

Cheltenham Borough Council
Cabinet – 1 March 2022
Draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document
consultation

Accountable member	Cllr Max Wilkinson, Cabinet Member Climate Emergency
Accountable officer	Tracey Birkinshaw, Director of Planning, Environmental & Regulatory Services
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Executive summary	<p>In 2019, CBC declared a Climate Emergency and set out to become a carbon neutral council and borough by 2030. To achieve this, a level of leadership is necessitated from the Council in guiding businesses and communities towards the 2030 target.</p> <p>Buildings are responsible for almost half of the UK's carbon emissions and collective action is needed to reduce the negative environmental impacts from building developments. The existing planning regulations are not in parallel with the Council's ambitions, nor do they provide the much needed hooks for local policy to induce mandatory change.</p> <p>The purpose of this report is for the Council to approve the draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation.</p> <p>The development of this SPD will help drive a proactive agenda for sustainable design and construction and help pave the way for future policy changes as our development plans are reviewed.</p>
Recommendations	1. Cabinet approve the draft Climate Change SPD for public consultation. The consultation is proposed to run for just over 4 weeks between 7 March 2022 and 4 April 2022.

Financial implications	<p>None arising from this report</p> <p>Contact officer: Gemma Bell, Head of Property, Finance and Assets and Deputy Section 151 Officer, Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk</p>
Legal implications	<p>The public consultation, and subsequent adoption of the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document should be undertaken in accordance with the requirements set out within The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.</p> <p>Contact officer: Nick Jonathan, nick.jonathan@tewkesbury.gov.uk</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>None arising from this report</p> <p>Contact officer: Georgie Tweddell, HR Business Partner, Publica, georgie.tweddell@publicagroup.uk</p>
Key risks	As outlined in Appendix 1.
Corporate and community plan Implications	The SPD will directly contribute the following key priority in the 2019-2023 Corporate Plan: “Achieving a cleaner and greener sustainable environment for residents and visitors”
Environmental and climate change implications	<p>The SPD will provide a tool to enable planning policy to drive the change we want to see from developers in tackling the climate emergency.</p> <p>It will incorporate guidance on different aspects of sustainable design and construction, including energy and carbon, climate change adaption, water efficiency, flood prevention, pollution, sustainable transport, ecology, biodiversity net gain, and waste reduction.</p> <p>The SPD will drive positive change and will contribute to mitigating the negative environmental impacts of the property development industry.</p>
Property/Asset Implications	<p>None arising from this report</p> <p>Contact officer: Gemma Bell, Head of Property, Finance and Assets and Deputy Section 151 Officer, Gemma.Bell@cheltenham.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

Climate Change Context

- 1.1 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC's) special report on Global Warming, published in August 2021¹, describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise. The report went on to say that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, indigenous peoples and local communities. Additionally, the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report stated that around 25% of the world's species are now at threat of extinction due to habitat loss and the effects of climate change². Humanity is facing an unprecedented combination of crises in the natural systems we rely on.
- 1.2 The motion to declare a climate emergency was unanimously supported by full Council in February 2019 and subsequently endorsed by Cabinet in July 2019. The motion called on the Council to:
- Declare a 'Climate Emergency';
 - Pledge to make Cheltenham carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions;
 - Call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible;
 - Work with other governments (both within the UK and internationally) to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C;
 - Continue to work with partners across the town, county and region to deliver this new goal through all relevant strategies and plans;
 - Report to Full Council within six months with the actions the Council will take to address this emergency.
- 1.3 The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) (Appendix 3) was presented to full Council on 21st February 2022. The CEAP sets out a number of tangible actions required for CBC to reach the goal of becoming a net zero carbon council and borough by 2030. It is explicit in stating that CBC must take on a leading role in multiple scenarios, including in the reduction of fossil fuel consumption and waste production within the borough. The production of a Climate Change SPD will support the requirements of the CEAP.
- 1.4 Buildings are responsible for almost half of the UK's carbon emissions, half of water consumption and about a quarter of all raw materials used in the economy. By encouraging new development in Cheltenham to reduce its environmental impact, planning can contribute towards addressing the commitments in the Council's climate change emergency declaration.

