

# Planning and Climate Change

## Briefing Note

June 2019

### Introduction

1. As a planning authority, the County Council must take account of relevant legislation, national policy, and guidance relating to climate change when determining planning applications relating to minerals, waste, and the County Council's own development, and the preparation of policy relating to minerals and waste development.

### National Policy and Guidance

2. The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) is based on achieving sustainable development. It requires decisions on policies/development to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy (paragraph 8). The NPPF also requires plans/decisions to:
  - Take into account the long-term implications of climate change for flooding, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures (paragraph 149);
  - Avoid increasing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, and reduce greenhouse emissions (paragraph 150); and
  - Help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat (paragraph 151), particularly community-led initiatives (paragraph 152).
3. The more detailed National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG): Climate Change highlights how important the issue is in planning, noting "*Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.*" (paragraph 001). Local plans must reflect this principle to be found 'sound', and local authorities are expected to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, in accordance with the Climate Change Act 2008.

### Local Policy

4. Strategic objective 14 of the *West Sussex Waste Local Plan* (2014) aims to minimise carbon emissions and adapt to and mitigate the potential adverse impacts of climate change. All waste development is assessed against Policy W12 which supports high quality development which includes measures to maximise water efficiency and the use of lower carbon energy generation; to minimise greenhouse gas emissions and the use of non-renewable energy; and includes measures to ensure resilience and adaptation to a changing climate.
5. This is mirrored in strategic objective 13 and Policy M23 of the *West Sussex Joint Minerals Plan* (2018) in relation to minerals development (including oil/gas).

6. The transport and flooding policies in each Plan also recognise the need to consider climate change.

### **Development Management**

7. As already noted, climate change is one of the issues at the core of land use planning so must be given significant weight in determining planning applications.
8. In practical terms, for the County Council this means approving renewable energy proposals such as solar farms, solar panels on schools, and battery storage if the impacts are, or can be made acceptable. It means giving significant weight to the energy produced through anaerobic digestion of organic waste, and through combustion at energy-from-waste facilities.
9. Any application which would increase school pupil numbers needs to be accompanied by a School Travel Plan showing how non-motorised travel to school will be encouraged and facilitated (e.g. sufficient bike/scooter stands). Considerations of flood risk must take into account the increased water levels resulting from climate change.
10. It also means proactively encouraging and supporting the incorporation of measures such as renewable energy, sustainable urban drainage (SuDS) and passive energy in the design of schemes.
11. For applications relating to fossil fuel (oil/gas) development, the government makes it clear that while the UK needs to transition to low carbon energy sources, and a priority is to play a leading role in securing international action to tackle climate change, during this transition energy supplies need to come from a variety of sources, including onshore, indigenous oil and gas.

### **Summary**

12. The County Council must give great weight to climate change issues in developing planning policy and determining planning applications. This means:
  - reflecting national policy and guidance in addressing climate change as one of the core principles underpinning plan making and decision-taking;
  - developing local planning policy which reflects the importance of addressing climate change;
  - supporting proposals for renewable energy, and in other development, the inclusion of measures to mitigate climate change; and
  - seeking to influence other authorities' plans and policies in relation to climate change.

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20 June 2019