

Planning Committee

10 January 2020

Agenda item number 11

Climate Change – Planning

Report by Planning Policy Officer and Head of Planning

Summary

This report outlines the planning policy response to climate change mitigation and adaptation, following the Broads Authority's resolution to adopt the Climate Change Emergency Statement for the Broads.

Recommendation

To note the report.

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	The Role of Planning	2
3.	Local Plan for the Broads	2
4.	Building regulations – potential future changes	3
5.	Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework – climate change sub-group	4
6.	Next steps	5
7.	Financial implications	5

1. Introduction

1.1. In September 2019, the Broads Authority resolved to adopt the [Climate Change Emergency Statement for the Broads](#).

1.2. This report summarises how planning policy is seeking to drive changes to help reduce emissions (mitigation) and adapt to a changing climate. It outlines policy in the Local Plan for the Broads, recent Government consultations on changes to building regulations, and how we are working with Local Planning Authorities in Norfolk and Suffolk to address climate change. This is a cross-boundary strategic issue that needs to be included in the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework. We are also working with Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council on strategic and local approaches to climate change.

2. The Role of Planning

2.1. The purpose and role of planning is to manage land use in the public interest. In recent years this has been interpreted relatively narrowly, with the focus on facilitating the development necessary for economic growth within sustainable limits. However, there has increasingly been an understanding of the wider contribution that planning can make to societal change through the creation of strong and vibrant sustainable communities. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2018) clearly identifies this social objective alongside the economic imperative.

2.2. The third objective identified in the NPPF is the environmental objective, which is described as:

“to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”

2.3. This third objective is an important one for the Broads and the Broads Authority, particularly in relation to the biodiversity duties and climate change. There are likely to be opportunities for the Broads to contribute significantly to the nature recovery agenda and work is underway to explore these areas, including working with partners and through offsetting. Planning has an important role to play in mitigation for and adaptation to climate change, and the consistent application of established planning principles around sustainable development will support this. Due to the type of development that comes forward in the Broads, which is typically small scale, there will be limited opportunities for a significant or major contribution to driving sectoral change. However, the cumulative impact of a number of small changes can be effective locally and these opportunities will be taken. It is also useful to note that the Authority will continue to comment on the policies and plans of the neighbouring LPAs and will continue to raise the issues of sustainability and climate change, as the allocations and developments they propose have the potential to have a significant impact.

3. Local Plan for the Broads

3.1. The Local Plan for the Broads was adopted in May 2019. It contains detailed development management (DM) policies that relate to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, including:

- a) The SWOT analysis on page 18 identifies climate change as both a threat and an opportunity.
- b) Objective 7 on page 22 refers specifically to climate change. Other objectives in general relate to climate change.
- c) DM4 requires new dwellings to be built to 110 litres/head/day rather than the standard 125 litres/head/day. Less water usage means less energy required.

- d) SP2, DM5 and DM6 and the Flood Risk Supplementary Planning Document seek to address flood risk.
- e) DM7 relates to open space, and DM8 relates to green infrastructure.
- f) SP3 and DM9 relate to climate change, with DM9 requiring all applications to complete a climate change checklist.
- g) DM10 is about peat soils. It seeks their protection in situ, but if they are required to be excavated, requires the material to be disposed of in a manner that keeps it wet.
- h) DM14 sets energy requirements for new developments and DM15 sets criteria relating to larger scale renewable or low carbon energy projects.
- i) DM21 has aspects relating to emissions.
- j) DM22 seeks to address light pollution – the less or more efficient lighting, the less energy required.
- k) DP8, SP9, DM23 are transport policies and generally seek active travel or public transport use.
- l) DM25 directs new employment to areas with development boundaries.
- m) SP12, DM29, DM30 address sustainable tourism, including the location of tourism development.
- n) SP15, DM35, DM36, DM37 and DM41 direct residential development to areas with good access to key services and facilities.
- o) DM43 is a general design policy with elements relating to climate change.