The SPD Background

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/assessment-report/ar6/>

²

https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/inline/files/ipbes_global_assessment_report_summary_for_policymakers.pdf

- 1.5 CBC, like many local authorities, are frustrated that the planning regulations are not yet fit for purpose nor provide the teeth needed to require mandatory change. The development of this SPD (Appendix 2) will help drive a proactive agenda for sustainable design and construction and help pave the way for future policy changes as our development plans are reviewed.
- 1.6 The SPD cannot introduce new targets that exceed current planning policy, but it can provide practical guidance or direction on how to design and construct new development sustainably and to comply with, or where possible exceed, policy requirements. The SPD will not form part of the development plan but will be an important material consideration in decision-making.
- 1.7 The SPD brings together local, national and international best practice together with case studies that help illustrate practical interventions as part of the development management process and help Cheltenham Borough Council stretch our ambition to drive change.
- 1.8 The SPD incorporates guidance on different aspects of sustainable design and construction, including sections on energy and carbon, climate change adaptation, water efficiency, prevention of flooding, pollution, sustainable transport, ecology, biodiversity and achieving net gain, and waste. It also includes a checklist criteria to assist applicants in the process of producing a sustainability statement, to demonstrate how they are responding to climate change and related issues.
- 1.9 This Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been created to communicate Cheltenham Borough Council's ambitions for all buildings within the borough and how they should respond to the climate change and biodiversity crisis.
- 1.10 The SPD is intentionally ambitious. It goes further than the current adopted policies, but it does so with necessity and purpose. Necessity because we are all in the middle of a climate emergency that needs to be responded to. Purpose because we want to communicate the direction of our future policy, which will be consistent with a zero carbon future, limiting global temperature rises, mitigating the impacts of climate change and limiting biodiversity loss.

SPD Procedure

- 1.11 The procedure for preparing SPDs is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Regulation 12 requires that before a local planning authority can adopt an SPD it has to prepare a statement setting out the persons it consulted when preparing the guidance, a summary of the main issues raised and how those issues have been dealt with in the SPD. There must then be a period of consultation (of not less than four weeks) on the draft SPD and the statement about its preparation.
- 1.12 The current consultation will run for just over 4 weeks between 7 March 2022 and 4 April 2022. Comments received will be considered and inform revisions to the SPD. The final draft will then be presented to Council for formal adoption.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 The requirements of reaching net zero carbon by 2030 present a highly complex challenge and will not be achieved through Council action alone. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions will require 'systemic leadership' across multiple sectors, strong communications and behavioural change that will result in adapted lifestyles. As a Council, we have a responsibility to lead in this area, to ensure that Cheltenham plays a pivotal role in meeting this challenge to reduce our local impact on global warming, while also being aware of the major changes in weather-vulnerability and climate-sensitivity that will affect the services we deliver. We also need to acknowledge our role in adapting to an already changed and changing climate and the fundamental leadership role

the council has in ensuring Cheltenham is fit for the future.

2.2 Cheltenham Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and set an ambitious target to become a net zero Council and Borough by 2030. A number of key work streams are underway; one of these is to approve a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document.

2.3 The SPD will be a valuable document in support of a number of the emerging actions from the CEAP, including:

- Action 8 under the theme of Buildings & Energy: "...encourage developers to commit to renewable energy by stipulating requirements in a new Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)" (p.18).
- Action 8 under the theme of Water & Waste: "Leverage the new climate-focussed Supplementary Planning Document to encourage the provision of better waste and recycling facilities in developments." (p.22).

