduction in overheating and instances of damp and mould; and
- Improved wellbeing through providing homes which are more affordable to power, heat and live in.

4.4 The Council are taking a proactive locally driven approach to addressing climate change in new development by, for example, making homes more energy efficient and affordable to live in. National Government also has a role to play through a more robust approach to tackling climate change in the National Planning Policy Framework and Building Regulations This would create a consistent approach to climate change nationally and ensure that the costs associated with climate ready development are reflected in the purchase price of development land. It would also ensure that, for example, national house builders better reflect the need to address climate change in the house types they bring to the market.

### **Planning context**

4.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provide high level planning policy requirements relating to climate change in new development. The NPPF states that “plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change<sup>1</sup>”

4.6 Building Regulations approved documents F, L, O and S are relate to construction regulations that impact on climate change.

4.7 The adopted Telford & Wrekin Local Plan contains a number of planning policies that are further explained within the Climate Change SPD these include:

- NE1 – Biodiversity and geodiversity
- NE 3,4 & 5 relating to the provision of open space
- C1 – Promoting alternatives to the car
- C4 – Design of roads and streets
- C5 – Design of parking
- BE1 – Design criteria
- ER1 – Renewable energy
- ER 10,11 & 12 Water management

### **How the SPD will be used**

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<sup>1</sup> NPPF paragraph 153.

- 4.8 The Council has the power to introduce SPD's under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, Part 5. SPD documents provide the opportunity for additional detailed planning guidance over and above planning policy set out in local development plans. This provides residents, businesses and other organisations with certainty when submitting planning applications. Once adopted the Climate Change SPD will be used to help determine planning applications in the borough.
- 4.9 The Climate Change SPD provides residents, business and organisations that intend to submit planning applications, planning guidance in the following areas;
- Site layout and design
  - The provision of onsite infrastructure including sustainable travel options and well-designed multifunctional drainage systems
  - How to increase the 'greening' of developments, delivery biodiversity gains and local food growing
  - The design of buildings including thermal and water efficiency as well as adaptability and flexibility of buildings
  - Renewable energy production and efficiency in buildings
  - Use of less carbon intensive building materials
  - Where higher building standards will apply to new developments
  - The suitability of sites for larger scale renewable energy development.

### **Consultation and engagement**

- 4.10 Consultation and engagement took place between February and March. This involved targeted engagement with the wider development community as the key organisations that will have regard to and implement the guidance.
- 4.11 Internal Council services were also consulted for technical input including: Development Management, Active Travel and Highways, Inward Investment, Estates and Investments, NuPlace, Environmental Health, Drainage and Climate Change Team.
- 4.12 As a result of the consultation and engagement process the changes made to the consultation version of the SPD are summarised below;
- what is a requirement in Local or National Policy, what is established best practice and what is an aspiration have been clearly defined and added into the document by identifying where development must, should or could address climate change issues;
  - a new page has been added focusing on Active Travel options;
  - further guidance has been added in relation to:
    - Energy efficiency
    - A fabric first approach
    - Preventing overheating
    - Heat pumps
    - Heat networks
    - general approach to different types of renewable energy;

- further explanation added on where the Climate Change SPD sits in relation to the Local Plan, the Local Plan Review and a future update to the SPD; and
- the glossary has been moved to the front alongside a new page with abbreviations to enhance the readers understanding of key terms.

## **5.0 Alternative Options**

5.1 The Council has declared a climate emergency in recognition of the global challenges the world faces in reducing and ultimately eliminating carbon emissions. Development has a key role to play in improving the thermal efficiency of buildings (reducing energy consumption), adapting to climate change and reducing embedded carbon in the design of buildings. The provision of clear guidance in the Climate Change SPD is critical to reaching a carbon neutral borough by 2030, therefore there is no alternative option available.

## **6.0 Key Risks**

6.1 Climate change is a global priority and development has a key role to play in helping to reach carbon neutrality by 2030. There are a number of key risks that would arise if action was not taken now, these include;

- the borough failing to reach carbon neutrality by 2030;
- less emphasis on green infrastructure, such as, green roofs, tree planting, rain gardens and well-designed multi-functional sustainable drainage systems within developments;
- development being poorly designed and not adaptable to climate change;
- new buildings that do not maximise thermal efficiency with consequential impacts on energy costs for residents and businesses;
- new developments that have a detrimental impact on local air quality as a result of homes close to major highway routes and lack of green infrastructure; and
- development not providing climate ready infrastructure, for example the installation of electric vehicle points and renewable energy generation.