4. Building regulations – potential future changes

- 4.1. Recently, the Government consulted on two changes to Building Regulations. Most development requires approval through Building Regulations, so this can be a powerful tool. No matter what Local Planning Authority area a scheme is in, or what local plan policies are in place, these standards will need to be met for a scheme to pass building regulations.
- 4.2. [The Future Homes Standard: Changes to Part L and Part F of the Building Regulations for new dwellings](#) consultation sets out plans for the Future Homes Standard, including proposed options to increase the energy efficiency requirements for new homes in 2020. The Future Homes Standard will require new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency. It will be introduced by 2025.
- 4.3. This document is the first stage of a two-part consultation about proposed changes to the Building Regulations. It also covers the wider impacts of Part L for new homes, including changes to Part F (ventilation), its associated Approved Document guidance, airtightness and improving as-built performance of the constructed home.

- 4.4. In [Electric vehicle charge-points in residential and non-residential buildings](#), the Government is proposing to alter building regulations for new residential buildings to include requirements for electric vehicle charge-points, and new non-residential buildings to include requirements for electric vehicle charge-point infrastructure. It is also proposing to introduce requirement for existing non-residential buildings to have electric vehicle charge-points.

5. Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework – climate change sub-group

- 5.1. The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF) discusses and sets out agreements relating to strategic and cross-boundary issues in Norfolk. It is produced and endorsed by all Norfolk Local Planning Authorities. Version 2 of the NSPF was recently endorsed, but as the Duty to Cooperate is an ongoing requirement, Version 3 is in preparation.
- 5.2. Numerous groups have been formed to investigate various topics. This includes the climate change sub-group, whose main focus is to research what Local Plans already do in relation to climate change, and what they can do. There will be recommendations that each Local Plan can incorporate, and there may also be model policies that the Local Plans in Norfolk could include.
- 5.3. The high-level approach, with related topics, is shown below.
- Tackling the causes of climate change - mitigation
 - Design of new build – water and energy
 - Energy production
 - Location of development
 - Movement
 - Parking standards
 - Food production
 - Peat soils
 - Broadband and telecommunications
 - Light pollution
 - Emissions
 - Waste
 - Construction methods
 - Build materials
 - Embodied energy in existing buildings
 - Local Energy Area plans
 - Air pollution
 - Addressing existing dwellings
 - Strong Sustainability Appraisal and Local Plan Objectives

- Tackling the impacts of climate change – adaptation
 - Flood risk
 - Coastal erosion
 - Biodiversity
 - Change in weather patterns
 - Seas and water bodies
 - Health
 - Design
 - Green Infrastructure and open space
- Sequestering greenhouse gases
 - Trees and hedges
 - Green Infrastructure and open space
 - Design
 - Peat soils – protecting, management and creation of carbon sinks
 - Carbon off-setting

5.4. This is ongoing work, and we will keep the Planning Committee informed of progress.

6. Next steps

- 6.1. With a new Government in place, any substantial changes relating to climate change and the planning system are yet to be identified, but it is anticipated that this will be an important policy area. We will continue to monitor the policy approaches, and we will keep the Planning Committee informed of any changes and ways to address them as required.
- 6.2. The Authority continues to take a proactive role in producing the NSPF. NSPF3 is due to be ready for endorsement later in 2020 and, as discussed above, will include a climate change agreement and potentially model policies. As we prepare the next Local Plan for the Broads, we will respond to Government directions, NSPF agreements and model policies, any relevant data or evidence, and our corporate approach to addressing climate change. This may see some different approaches and policies in our next Local Plan. In the meantime, we will apply the policies of our adopted Local Plan.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1. The review of the Local Plan for the Broads is set to start towards the end of 2020. There will be a budget in place for this review. The Authority also contributes £5,000 each year to the NSPF, which is budgeted.
- 7.2. The financial burden on applicants in meeting the requirements of the adopted Local Plan is deemed acceptable and has been assessed through a [viability appraisal](#).

7.3. Any policy requirement in the next Local Plan will have its impact on the viability of a scheme assessed in the same way as in the current Local Plan.

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