

planning for climate change - guidance for local authorities

'Planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.'

National Planning Policy Framework. Department for Communities and Local Government, Mar. 2012, paragraph 93

Planning & Climate
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April 2012

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A full list of members of the Planning and Climate Change Coalition is given on page 27.

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Planning and Climate Change Coalition

April 2012

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part 1

introduction

Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing people and wildlife. It is not just our biggest economic and social challenge; it is also a personal and moral one. In whatever sector we work, we should endeavour to forge practical and rapid paths to a sustainable low-carbon planet. Fairness and justice should be at the heart of the debate about ways forward, alongside an acknowledgement of the need for risk-taking and innovation.

While we need to work nationally and internationally to secure progress on addressing climate change, we also need to galvanise local action. It has been estimated that some 70,000 jobs could be created from local action on domestic energy efficiency and renewable energy alone.¹ Local communities are at the cutting edge of the climate change challenge because they have responsibility for a wide range of decisions that are vital to our collective future. Many of the adverse impacts of climate change, such as flooding, will result in costs to businesses and householders, and solutions to the problems they pose need to be developed locally. Adaptation to the risks presented by climate change, such as extreme heat or water scarcity, is key to future-proofing our existing communities and making sure that new developments maintain quality of life and are affordable now and in the future.

Spatial planning can make a major contribution to tackling climate change by shaping new and existing developments in ways that reduce carbon dioxide emissions and positively build community resilience to problems such as extreme heat or flood risk. Spatial planning has the potential to deliver the right development in the right place in a fair and transparent way, informed by the imperative of sustainable development.

1.1 The Planning and Climate Change Coalition

The Planning and Climate Change Coalition is made up of a wide cross-sector group of organisations and individuals unified by a common drive to ensure that the planning system responds effectively to the climate challenge. It is led by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and Friends of the Earth. The Coalition has no core funding and no political or corporate affiliations.

1.2 Who the guide is for

The Localism Act signals a major shift of responsibilities to local authority and community levels in England. This guide is designed to respond to the localism agenda and is aimed primarily at local authorities, private sector practitioners, Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships who want both to tackle climate change and to reap the positive economic benefits that solutions such as renewable energy, sustainable transport and flood resilience can bring. Friends of the Earth have produced a separate guide for community planning and climate change.

The guidance set out here updates the Planning and Climate Change Coalition guide published in 2010, which itself was based on the draft Planning Policy Statement on climate and energy, *Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate*, published in March 2010.² The guide has been drawn up to support planning under the Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework and has been developed through cross-sector dialogue, using the wide-ranging expertise of the members of the Planning and Climate Change Coalition.

1 Carbon Descent/Friends of the Earth (December 2009) *Job Creation from Local Action on Climate*. London: Friends of the Earth. http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/job_creation_carbon_descent.pdf

2 Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2010) *Consultation on a Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate*. London: DCLG. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1499780.pdf>

The guide gives detailed guidance on principles that can underpin plan-making and development management

The rest of this guide is divided into four parts. Part 2 sets out the legislative and policy context for action on climate change. Parts 3 and 4 offer a set of principles and good practice guidance which local authorities and communities may find helpful in preparing plans and implementing them through development management.

1.3 The status of the guide

The aim of the guide is to support plan-making and development management processes by identifying key principles to underpin policies designed to support the development of a low-carbon future and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. While the guide is not a statutory document, it nevertheless has considerable support and can be expected to be accorded appropriate weight in both plan-making and development management. The approaches set out in the guide have been designed to support the policy outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework and other relevant government statutes and guidance. The guide is intended to be a living document which can evolve in the light of experience of the implementation of the Localism Act.

1.4 How to use the guide

The guide gives detailed guidance on principles that can underpin plan-making and development management. It is recommended as the basis for comprehensive policy in community-based local plans in the context of the National Planning Policy

Framework. It could also form the basis of neighbourhood planning policies and can be used to guide development management decisions.

1.5 What the guide does not do

The guide cannot cover the full breadth of planning policy issues raised by climate change. Instead, it focuses on mitigation (particularly in relation to energy use and generation) and on adaptation. It does not contain detailed material on important elements such as green infrastructure, biodiversity, food security, and the detail of flood risk assessment. Some of this material – including flood risk – is dealt with in the *Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework*,³ published to accompany the National Planning Policy Framework. The related cross-sector guides on green infrastructure⁴ and sustainable construction⁵ provide useful and more detailed guidance on implementation. Similarly, while the guide refers to the relationship between planning and Building Regulations, it is focused on the former.

³ Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012) *Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework*. London: DCLG. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115548.pdf>

⁴ TCPA and The Wildlife Trusts (2012) *Planning for Green Infrastructure*. London: TCPA (forthcoming)

⁵ BRE *et al.* (2012) *Good Practice Guidance: Sustainable Design and Construction*. Watford: BRE (forthcoming)

part 2

background



2.1 The challenge for planning

The overriding objective of the planning system is to deliver sustainable development. The National Planning Policy Framework defines the five elements of sustainable development in accordance with the 2005 UK Sustainable Development Strategy.⁶ Planning makes a significant contribution to both mitigating and adapting to climate change, through decision-making on the location, scale, mix and character of development. Planning is capable of doing this job over the long periods of time necessary to deal with impacts such as sea level rise.⁷

The guide sets out how local planning authorities can help to shape places with greater resilience to the impacts of climate change. Increased resilience will reduce future costs both for businesses and for households.⁸

Local authorities have a responsibility to help to secure progress on meeting the UK's emissions reduction targets, both through direct influence on energy use and emissions (by, for instance, encouraging energy efficiency and renewable energy) and by bringing others together and encouraging co-ordinated local action. A key part of any local authority strategy to encourage economic recovery and improve energy security should be to help to reduce the costs of buying in energy – by identifying renewable and local sources of energy, and also by reducing the amount of energy used.

Planning can also give local communities real opportunities to take action on climate change by encouraging community-based development and active participation in plan-making, and by helping them to reap the rewards of green development.

⁶ HM Government (March 2005) *Securing the Future: Delivering UK Sustainable Development Strategy*. The UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy. Cm 6467. London: The Stationery Office. The five 'guiding principles' of sustainable development are set out as: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly

⁷ Adaptation Sub-Committee (July 2011) *Adapting to Climate Change in the UK. Measuring Progress*. Adaptation Sub-Committee Progress Report. London: Committee on Climate Change. <http://www.theccc.org.uk/reports/adaptation/2nd-progress-report-2011>

⁸ Cabinet Office/HM Treasury (October 2006) *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change*. Published as *The Economics of Climate Change. The Stern Review*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2007). http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview_index.htm

2.2 The legislative context

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 involves a far-reaching reform of the planning system which hands new opportunities to communities. The reform has brought about changes at all levels of planning:

- **Strategic level:** The Localism Act has abolished the regional tier of planning and replaced it with a new 'duty to co-operate' in relation to the planning of the sustainable development of land. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) can also play a role in helping to inform development plans.⁹
- **Local level:** The basic structure of local planning remains unchanged, but the contents of local plans are shaped by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- **Neighbourhood level:** The Localism Act introduced a voluntary neighbourhood planning process, including Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) and Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs).

