

**Meeting date:** 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023

**Report to:** Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board

**Report title:** Draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

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**Wards affected:**

- All Wards |  Bickenhill |  Blythe |  Castle Bromwich |  Chelmsley Wood |  
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath |  Elmdon |  Kingshurst/Fordbridge |  Knowle |  
 Lyndon |  Meriden |  Olton |  Shirley East |  Shirley South |  
 Shirley West |  Silhill |  Smith's Wood |  St Alphege
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**Public/private report:** Public

**Exempt by virtue of paragraph:** N/A  
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**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report presents the draft Climate Change SPD for consideration by the Scrutiny Board.
- 1.2 The Council is committed to achieving its target of being net zero carbon by 2041 as a borough and corporately as a Council by 2030. One of the deliverables in the 22/23 update to the Council Plan, is the production of a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will be an important part of the Council's package of measures to reach net zero by 2041.
- 1.3 The draft Climate Change SPD will support the implementation of the policies in the proposed Local Plan that seek to address the causes and impacts of climate change. It will provide guidance to developers and decision-makers for planning applications on a range of topics from energy assessments, sustainable construction, green infrastructure, flood risk and sustainable transport. SPDs cannot introduce new policy, as they are not part of the development plan, but are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.4 The proposed Local Plan (Draft Submission Plan) is at Examination, and at an

advanced stage. It should be noted that the policies in the draft Local Plan may still be subject to change as 'Main Modifications'. The draft SPD is expected to be adopted following the adoption of the new Local Plan.

## **2. Decision(s) Recommended**

2.1 Scrutiny Board Members are asked to:

(a) Review and provide comments on the draft SPD appended to this report.

**Report Title:** Draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

### **3. Matters for Consideration**

#### Background to Draft Climate Change SPD

- 3.1 The Council's draft Submission Local Plan (DSP) is currently at Examination. The DSP has been through three periods of consultation and is at an advanced stage of the Examination process. However, it should be borne in mind that the Planning Inspectors may suggest amendments to the policies, which will need to be consulted on as 'Main Modifications', and may result in differences to the policies shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Addressing the challenges posed by Climate Change is a key strategic objective within the DSP, and is supported by a range of policies relating to the mitigation of the causes of climate change; and adaptation to effects of climate change. In order to support the implementation of the new and revised policies within the DSP, Officers are working on the preparation of a series of SPDs that will assist applicants and Development Management alike.
- 3.3 As such, the production of the Climate Change SPD will help to deliver the Borough's transition to net zero by 2041, complementing the Council's Climate Change Prospectus and Net Zero Action Plan; and is a deliverable within the Council Plan (2022-2025) against Priority 8: 'Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions.'

#### Role and scope of SPDs

- 3.4 The definition of SPDs in the NPPF Glossary<sup>1</sup> describes them as:
- 3.5 *"Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan."*
- 3.6 Therefore, the role of SPDs is not to introduce new policy or burdens upon developers, but to provide additional guidance to aid developers with preparing their applications, and Development Management and Planning Committee in the assessment of planning applications.

#### Work to date

- 3.7 The working draft of the SPD has been prepared by planning policy officers, with input from internal consultees.
- 3.8 Some benchmarking has been carried out with other local authorities who have produced Climate Change SPDs, in particular those that are seeking to accelerate Building Regulations.
- 3.9 Further work that is required includes ensuring this SPD cross-references other SPDs

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<sup>1</sup> [National Planning Policy Framework - Annex 2: Glossary - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/nppf-annex-2-glossary-guidance.pdf)

in the pipeline, e.g. Design; Open Space; and Biodiversity Net Gain.

- 3.10 The usability of the SPD can be enhanced by greater use of graphical illustrations, and more concise wording.