6.2 Delivering on the Climate Change SPD will have a cost burden on new development. Where sites are can clearly demonstrate there is a proven issue of viability, especially where previously developed land comes forward for development, the Council will need to consider the mix of developer contributions to ensure sites can still come forward. This is likely to be the case until the Government standardise planning policy requirements in relation to climate change, which can then be reflected in the purchase price of development land.

## **7.0 Council Priorities**

7.1 The report recommendations link to the following Council priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community;
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy;
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live
- Our natural environment is protected, and the Council has a leading role in addressing the climate emergency;

- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

## 8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The Climate Change SPD will allow the Council to continue to make the most effective use of its resources and support the efficient delivery of the Planning application process. The implementation of the SPD will be met from within existing resources and budgets. It should be noted that implementation of the guidance could increase the cost of future developments across the Borough in order to meet planning regulations.

## 9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) should build on and provide more detailed advice or guidance on policies in an adopted local plan. Regulations 11 to 16 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for producing, consulting on and adopting SPDs. An SPD must not conflict with the Local Plan. The policies within the Council's Local Plan are significant in determining planning applications as proposals are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework states that SPD's add further detail to the policies in the Council's Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites or on particular issues and are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the Council's Local Plan. Approval of an SPD is a Cabinet function.

9.2. There are no direct HR implications arising from this report. The proposals contained in this report can be delivered using existing resources.

## 10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 The Climate Change SPD will apply borough wide and be used to help determine planning applications in all wards.

## 11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 There are many health, social and economic benefits of that will arise from the Climate Change SPD, these include:

- **Reduced energy costs through better thermal efficiency and ventilation of buildings** – this includes affordable homes and will help reduce instances of fuel poverty and damp in homes.
- **Better air quality in and around developments** – this will be achieved in the design highways and transport infrastructure and the ensuring the borough is 'electric vehicle ready'.
- **Improved mental and physical health of residents** - ensuring sustainable modes of travel (walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport) are central to

the design of developments and walkable neighbourhoods for access to recreation, shopping, work and education.

- **Increasing access to locally grown produce** - via edible neighbourhoods, allotments and community gardens, helping to reduce 'food miles'.
- **Improved natural environment** - Protection and enhancement of local biodiversity, ecology and the provision of green space for communities.
- **Helping the locally circular economy** - through the use of recycled materials in new development and increased use of local supply chain through Modern Methods of Construction.
- **Creating a green economy** – Improving the quality of commercial buildings and encouraging renewable energy will help increase levels of investment, job creation and address key issues that are priorities for businesses.
- **Allowing residents and businesses in Telford to be more resilient to the impacts that climate change is already having in the borough.**

## 12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The Climate Change SPD will help improve economic equality for residents on lower incomes. This will be achieved through homes by homes being more thermal and water efficient regardless of tenure thereby lowering utility costs, better access to locally grown produce and improved sustainable travel options.

## 13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 The overall combined impact of the guidance set out in the Climate Change SPD will make a positive contribution to the Council's commitment to achieve a carbon neutral borough by 2030. The Climate Change SPD will help;

- **achieve climate ready site layouts** that, for example, maximise solar gain and provide effective infrastructure such as well-designed sustainable drainage systems, electric vehicle charging, opportunities for food growing and well defined play recreation and open space provision;
- **deliver buildings that design out carbon emissions** through, for example, better thermal efficiency and ventilation, ensuring buildings are flexible and adaptable helping to increase their 'lifespan', achieving greater levels of water efficiency, delivering renewable energy and use of less carbon intensive building materials; and
- **ensuring that large scale renewable energy development is in the right locations** by, for example, minimising the impact on valued landscapes, protecting areas of ecology, wildlife and historic value.

## 14.0 Background Papers

N/A

## 15.0 Appendices

- A Climate Change Guidance for New Development – Supplementary Planning Document - <https://indd.adobe.com/view/a2413f1e-82a6-4831-9a75-fc211e19fd3b>

## 16.0 Report Sign Off

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Finance	16/06/2023	16/06/2023	MLB
Legal	03/07/2023	03/07/2023	SH