■ Why is this relevant?

Local authorities will need to use the various provisions in the Localism Act to implement action on climate change. In particular, NDPs and NDOs can be useful for community action on climate change, and the duty to co-operate is important in cross-boundary adaptation and mitigation activities.

Flood and Water Management Act 2010

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 addresses the threat of flooding and water scarcity. Under the Flood Risk Regulations the Environment Agency is responsible for managing flood risk from main rivers, the sea and reservoirs.

■ Why is this relevant?

Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) are responsible for local sources of flood risk, in particular surface run-off, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that new requirements for Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments and for approval of sustainable drainage systems are met.

Renewable Energy Directive 2009

In response to EU Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, the UK is committed to sourcing 15% of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 – almost a seven-fold increase on the share of about 2.25% in 2008, in scarcely more than a decade.

■ Why is this relevant?

Applications for renewable energy plants of capacity of under 50 megawatts (50 MW) will be decided by local authorities. If the UK is to meet its renewable energy target, all local authorities will need to engage in identifying and approving appropriate renewable energy development.

Climate Change Act 2008

The Climate Change Act 2008 introduced a statutory target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions to at least 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, with an interim target of 34% by 2020. Government departments have prepared carbon budgets to indicate how greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced across the government estate and in sectors where departments take a policy lead. The Act also created a framework for climate change adaptation. The national Climate Change Risk Assessment was published in January 2012,¹⁰ and

9 Although London has distinctive administrative arrangements for planning and strong mayoral powers, this guide is still relevant to the development of London Borough plans

10 HM Government (January 2012) *UK Climate Change Risk Assessment: Government Report*. London: The Stationery Office.
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climate/government/risk-assessment/#report>

This powerful outcome-focused duty on local planning clearly signals the priority to be given to climate change in plan-making

development of a National Adaptation Programme is under way, with planning and the built environment as one of its key sectors or themes. The Climate Change Act also sets out a reporting power, requiring compulsory reporting of climate change impacts and adaptation plans for certain public bodies and organisations.

■ Why is this relevant?

The outputs from the Act provide an evidence base that can be used in identifying priorities for action and appropriate adaptation measures.

Planning Act 2008

The Planning Act 2008 introduced a new planning regime for nationally significant infrastructure projects, including energy generation plants of capacity greater than 50 megawatts (50 MW). The Government has produced National Policy Statements (NPSs) to guide decisions on such projects. Alongside this regime, there is a duty (also introduced by the 2008 Act) on local development plans to include policies which ensure that they make a contribution to both climate mitigation and adaptation.

■ Why is this relevant?

Local planning authorities need to apply aspects of the NPS series to issues such as renewable energy applications.

Energy Act 2008

The Energy Act 2008 sets out powers to introduce Feed-in Tariffs and a Renewable Heat Incentive

scheme aimed at driving an increase in renewable energy generating capacity. In August 2010, new legislation enabled local authorities in England and Wales to sell electricity produced from a range of renewable sources to local electricity networks.

■ Why is this relevant?

The Act allows local authorities and communities to reap the benefits of local renewable energy generation.

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the duty on mitigation and adaptation

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out the structure of the local planning framework for England, including the duty on plan-making to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

■ Why is this relevant?

Local planning authorities are bound by the legal duty in Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, as amended by the 2008 Planning Act, to ensure that, taken as a whole, plan policy contributes to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change. This powerful outcome-focused duty on local planning clearly signals the priority to be given to climate change in plan-making.¹¹ In discharging this duty, local authorities should consider Section 10, paragraph 94 of the National Planning Policy Framework and ensure that policies and decisions are in line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008 (Section 1) and support the National Adaptation Programme.

¹¹ Section 19 of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, as amended by Section 182 of the Planning Act 2008, states: 'Development plan documents must (taken as a whole) include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change'

2.3 The policy context

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the key national planning priorities for England. It replaces Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) that related to climate change, including the supplement to PPS1 on climate change, PPS22 on renewable energy, and PPS25 on flood risk. The NPPF is non-statutory guidance and is a material consideration in plan-making and development management decisions. The NPPF is accompanied by the important Technical Guidance on flood risk taken from the annex of PPS25,¹² and the PPS25 practice guides on flood risk and coastal change remain extant until replaced following a government-led review. In addition, the NPPF makes clear that the National Policy Statement on renewable energy is material to decision-making in town and country planning decisions. Collectively, this forms the relevant national planning policy.

It is also important to note that the NPPF directly cites the 2008 Climate Change Act as a relevant consideration in decision-making (in the footnote to paragraph 94). This has the effect of making the objective of an 80% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 clearly relevant to the discharge of the duty on planning authorities to shape policy which reduces carbon dioxide emissions. As a result, planning authorities will need a clear grasp of their carbon profile, and their policy should support ‘radical’ reductions in carbon dioxide emissions.

The NPPF strongly reinforces the plan-led system as the key way to deliver sustainable development over the long term, allowing for proper engagement with communities. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is an operational principle for plan-making and development management. This golden thread reinforces the need for positive evidence-based plans which objectively meet the

development needs of their communities, unless to do so would result in demonstrable harm or conflict with the objectives of the NPPF. To be in conformity with the NPPF, both plans and other development proposals which come forward where plans are out of date, absent or silent must fully consider their obligations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and adapt to climate change, in line with the legal obligations of the 2008 Climate Change Act and the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.

NPPF core planning principles

The NPPF makes clear that climate change is a core planning principle of the NPPF. Paragraph 17 states: *[planning should] support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)*'. To be in conformity with the NPPF, local plans should reflect this principle, ensuring that planning policy clearly and comprehensively deals with climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The importance of proportionate evidence

The NPPF supports the need for objective and proportionate evidence bases for plan-making, which underpins the approach established in Section 3.2 of this guide. In relation to both carbon dioxide emissions and key adaptation data, it may be useful to share approaches across local authority boundaries as part of the wider commitment to fulfil the duty to co-operate. The NPPF stresses the importance of viability testing; this is dealt with in more detail in Section 3.2 of this guide.