#### Climate Change SPD Chapters

- 3.11 The SPD is organised thematically with 7 main chapters. The key parts of the relevant policies feature at the start of each chapter, as outlined below.
- 3.12 **Energy Assessments** – (Policy P9). This chapter sets out the information required to submit an energy assessment for different types of planning applications. In particular, it refers to the energy hierarchy and how to calculate the 15% renewable/low carbon energy for major new developments. Net zero carbon is defined as operational regulated carbon emissions. This is to ensure consistency across applications, as data can be drawn from the SAP or SBEM calculation, rather than estimating the unregulated emissions. Embodied (as well as operational) carbon is evidently also an important consideration, however, it is currently considered beyond the scope of planning to require net zero embodied carbon.
- 3.13 **Renewable/Low Carbon Energy** – (Policy P9) This chapter sets out different types of renewable and low carbon energy that can be used and are suitable for different purposes in the Solihull context. The document is not meant to be an extensive manual, but to highlight considerations, and signpost to other sources, as technologies are evolving.
- 3.14 **Sustainable Construction** – (Policy P9 & P15) This chapter sets out how the layout, orientation and materials of developments can all contribute to lowering carbon emissions, for example by reducing energy demand and increasing energy efficiency. In turn these measures will contribute to lower fuel bills.
- 3.15 **Climate Change Adaptation** – (Policy P9 & P15) This chapter focusses on the role of green infrastructure (GI) in climate change adaptation. GI for biodiversity will be more of a focus in the 'Biodiversity Net Gain and Green Infrastructure' SPD.
- 3.16 **Water Management** – (Policy P11) This chapter refers to mechanisms to reduce water consumption, and guidance on minimising and attenuating flood risk.
- 3.17 **Sustainable Transport** – (Policy P7 & P8) This chapter sets out the importance of reducing transport carbon emissions associated with new development, such as promoting active travel and linking to walking and cycling routes. Guidance is also provided on cycle parking and electric vehicle charging points.
- 3.18 **Waste Management** – (Policy P12) This chapter sets out measures to reduce/re-use waste where possible on development sites.
- 3.19 Lastly, there is a proposed chapter on Case studies, to provide examples to developers on how to achieve the policy expectations.

#### Implementation

- 3.20 Implementation of SPD will largely reside with the existing development management

framework and consultee advice. However, the verification of energy assessments will require additional expertise to the Council, either as an in-house Officer, or using external consultants.

**4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?**

4.1 Options for policy content has been developed through the draft local plan process with several stages of consultation. Policy is set in the draft Local Plan, and is currently being considered under the Examination in Public.

4.2 An alternative option is to not continue preparing an SPD. Without an SPD, it will be much more difficult for the Council to provide the appropriate guidance for planning applications and to fulfil the aims and ambitions of the Local Plan to reduce the Borough’s carbon emissions.

**5. Reasons for recommending preferred option**

5.1 To ensure new developments under the new Local Plan address the multiple challenges of climate change, it is recommended that work continues on the preparation of the draft Climate Change SPD for consultation.

**6. Implications and Considerations**

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

| Priority:   | Contribution:   |
|---|---|
| <p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull.</li> <li>2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it.</li> <li>3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities.</li> <li>4. Enable communities to thrive.</li> </ol> | <p>Support the provision of new development that is climate change resilient, constructed sustainably, with good quality transport links, resulting in lower energy bills for new occupants.</p>                      |
| <p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Develop and promote the borough’s economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres.</li> <li>6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2.</li> <li>7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.</li> </ol>  | <p>Supports the low carbon economy, including at UK Central and Solihull town centres.</p> <p>New residential developments will increase the supply of environmentally sustainable affordable and social housing.</p> |

| Priority:  | Contribution:  |
|--|--|
| Environment:<br>8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions. | Directly supports Deliverable 5 of the Council Plan 2022-2025 - Publish, consult on and take forward for approval the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document |
| 9. Promote employee wellbeing  | N/A  |

## 6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 The Draft Local Plan has had three rounds of public consultation and is currently at Examination.

## 6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.

6.3.2 Upon implementation of the Local Plan, additional resources will need to be employed by the Council to adequately verify and monitor the Energy Assessments required under Policy P9. Options are being considered and will be proposed alongside any recommendation to adopt the SPD.

## 6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 None directly arising from this report.

## 6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

6.5.1 None directly arising from this report.

## 6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 None directly arising from this report.

6.6.2 The Draft Local Plan has been subject to a Fair Treatment Assessment.

## 6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

6.7.1 The implementation of the new Local Plan, supported by the Climate Change SPD, will guide low carbon/net zero development, and contribute to the WMCA #2041

agenda.

**7. List of appendices referred to**

7.1 Draft Climate Change SPD (December 2022)

**8. Background papers used to compile this report**

8.1 N/A

**9. List of Other Relevant Documents**

9.1 Solihull Draft Submission Local Plan (2020)