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 An alternative option to not produce an SPD was considered. It was determined that any short term gain in officer time would not outweigh the benefits of producing the SPD both in terms of improving outcomes in the planning process and demonstrating the council's commitment to net zero.

4. How this initiative contributes to the corporate plan

4.1 The SPD will support CBC in demonstrating strategic co-ordination across our networks to drive the delivery of the Place Vision.

4.2 Setting out the Council's ambitions and expectations for developments in the borough will lead developers, including homeowners, to design buildings that use low carbon construction techniques and maximise nature for increased biodiversity and flood management. This will improve green spaces and enhance the look and feel of the town, encouraging further investment in the area, and meeting Key Priority 2. The SPD's guidance on improving access to developments for active transport options, such as bikes and e-scooters, will impact the demand for improvements to infrastructure used by cyclists and pedestrians, improving air quality and health.

4.3 By virtue of the topics covered in the SPD, developers will be directed to improve on site recycling facilities and support more efficient and environmentally friendly waste management. This will achieve a greener environment for residents and businesses in Cheltenham, contributing to Key Priority 3.

5. Consultation and feedback

5.1 The development of the SPD has been informed by informal consultation with several specialist officers, including those from Climate Emergency, Planning, Townscape, Environmental Services, Public Protection teams. Input from appropriate Cabinet Members was garnered early on in the project.

5.2 Informal consultation was had with external partners such as the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership and their input sought as experts in the field of nature and biodiversity.

5.3 The formal four week public consultation will also inform the final draft of the document and will be followed up by a concluding officer review.

6. Performance management – monitoring and review

- 6.1 The results of the consultation will provide an important step in refining the SPD. The responses from all respondents will be taken into account and documented in a statement of consultation.
- 6.2 Following the consultation, any applicable changes will be made to the SPD before its final presentation to Cabinet and formal publication.
- 6.3 It is noted that the intention is for the SPD to be an interim document to drive a proactive agenda for sustainable design and construction and help pave the way for future policy changes as our development plans are reviewed. As policy and legislation from both central Government and the Joint Core Strategy change, the SPD will be reviewed and updated as applicable to reflect such changes.

Report author	Contact officer: John Rowley, Planning Policy Team Leader john.rowley@cheltenham.gov.uk , 01242 264180
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Risk Assessment2. Draft Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document3. Climate Emergency Action Plan
Background information	N/A

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
1.4	If global heating continues unchecked, there will be significant financial implications, including the revenue and capital costs associated with delivering more frequent emergency responses, repairs and mitigation actions to respond to the consequences of failing to address carbon emissions.	Mike Redman	01/02/22	5	5	25	Reduce	Progress identified leadership and mitigation actions within the climate pathway to move the council and the borough towards a net zero carbon emission future by 2030.			
1.5	If we fail to address our local contribution to global heating, there will be an on-going negative impact on weather patterns which will affect the whole environment, including food and water supply, building and cultural assets, landscape, trees and biodiversity.	Mike Redman	01/02/22	4	2	8	Reduce	Progress identified leadership and mitigation actions within the climate pathway to move the council and the borough towards a net zero carbon emission future by 2030.			
1.6	If we fail to address our local contribution to global heating, there will be an on-going negative contributory impact affecting human health and wellbeing, as temperatures and other climate-related impacts continue to rise at an unsustainable level. This has the potential to	Mike Redman	01/02/22	5	6	30	Reduce	Progress identified leadership and mitigation actions within the climate pathway to move the council and the borough towards a net zero carbon emission future by 2030.			Mike Redman

	seriously disrupt the availability of health and social care services.										
1.7	If we fail to address our local contribution to global heating, there will be a disproportionate impact on those vulnerable groups least able to adapt to the impacts of climate change.	Mike Redman	01/02/22	3	4	12	Reduce	Progress identified leadership and mitigation actions within the climate pathway to move the council and the borough towards a net zero carbon emission future by 2030.			
<p>Explanatory notes</p> <p>Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p>Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p>Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											