12 Department for Communities and Local Government (March 2012) *Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework*. London: DCLG. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115548.pdf>

Mitigation and renewable energy

The NPPF sets out a positive vision for local plans in order to '*secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions*' (paragraph 93). Paragraph 94, footnote 16 of the NPPF makes clear that decisions should be taken in line with the 2008 Climate Change Act. The core provision of this Act is the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 80% by 2050. Local plans present a clear opportunity and obligation to contribute to the trajectory required to meet this standard. Paragraph 95 of the NPPF makes clear that this can be achieved by shaping the location and design of development, by supporting energy efficiency in existing buildings, and by setting local requirements for building sustainably so long as these are in line with national standards.

The NPPF encourages new development to '*take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption*' (paragraph 96). In planning for renewable energy, local authorities are encouraged to take a positive approach by identifying suitable areas for renewable energy generation and its supporting infrastructure, and by maximising the opportunities for community-led and decentralised energy production (paragraph 97).

Adaptation

Paragraph 99 of the NPPF states that: '*Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.*' Taken as a whole,

the NPPF requires local planning authorities to have a holistic understanding of climate adaptation, ranging from flood risk to increased temperatures and heat stress. Local plans should play a full part in building community resilience to a changing climate.

Other climate-related policy

The NPPF contains a number of related policy issues, and in particular Section 4 emphasises the need to encourage sustainable transport modes and locate development to reduce the need to travel.

A significant amount of other policy has been put in place that has an impact on planning and the policies that underpin plan-making and development management. The list below, while not exhaustive, demonstrates how much has happened in recent years:

- The Renewable Energy Roadmap published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in July 2011 sets out a comprehensive action plan to accelerate the UK's deployment and use of renewable energy, illustrating how the UK can meet its 15% renewable energy target by 2020. It provides detailed actions for the following eight technologies: onshore wind, offshore wind, marine energy, biomass electricity, biomass heat, ground source and air source heat pumps, and renewable transport.
- The Household Energy Management Strategy, *Warm Homes, Greener Homes*, published in March 2010, places an increased emphasis on district heating schemes and identifies an essential role for planning in facilitating the delivery of these and other community-scale energy schemes.
- Climate change projections were updated in 2009 by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP). These set out three global emission scenarios based on high, medium and low forecasts for a range of climate- and weather-related impacts, such as temperature, rainfall, flooding and other extreme weather events.



- UKCIP has also developed various tools to help local authorities to identify their vulnerability to climate change and prepare adaptation strategies, including the Local Climate Impacts Profile (LCLIP) methodology and the Adaptation Wizard, which has been adopted by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency has enlisted Climate UK to deliver the regional outreach for this work.
- New legislation that came into effect in August 2010 permits local authorities in England and Wales to sell electricity produced from a range of renewable sources to local electricity networks.
- The EU's Transport White Paper, published in 2011, establishes a roadmap for a single European transport area with an objective of a 60% cut in transport emissions, to be achieved by 2050 through key goals of removing all conventionally fuelled cars in cities, meeting a target of 40% low-carbon fuels in aviation, and bringing about a 50% shift of freight journeys from road to rail and waterborne transport.
- The progress report of the Adaptation Sub-Committee of the Committee on Climate Change's assesses the UK's preparedness for climate change and identifies policy recommendations.
- The Heat Strategy and National Heat Map published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in March 2012 provide a strategic framework for low-carbon heat. The map is a spatial plan of heat demand from buildings for all of England, designed to help planners develop low-carbon heating solutions.
- The Natural Environment White Paper details how local people can take action to protect and improve green spaces and encourages the establishment of new Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs).
- The Department of Energy and Climate Change's Community Energy Online Portal¹³ includes guidance for local authorities on initiating and developing community energy projects, and/or facilitating others to undertake such projects.

2.4 The importance of local plan-making

Effective local plans can both help to deliver a range of key solutions to climate change issues and help local communities to reap the economic, environmental and social benefits of such action over the long term.

The NPPF reinforces the importance of the legal basis of the local-plan-led system and the need for a strong and proportionate evidence base, including the need to test the viability of policy. Part 3 of this guide sets out a logical set of steps from evidence-gathering to suggested policy approaches for both mitigation and adaptation. The guide provides an indication of the key sources of evidence and of how future patterns of spatial development can be designed to maximise opportunities to, for example, use decentralised renewable energy systems and reduce the need to travel.

New developments should take the full range of mitigation and adaptation factors into account. For example, good site selection at the plan-making stage is crucial. This is why in Section 3.6 the guide sets out a proposed list of criteria which can be used to assess site suitability when allocating sites, considering, for example, the type of building and the intensity of use.

13 See <http://ceo.decc.gov.uk/>

Action on climate change should be an integral part of the culture of plan-making and should be embedded and integrated in policy preparation

Climate change is a strategic priority of the NPPF. Action on climate change should be an integral part of the culture of plan-making and should be embedded and integrated in policy preparation. Only by treating climate issues as central to policy formulation will a local authority have effectively discharged its duty under the 2004 Planning Act.

The importance of political and community leadership

Long-term effective action on climate change requires strong political leadership and a continuity of policy approach. It is also vital that communities are at the heart of a local policy debate so that local knowledge can shape decision-making. In communicating the challenge posed by climate change there is a risk that we may underestimate the multiple benefits that effective action can bring to communities. Reducing carbon dioxide emissions and building in resilience to extreme weather can result in the community ownership of energy supply, with direct economic benefits such as increased energy performance and reductions in fuel poverty; while benefits such as cooling, flood resilience and access to green space and wildlife can be delivered through the provision of green infrastructure. Many of the initiatives that can be taken to address climate change are simply ‘win-win’ actions for communities, and help to shape low-carbon resilient places with high-quality design and access to the natural environment.

The importance of climate adaptation

While mitigation and adaptation are two vital components of a holistic and coherent response to climate change, there is a real risk that adaptation

might be regarded as a secondary priority or could be seen simply as dealing with flood risk. However, some degree of climate change is already inevitable, and it is likely to have a range of impacts, including increased temperatures in the summer and increased risk of flooding or droughts. Local plans should reflect local authorities’ wider corporate goals of building in resilience to climate change and ensuring that risk is managed effectively over the long term.

Climate change effects can have devastating consequences, as seen in the floods in Cumbria in 2009 and in Gloucestershire in 2007. Local planning authorities can consider the likely impacts of climate change and, using the available evidence, both plan for these impacts when considering new development and develop adaptation options for existing areas. Part 3 of this guide sets out the key evidence sources for adaptation in Section 3.2 and presents a proposed planning approach to adapting to a changing climate in Section 3.5. A separate guide to planning for green infrastructure, produced by the TCPA and The Wildlife Trusts, provides more detailed advice.¹⁴

Development management

When determining applications for major development, local authorities can give great weight to compliance with criteria set out in Part 4 of this guide, in Section 4.1. These criteria are intended to ensure that consideration is given to the wide range of measures that can be taken in creating low-carbon, resilient communities, on matters such as sustainable drainage, waste management, transport, and the vulnerability of existing developments. The clear message of this guide is that new development can be both low-

14 TCPA and The Wildlife Trusts (2012) *Planning for Green Infrastructure*. London: TCPA, 2012 (forthcoming)

carbon and well adapted to the impacts of climate change.

2.5 Opportunities for strategic co-operation

Nearly all aspects of climate change will require work that has to be carried out across local authority boundaries, on landscape or river catchment area scale. The Localism Act introduced the duty to co-operate, which requires local planning authorities to co-operate strategically on plan-making issues that cross administrative borders. The NPPF outlines a number of strategic priorities that should be included in the local plan and to which the duty to co-operate particularly applies. These strategic priorities include climate change mitigation and adaptation (paragraph 17).

In addition to the duty to co-operate, strategic planning issues can also be addressed through joint planning boards using existing powers under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which enable local planning authorities, where they so wish, to prepare joint Development Plan Documents. Local authorities may wish to consider the wider cost and planning benefits of pooling expertise and producing shared Development Plan Documents on climate mitigation and adaptation.

A strategic approach could reflect the importance of watershed management/river basin management and landscape-scale issues. Furthermore, local plans could draw on the extensive evidence base on energy capacity and environmental constraints compiled for the revoked Regional Strategies. Local authorities should ensure that the most important strategic partnerships are put in place as soon as possible – for example with Local Enterprise

Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships. It will be important in this context to consider, where relevant, the relationship with the new proposed local transport bodies.

2.6 Integrating planning and Building Regulations

Planning low-carbon communities requires joined-up working. This includes taking account of the raft of work under way in and around the planning community – for example, the proposed changes to energy efficiency and carbon standards in Part L of the Building Regulations (see Section 3.8 of this guide); the target for new homes to be zero-carbon from 2016; and the ambition for new non-domestic buildings to be zero-carbon from 2019. All these initiatives are designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions, and planning needs to ensure that it integrates with, not duplicates, such initiatives to achieve the most sustainable outcome possible.¹⁵

Changes to the Building Regulations and the move to zero-carbon buildings will increase energy efficiency and encourage greater use of decentralised and renewable energy. Local energy planning needs to support and extend these changes rather than duplicate Building Regulations. While authority-wide targets to secure decentralised energy supply to development may, in time, become redundant, they remain a powerful interim measure in the build-up to 2016. Local authorities can still set site- or development-specific targets where justified by local circumstances. It is important to recognise that sustainable development is about considerably more than reducing carbon dioxide emissions, important as that is. For example, the Code for Sustainable Homes and similar assessment methods for non-domestic buildings cover a wide range of issues, of which energy is but one.

15 One element of the zero-carbon homes policy is 'allowable solutions'. The Government is currently considering how builders could make payments to fund community energy projects, such as wind farms and district heating schemes, to meet their obligations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from new homes

part 3

local planning approaches

The following guidance represents a comprehensive package of measures which create a pathway from evidence-gathering to specific energy and adaptation policies.

3.1 Objectives

Planning can continue to provide for the sustainable development needs of all in the community, contribute to housing supply and economic growth, and support social justice. It can also continue to sustain biodiversity and protect natural and historic environments. Planning strategies, and the decisions taken in support of them, can help business and communities to build a low-carbon future and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Plan-making and development management can fully support the transition to a low-carbon future in a changing climate. Local communities can be empowered to:

- Shape places so as to help secure radical cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. This requires the location and layout of new development to be planned to deliver the highest viable energy efficiency, including the use of decentralised energy; reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car; and secure the highest possible share of trips made by sustainable travel.
- Actively support and help to drive the delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy.
- Shape places and secure new development so as to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to impacts arising from climate change, and to do so in ways consistent with cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
- Ensure that local communities are given real opportunities to take positive action on climate change, in particular by encouraging community-led initiatives to reduce energy use – for example, by securing land for local food

sourcing and securing more renewable and low-carbon energy.

- Increase sustainable transport use and local transport solutions.

It is worth emphasising that these policies simultaneously achieve other social objectives. For example, increased public transport use and safe cycling options are good for breaking down socio-geographical boundaries and enhancing mobility for young people, and local food sourcing can provide an opportunity for the kind of community engagement that the localism agenda is seeking to foster.

3.2 Evidence base for plan-making

Principles

- The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process can enable plan-makers both to identify options for local plans which best reflect objectives and recommended approaches in this guide, and to shape planning strategies and policies that support their achievement.
- The SEA Environmental Report and other evidence-gathering for plan preparation can enable consideration to be given to the vulnerability of areas to the impacts of changes in climate. Published material on projected climate change and its impacts prepared by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Environment Agency and the local authority itself includes: Technical Guidance to the NPPF; UKCIP 09 Climate Projections; Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments; the Environment Agency's flood maps (which include surface water flooding); Shoreline



Management Plans; Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies; Water Resource Management Plans; River Basin Management Plans; water cycle studies; and other vulnerability assessments to assess the risks of urban heat island effects, building overheating and water availability. Local planning authorities may also have regard to the Climate Change Risk Assessment and the forthcoming National Adaptation Programme. In applying the UKCIP 09 projections, local planning authorities may consider using the High++ scenarios for assessing vulnerability and planning for resilience and adaptation options to sea level rise. This especially applies to particularly vulnerable locations or sensitive development. For impacts not covered by this derived material, such as changes in temperature or extreme weather events, assessments can be informed directly by the latest set of UK Climate Projections and the latest UK Climate Change Risk Assessment, and also by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, Surface Water Management Plans and Local Climate Impacts Profiles. Assessments and maps of existing and potential components of ecological networks can also form part of the evidence base for climate change mitigation and adaptation.¹⁶

Good practice

- a** In preparing the evidence base for plan-making, and in the context of the duty to co-operate, the most robust and cost-effective evidence base on

wider-than-local issues might be provided by joint working across local planning authority boundaries – between tiers in two-tier areas, and with Local Enterprise Partnerships, Local Nature Partnerships, the Environment Agency, Natural England and water companies to develop assessments for sub-regions, including city-regions.

- b** Involving communities in plan-making from the earliest stage and giving them the information and support to enable effective engagement in decision-making can help in identifying locally based low-carbon measures. Neighbourhood plans provide a particular opportunity to work with community and third-sector groups already blazing a trail in this area.
- c** Understanding the potential for the supply of and demand for renewable and low-carbon energy in a local area is an essential starting point in considering opportunities to move to low-carbon communities. There are a range of methodologies available to quantify and map the renewables resource in a particular area. The methodology set out in *Renewable and Low-carbon Energy Capacity Methodology*,¹⁷ commissioned by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, is a good example. The objective should be to identify the sustainable energy resource by considering both potential and environmental restrictions. For example, for onshore wind this would mean considering where suitable wind speeds are attained and environmental criteria such as constraints imposed by designated sites

16 TCPA and The Wildlife Trusts (2012) *Planning for Green Infrastructure*. London: TCPA, 2012 (forthcoming)

17 SQW Energy/Land Use Consultants (October 2010) *Renewable and Low-carbon Energy Capacity Methodology: Methodology for the English Regions*. London: Department of Energy and Climate Change.
http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting_energy/renewable_ener/ored_news/ored_news/method_assess/method_assess.aspx

Local authorities should consider the positive benefits of renewable energy measures to communities and the wider economy

and species. Clearly identifying and mapping the sustainable resource for an area helps to ensure that a strategic approach is taken, and enables effective community-led spatial planning. Sending clear signals to developers about where renewable energy would be most appropriate can accelerate deployment and avoid conflict. Both communities and energy providers must be integral to this process so that decisions are realistic, viable and legitimate.

- d** It is recommended that local communities assess their area for opportunities for renewable energy and decentralised energy. The assessment could focus on opportunities at a scale which could supply more than an individual building and could include up-to-date mapping of heat demand and possible sources of supply.¹⁸ Local planning authorities can assist this process by looking for opportunities to secure:
 - i** decentralised energy to meet the needs of new development;
 - ii** greater integration of waste management with the provision of decentralised energy;
 - iii** co-location of potential heat suppliers and users;
 - iv** the supply of heat through district heating networks; and
 - v** the use of renewable energy in public buildings which can act as a critical mass for district heating systems.
- e** It is recommended that local communities assess their area for opportunities to reduce the need to travel, particularly by car, and to increase the share of trips made by sustainable travel, taking into

account the need to maintain the sustainability of rural areas. Local planning authorities can assist this process by looking for opportunities to:

- i** secure support for existing and new shops and services, as well as pre-school/primary education facilities, within walking distance of people's homes, thus reducing the need to travel;
- ii** secure better conditions for walking and cycling by lowering speed limits, managing motor traffic levels and increasing route options, for example by improving Rights of Way networks;
- iii** secure better public transport services, including new demand-responsive and community transport, as well as integration between existing services and opportunities to set up car-clubs; and
- iv** consider area/community-based travel plans linked to neighbourhood plans and transport strategies.

Evidence on viability

- a** Viability is increasingly becoming a critical issue in determining applications for new development and the incorporation of low-carbon/renewable requirements, particularly in light of pursuing jobs and growth.¹⁹ The NPPF stresses, in paragraph 173, the need to establish the viability of '*requirements likely to be applied to development*'. In preparing such viability studies, local authorities should consider the positive benefits of renewable energy measures to communities and the wider economy. They should also ensure that the long-term costs

18 The costs and carbon savings from connecting new and existing buildings to a district heating network (powered by a range of sources) can be identified using BioRegional's Energy Retrofit Tool for Buildings, available at <http://www.bioregional.com/news-views/publications/energy-retrofit-tool-for-buildings/>

19 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council has done a lot on this agenda, including training for developers on low-carbon planning requirements and viability guidance – see <http://www.stockport.gov.uk/services/environment/planningbuilding/planningpolicy/sustainabledevelopment/>

to business and communities of climate change are fully considered and that the long-term benefits of critical adaptation measures, such as green infrastructure, are properly accounted for. Evidence on viability should be transparent and accessible to all parts of the community, so that local aspirations can be accurately judged against development values over the long term.

3.3 Local planning approach for a low-carbon future in a changing climate

Principles

- a** Local development plans can support the move to a low-carbon economy and secure low-carbon living in a changing climate.

Good practice

- a** In working with communities to shape the vision for how the area, and the places within it, could develop and respond to local challenges and opportunities, it is recommended that local authorities consider the long-term impact of climate change on their area. Local plans should reflect community aspirations for their areas and encourage innovative solutions to climate change.

3.4 Local planning approach for renewable and low-carbon energy and associated infrastructure

Principles

- a** Building on the evidence base approaches set out in Section 3.2, local planning authorities are advised to design their policies to support and

not unreasonably restrict renewable and low-carbon energy developments. Strategic sites which are central to delivering the local planning approach for decentralised energy can be allocated in the local plan.

Good practice

- a** It is recommended that local authorities:
 - i** ensure that any local criteria-based policies, including local approaches for protecting landscape and townscape, which will be used to assess planning applications for renewable and low-carbon energy and associated infrastructure:
 - provide appropriate safeguards, so that any adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, but do not preclude the development of specific technologies other than in the most exceptional circumstances;
 - require the scale and impact of developments affecting recognised designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Wildlife Sites, irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland, National Nature Reserves, National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Nature Improvement Areas, Heritage Coasts, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Registered Historic Battlefields, internationally recognised designations (Natura 2000 sites), and Registered Parks and Gardens) to be compatible with the purpose of the designation (see paragraph 118 of the NPPF);
 - are informed by the approach and policies set out in the National Policy Statements for nationally significant energy infrastructure;
 - ii** identify the most, and least, environmentally sensitive areas for deployment of different renewable technologies and communicate this information to developers and

Case study – Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework

The Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework (CRIF) project is playing a crucial role in drawing up the renewables infrastructure evidence base for Cambridgeshire. By developing understanding and capacity within three areas – the public sector, the commercial sector and within communities – the CRIF builds on the Department of Energy and Climate Change's *East of England Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Capacity Study* and gives structure to the development of renewable energy in the county. The CRIF demonstrates the potential for renewables and the possible economic benefits of their use, and has allowed constructive discussion to define where the ambition of the county should lie.

Three significant challenges face local authorities as they plan for renewables infrastructure:

- understanding the scale of infrastructure and investment needed;
- identifying the appropriate technology in the right locations; and
- building understanding within an area that there is a need for change, that there are renewable energy options, and that we all have a role to play.

In response to the first two challenges, the CRIF project has established the technical baselines and presented an appraisal of options related to scale and different technologies. The third, very significant challenge lies in building understanding of both the issues and whose role it is to deliver solutions. By making stakeholder engagement inclusive and incremental, the scope of the discussion can be better defined, allowing sensible debate about different scales of ambition and any associated compromises.

The CRIF project concluded that a wide range of technologies are both possible and appropriate and that Cambridgeshire has an opportunity to be a leader in clean energy projects, goods and services. It found that 11% of the potential for deployment lies within the public sector, 36% in local community-based installations, and 53% in the commercial sector. Together, renewable energy projects could meet 26% of the county's energy demand by 2031. The renewable energy investment opportunity could be significant for Cambridgeshire, with scenarios analysed ranging from £2.3 billion to £6.1 billion in projects. The employment opportunities associated with this level of development are also great: up to 11,500 jobs could be created.

There is now an established evidence base that provides a consistent framework for the county's planning authorities to develop complementary planning policy. Alongside this, draft delivery frameworks have been produced for each of the public, commercial and public sector pathways. These pathways set out short-, medium- and long-term action areas and summarise practical issues to be tackled. They also set out the inevitable tensions and sensitivities, as well as the progress made to date and next steps for action.

Further information on the CRIF is available at <http://www.sustainabilityeast.org.uk>

- communities, making explicit what criteria have been applied, including the relevant approaches set down in the National Policy Statement on renewable energy;²⁰
- iii set out how any opportunities for district heating (to supply existing buildings and/or new development) identified through heat mapping will be supported;
- iv set out the decentralised energy opportunities that can supply new development proposed for the area; and
- v support opportunities for community-led renewable and low-carbon energy developments, including the production, processing and storage of bio-energy fuels.

20 See paragraph 97 of the NPPF and consider use of Department of Energy and Climate Change assessment tools

3.5 Local planning approach for adapting to a changing climate

Principles

- Local development plans can set out how the local authority area will be planned over the long term to adapt to the opportunities and impacts arising from changes in the climate.

Good practice

- In their local development plans, local authorities are recommended to:
 - i* bring forward adaptation options for existing development in areas with significant vulnerability to impacts likely to arise from changes in the climate;
 - ii* pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, as different impacts (and options to manage impacts) will affect parts of the community differently;
 - iii* set out how new development should be planned to avoid significant vulnerability to impacts arising from changes in the climate on a 30-year time horizon, tailored to the local authority area and the lifetime of the proposed development;
 - iv* ensure that, when new development is brought forward in areas with significant vulnerability to impacts arising from changes in the climate, risks can be avoided or managed through suitable and sustainable adaptation measures so as to provide sufficient resilience – in areas of water stress, and in order to secure development that would otherwise be unacceptable for its proposed location, resilience could be provided by setting standards for water usage in new development (any proposed

standard should comply with Section 3.9 of this guidance); and

- plan green infrastructure in order to optimise its many benefits and, as part of wider green infrastructure networks, in order to support local biodiversity and healthy living environments, including through providing urban cooling, local flood risk management, carbon sequestration and local access to shady outdoor space. The TCPA and The Wildlife Trusts planning guide to green infrastructure provides more detail.²¹

3.6 Local planning approach for selecting sites for new development

Principles

- In assessing sites for suitability for new development, local authorities are advised to consider their potential to support the move to a low-carbon future and to adapt to or mitigate the impacts of climate change. Where sites perform poorly against any of the criteria identified below, local authorities might consider whether there are proposals in local plans which would improve their performance and/or whether their performance would be improved by, for example, limiting development on the site to particular uses and/or by changing density.

Good practice

- Local planning authorities are recommended to assess the suitability of sites for new development, and for the type and intensity of development, against the following criteria:
 - i* whether developing the site is appropriate, having regard to the intended lifetime of the

21 TCPA and The Wildlife Trusts (2012) *Planning for Green Infrastructure*. London: TCPA, 2012 (forthcoming)



development and increases in risk resulting from changes in the climate to known physical and environmental elements such as sea level rise, flooding, increased temperatures, instability and extremes of weather;

- ii** the extent to which existing or planned opportunities for decentralised energy could contribute to the energy supply of new development on the site;
- iii** the potential for new development on the site to contribute heat demand where a heat network exists or could be provided;
- iv** the scope for sustainable and low-carbon transport (particularly physically active modes) to make up a high proportion of trips to and from the site, including service trips;
- v** whether development of the site would result in the loss of a significant carbon sink;
- vi** whether developing the site would provide opportunities to help the existing community to adapt to impacts arising from changes in the climate, including through sustainable drainage systems (the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 includes provisions on sustainable drainage systems) and green infrastructure;
- vii** the effect of developing the site on the capacity of biodiversity to adapt to likely changes in the climate; and
- viii** whether the development provides gardens and plots for allotments, or other community areas to maximise opportunities for local food sourcing.

3.7 Local planning approach to setting requirements for using decentralised energy in new development

Principles

- a** Local requirements can be consistent with national policy on allowable solutions set out in support of the zero-carbon policy. Local requirements for decentralised energy can be set out in a Development Plan Document and could be derived from an assessment of local opportunities in line with Section 3.2.
- b** Where there are existing, or firm proposals for, decentralised energy supply systems with capacity to supply new development, local planning authorities can expect proposed development to connect to an identified system, or to be designed so that it can connect to it in future. In such instances, and in allocating land for development, it is recommended that local authorities set out how the proposed development would be expected to contribute to the decentralised energy supply system.
- c** Where a local requirement relates to a decentralised energy supply system fuelled by bio-energy, local planning authorities could ensure that fuel sources meet the objectives of sustainable development by not creating demand

for bio-energy fuels known to result in net carbon emissions through production methods, transport requirements, loss of carbon sinks or other environmental harm such as loss of habitat or damage to landscapes.

Good practice

- a** It is recommended that local authorities set requirements for decentralised energy that:
 - i* relate to identified development areas or specific sites;
 - ii* are consistent with giving priority to energy-efficiency measures; and
 - iii* focus on opportunities at a scale which developers would not be able to realise on their own in relation to specific developments.
- b** If a local requirement is set out as a target for the use of decentralised energy in new development, the target could be expressed as:
 - i* the percentage reduction in carbon dioxide emissions to be achieved (in doing so, local planning authorities should set out how the target relates to standards for carbon dioxide emissions set by the Building Regulations); or
 - ii* an amount of expected energy generation, expressed in megawatt-hours per year.

3.8 Local planning approach to setting authority-wide targets for using decentralised energy in new development

Principles

- a** The progressively demanding standards for carbon dioxide emissions set through the Building Regulations, together with the assessment of local opportunities for renewable

and low-carbon energy, will help to drive greater use of decentralised energy. Targets for application across a whole local authority area which are designed to secure a minimum level of decentralised energy use in new development may become unnecessary when the proposed 2013 revisions to Part L of the Building Regulations (for both domestic and non-domestic buildings) are implemented. However, they remain an important interim measure.

Good practice

- a** At the local level, it is recommended that any target may be set in a Development Plan Document.

It is recommended that local authorities set requirements for decentralised energy that focus on opportunities at a scale which developers would not be able to realise on their own



3.9 Local planning approach to setting requirements for sustainable buildings

Principles

a Any local requirement for a building's sustainability should be set out in a Development Plan Document, and applied appropriately to specific sites.

Good practice

a In setting any such local requirement, it is recommended that local authorities:

- i ensure that any local standards for a building's performance, or for measuring a building's performance, on matters relating to construction techniques, building fabrics, products, fittings or finishes have a robust

justification and do not duplicate the Building Regulations (unless, in the case of electric vehicle charging infrastructure/cabling, this is a local requirement set out as recommended in Section 3.10 of this guide, or, in the case of green roofs/walls, this supports a local planning approach to adaptation set out as recommended in Section 3.5); and

- ii specify local requirements in terms of the achievement of nationally described sustainable buildings standards – in the case of housing, this means a specific level of the Code for Sustainable Homes; where local circumstances do not support specifying compliance with an entire Code level (because of the range of environmental categories covered) or envisaged development could not attain the relevant Code level on all environmental categories, a local requirement can be stipulated solely in relation to the energy/carbon dioxide

emissions standard and/or water standard in an identified level of the Code.

3.10 Local planning approach to sustainable transport

Principles

a Local planning authorities should prioritise walking, cycling and public transport and other smarter choices by setting targets for the proportion of trips in their area by these modes.

Good practice

a In this context local authorities are recommended to:

- i** support the development of voluntary travel plans for existing developments and communities – for example using the neighbourhood planning process;
- ii** ensure that appropriate targets are set within travel plans for new development, particularly for new neighbourhoods;
- iii** ensure that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes investment in transport infrastructure, including public transport, that will contribute towards the achievement of these targets;
- iv** work in partnership with the local transport authority and local transport providers (bus/train operators and community transport) to:
 - identify and establish a strategic and local transport network that is included in the local plan to serve the needs of their area through the plan period;
 - support the delivery of the associated infrastructure and services throughout the period of the plan; and
 - establish the extent and levels of service that should underpin the strategic and local networks for existing and new

developments, ensuring that they are consistently underpinned by other relevant policies;

- v** monitor the numbers of trips and the proportions undertaken by different modes of transport; and
- vi** establish a parking management strategy and maximum parking standards that are consistent with the promotion of the above principles so as to support smarter choices, including the use and promotion of walking, cycling and public transport.

b Local authorities should design their policies to focus on prioritising a move away from car dependency. Policies could include:

- i** prioritisation of development which focuses on improving local high streets and town centres; and
- ii** the prevention of both urban sprawl and the development of out-of-town centres.

c Planning, transport and public health policy should be joined up to ensure that actions committed to and priorities outlined in the Local Transport Plan are supported by planning approaches. Local authorities should ensure that all developments are at least air quality neutral and do not lead to further deterioration of existing poor air quality. They should ensure that where provision needs to be made to reduce emissions from a development, this is usually made on-site.

d In the context of their transport strategies, local authorities should consider how to support the take-up of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles, and, in particular, should encourage new developments with parking facilities to:

- i** be designed to provide opportunities for charging such vehicles, especially at home;
- ii** include cabling for charging infrastructure;
- iii** provide relevant charging infrastructure; and
- iv** support the use of car-clubs, in particular for such vehicles.

part 4

development management approaches

The National Planning Policy Framework stresses the importance of the development management process in the delivery of sustainable development. It also introduces the '*presumption in favour of sustainable development*' where plans are '*absent, silent or out of date*' (paragraph 14) and stresses the need for a positive and proactive approach to decision-making. Where authorities have an up-to-date local plan with robust climate change policy, decisions should be made in accordance with that plan policy. Where up-to-date plans are not in place or where the status of plans is disputed, local authorities are recommended to apply the principles set out in this guide.

4.1 Designing for a low-carbon future in a changing climate

Principles

a Local planning authorities should engage constructively with developers to deliver well designed, sustainable buildings and high-quality local environments suitable for low-carbon living in a changing climate. It is reasonable for them to expect proposals for major new development (ten or more dwellings, or commercial development with 1,000 square metres or more of commercial floorspace) to demonstrate through the submitted Design and Access Statement how the proposed development complies with the criteria set out below. In determining planning applications for major development, great weight could be given to compliance with the criteria where they have been '*adopted*' by the local planning authority. Where a proposal for major development fails to meet one or more of the criteria, the application

could be refused planning permission unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant (having regard to the type of development and its design) that meeting a criterion is not feasible.

b Local planning authorities are encouraged to support innovation which secures well designed sustainable developments. Some features which are essential for securing a low- or zero-carbon building, or for adapting to impacts arising from changes in the climate, may give rise to concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape. Such concerns by themselves should not normally warrant planning applications being refused permission. Planning permission may only be refused where the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to, or removal of significance in relation to, the asset, and this is not outweighed by the proposal's wider social, economic and environmental benefits.

Good practice

a In determining planning applications, local planning authorities are advised to expect proposed new development to:

- i** be designed to avoid adding to the vulnerability of existing or other proposed development to impacts arising from changes in the climate;
- ii** be designed to contribute to achieving national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by:
 - using landform, layout, building orientation, tree planting, massing and landscaping to reduce likely energy consumption and resilience to increased temperatures;

The new role of the Environment Agency in climate adaptation

The Environment Agency was given an enhanced role on climate change adaptation in September 2011. These responsibilities were previously held by the UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) based at Oxford University. The Environment Agency is working alongside UKCIP to ensure continuity of the core service currently provided and to build on the excellent work that UKCIP has undertaken. The aim of the Environment Agency's new programme is that by 2015 priority sectors will be incorporating climate risk management and adaptation into their routine business decision-making, so that key sectors are increasing resilience to climate change. The built environment and local authorities, among others, have been identified as key sectors.

- using the layout, density and mix of development to support identified opportunities for decentralised energy;
- connecting to an existing decentralised energy supply system where there is capacity to supply the proposed development, or by being designed for a future connection where there are firm proposals for such a system;
- not creating demand for bio-energy fuels known to result in net carbon emissions through production methods, transport requirements and/or loss of carbon sinks;
- iii** provide public or private open space as appropriate so that an accessible choice of shade and shelter is offered, recognising the opportunities for people, biodiversity, flood storage and carbon management provided by multi-functional green spaces and green infrastructure networks;
- iv** give priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems, paying attention both to the potential contribution to water harvesting to be gained from impermeable surfaces and to layouts that accommodate waste water recycling;
- v** support sustainable waste management by providing space for recycling and composting;
- vi** increase the proportion of trips in the local area made by sustainable modes, in particular by active travel modes, by:
 - giving comparative advantages to sustainable travel, for example by placing cycle parking closer to the main entrance than car parking (other than disabled parking);
 - implementing travel plans, unless the scale of the development is small, so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
 - providing for safe and attractive walking and cycling opportunities, including secure cycle parking and, where appropriate, showers and changing facilities;
 - managing the provision of car parking (including consideration of charging for use) so that it is consistent with cutting greenhouse gas emissions, including the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
 - improving public transport and utilising a travel planning approach; and
- vii** (if the site has not been allocated for development in a Development Plan Document) reflect the site selection criteria set out in Section 3.6.

4.2 Renewable and low-carbon energy generation

Principles

- a** Development management should not prevent, delay or inhibit proposals for renewable and low-carbon energy, and associated infrastructure, which could be permitted having regard to the objectives and advice set out in this guide.

Good practice

- a** In determining planning applications for the development of renewable or low-carbon energy, and associated infrastructure, local planning authorities are recommended to:
 - i** expect applicants to have taken appropriate steps to avoid and then mitigate any adverse

- impacts through careful consideration of location, scale, design and other measures, including ensuring that all reasonable steps have been taken, and will be taken, to minimise noise impacts;
- ii** give significant weight to the wider environmental, social and economic benefits of renewable or low-carbon energy projects and fuel sources whatever their scale, recognising that small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to the local area and contribute to security of supply and to cutting greenhouse gas emissions – and not reject planning applications simply because the level of output, or number of buildings supplied, is small;
 - iii** not require applicants for energy development to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low-carbon energy;
 - iv** expect developers of decentralised energy to support the local planning approach for renewable and low-carbon energy set out in the local development plan and, if not, to provide compelling reasons to justify the departure – but, otherwise, not question the energy justification for why a proposal for renewable and low-carbon energy must be sited in a particular location;
 - v** not refuse planning permission for a renewable energy project because a renewable energy target set out in the local plan has been reached – but where targets have not been reached this should carry significant weight in favour of proposals when determining planning applications;
 - vi** take great care to avoid stifling innovation, including the rejection of proposals for renewable energy solely because they are outside of a broad area identified in the local plan for where substantial renewable energy development is anticipated;
 - vii** expect applicants in cases where the proposed development is for a renewable energy technology included in the National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure, or associated infrastructure, to

have regard to the policies contained within the National Policy Statements; and

viii recognise that, when located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development, which may impact on the openness of the Green Belt – careful consideration will therefore need to be given to the visual impact of projects, and developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances that clearly outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm if projects are to proceed; such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.

4.3 Safeguarding renewable and low-carbon energy supplies

Principles

- a** Where proposed development would prejudice renewable or low-carbon energy supply, it would be appropriate for consideration to be given as to how the proposed development could be amended to make it acceptable. Where this is not achievable, planning permission may be refused.

Good practice

- a** In determining planning applications, planning authorities are recommended to consider the likely impacts of proposed development on:
 - i** existing or other proposed development and their supply of, or potential for using, decentralised energy; and
 - ii** existing, or proposed, sources of renewable or low-carbon energy supply and associated infrastructure.

part 5

conclusion

Addressing climate change is necessary if we are to ensure future economic, environmental and social well-being. While communities can benefit from decentralised energy directly, they can also build a resilient economic future by anticipating and responding to climate change that is now inevitable. Communities that ignore the challenge will find the cost of impacts and of insurance rising sharply, threatening their economic and social fabric. This guide sets out suggestions for action, but that action is now up to local authorities and communities.

**This guide sets out
suggestions for
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practice guidance

There is a wealth of information on adaptation and mitigation. Many of the organisations that have supported this guide offer useful guidance on planning and climate change. Some of the key websites offering such information include the following:

- AECB, the Sustainable Building Association: <http://www.aecb.net>
- BRE <http://www.bre.co.uk>
- Carbon Trust <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk>
- Centre for Sustainable Energy <http://www.cse.org.uk>
- CLASP <http://www.claspinfo.org>
- Climate UK <http://www.climateuk.net>
- Combined Heat and Power Association <http://www.chpa.co.uk>
- Campaign to Protect Rural England <http://www.cpre.org.uk>
- Department for Communities and Local Government <http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate>
- Department of Energy and Climate Change <http://www.decc.gov.uk>
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs <http://www.defra.gov.uk>
- Energy Saving Trust <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk>
- Environment Agency <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>
- Friends of the Earth <http://www.foe.co.uk>
- Homes and Communities Agency <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/design-and-sustainability>
- Institute for European Environmental Policy <http://www.ieep.eu>
- Landscape Institute <http://www.landscapeinstitute.org>
- London Sustainable Development Commission <http://www.londonsdc.org>
- Natural England <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk>
- NHBC Foundation <http://www.nhbcfoundation.org>
- RenewableUK <http://www.bwea.com>
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds <http://www.rspb.org.uk>
- Royal Town Planning Institute <http://www.rtpi.org.uk>
- South West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership <http://www.swplanners-toolkit.co.uk>
- Town and Country Planning Association <http://www.tcpa.org.uk>
- UK Climate Impacts Programme <http://www.ukcip.org.uk>

coalition members

The Planning and Climate Change Coalition is made up of the following organisations and individuals who have all contributed to discussions on the preparation of this document:

- AECB, the Sustainable Building Association
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- Royal Town Planning Institute
- Sustain
- Sustainability East
- Sustrans
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Climate UK is a not-for-profit national network organisation which supports local action on climate change throughout the UK. It was incorporated in 2011 as a Community Interest Company by the nine Climate Change Partnerships across England and their equivalents in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Climate UK aims to investigate, inform and advise on risks and opportunities presented by climate change; and to co-ordinate and support integrated, sustainable and effective responses. Through its network of trusted and independent Climate Change Partnerships, it can uniquely offer both local and national coverage by bringing together local knowledge and technical expertise from a range of sectors.

You can contact Climate UK at info@climate.uk.net, or you can get in touch with any of the partnerships by visiting <http://www.climateuk.net>



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The sole responsibility for the content of this report lies with the authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union. Neither the EACI nor the European Commission are responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

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