

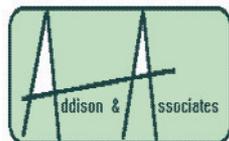
planning for climate change -

guidance and model
policies for local authorities

**Planning & Climate
Change Coalition**

November 2010

Planning and Climate Change Coalition



A full list of members of the Planning and Climate Change Coalition is given on page 20.

planning for climate change -

guidance and model policies for local authorities

Planning and Climate Change Coalition
November 2010

Contents

Part 1: Background	2
Part 2: The policy framework	
Model plan-making policies	
LCP1: Evidence base for plan-making	8
LCP2: Local planning approach for a low-carbon future in a changing climate	9
LCP3: Local planning approach for renewable and low-carbon energy and associated infrastructure	10
LCP4: Local planning approach for adapting to a changing climate	10
LCP5: Local planning approach for selecting sites for new development	11
LCP6: Local planning approach to setting requirements for using decentralised energy in new development	12
LCP7: Local planning approach to setting authority-wide targets for using decentralised energy in new development	12
LCP8: Local planning approach to setting requirements for sustainable buildings	13
LCP9: Local planning approach for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles	13
LCP10: Testing local planning requirements	14
Model development management policies	
LCP11: General approach	14
LCP12: Designing for a low-carbon future in a changing climate	14
LCP13: Renewable and low-carbon energy generation	16
LCP14: Safeguarding renewable and low-carbon energy supplies	17
Conclusion	18
Practice guidance	19
Coalition members	20
Acknowledgements	21

part 1

background

Climate change is the greatest long-term challenge facing human development. It is not just our biggest economic and social challenge; it is also a personal and moral one. In whatever sector we work, our endeavour must be to forge practical and rapid paths to a sustainable low-carbon planet. Fairness and justice must 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. Around 80% of UK carbon dioxide emissions are produced as a result of locally based activities, such as heating and powering our houses and local transport.¹ Many of the impacts of climate change – flooding, for example – can also play out in ways that require local solutions. 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.

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.

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 (FoE). The Coalition has no core funding and no political or corporate affiliations.

Who is this guide is for?

The Government has signalled a radical shift of responsibility to local authority and community levels. Although there is still uncertainty about how the new planning framework will work in detail, this cannot be allowed to delay action on climate change. This guide is designed primarily for local authorities and new Local Enterprise Partnerships who want both to tackle climate change and to reap the benefits that renewable energy and effective adaptation can bring. It draws explicitly on the draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on climate and energy, *Consultation on a Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate*, published in March 2010,² and it seeks to reflect the wide-ranging consensus which that document commanded. The policy has been developed through cross-sector dialogue, using the wide-ranging expertise of the Planning and Climate Change Coalition partners. A separate 'plain English' community guide to planning and climate change will also be available from Friends of the Earth.

The Guide is divided into two parts. Part 1 sets the context on climate change. Part 2 offers a set of detailed model policies.

1 Friends of the Earth (September 2010) *Briefing: Local Carbon Budgets*. London: Friends of the Earth. http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/local_carbon_budgets.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>

Planning can give local communities real opportunities to take action on climate change by encouraging community-based development and active participation

How to use the guide

The guide gives detailed guidance on the principles which should underpin plan-making and development management. It is recommended as the basis for comprehensive policy in the new, community-based local plans. It could also form the basis of local supplementary planning policy and should guide development management decisions.

The challenge for planning

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 time period necessary to deal with impacts such as sea level rise.

The guide sets out how local planning authorities can help to shape places with reduced carbon dioxide emissions and greater resilience to the impacts of climate change. This should help to secure progress against the UK's emissions targets, both through direct influence on energy use and emissions (by, for instance, encouraging energy efficiency), and by bringing others together and encouraging co-ordinated action. 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.

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 issues such as biodiversity, food security and transport which are dealt with by existing national planning guidance. Similarly, while the guide refers to the relationship between planning and Building Regulations, it is focused on the former.³

A changing context

In December 2007, the Department for Communities and Local Government published Planning Policy Statement: *Planning and Climate Change*.⁴ This placed tackling climate change at the heart of planning. Its cross-cutting importance was signalled by making it a supplement to PPS 1: *Delivering Sustainable Development*, which set out overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development. *Consultation on a Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Low Carbon Future in a Changing Climate*, the draft PPS published in March 2010, proposed to consolidate PPS1 and PPS22: *Renewable Energy*.

The Government has signalled that it will legislate to bring about major changes to the planning system. National planning policies, including PPS1

³ It is also crucial to integrate the planning of new development with a range of transport options and to reduce the need to travel. This guide considers transport issues briefly. More detailed guidance on local planning and transport is available in PPG13: *Transport* and in *Delivering Sustainable Low Carbon Travel: An Essential Guide for Local Authorities* (Department for Transport, November 2009. <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/guidelocalauth/>)

⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government (December 2007) *Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change. Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1*. London: DCLG. <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/ppscclimatechange.pdf>

Legislative and policy context

A significant amount of new legislation and policy has been put in place that affects 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 Climate Change Act 2008 introduced a statutory target of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 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. A national Climate Change Risk Assessment is currently being undertaken and will be completed in 2012.
- In response to EU Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources, the UK has 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.
- The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan and the UK Renewable Energy Strategy, both published on 15 July 2009, set out how the UK will achieve dramatic reductions in emissions and meet targets on renewables.
- The Household Energy Management Strategy, *Warm Homes, Greener Homes*, published on 2 March 2010, placed a greater emphasis on district heating schemes and identified an essential role for planning in facilitating the delivery of these and other community-scale energy schemes.
- On 16 July 2009, the then Minister for Housing and Planning issued a written statement on the proposed definition of zero-carbon homes, involving a combination of energy efficiency measures and the use of decentralised energy solutions, to be set out through Building Regulations and through the use of a range of 'allowable solutions', the details of which are still to be decided but are likely to include a community fund solution.
- 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.
- The Energy Act 2008 set out powers to introduce feed-in tariffs and a Renewable Heat Incentive scheme aimed at driving an increase in renewable energy generating capacity. In October 2010, the Government announced £860 million funding for the Renewable Heat Incentive, to be introduced from 2011-12, and indicated that feed-in tariffs would be refocused on the most cost-effective technologies.
- From 18 August 2010, new legislation permits local authorities in England and Wales to sell electricity produced from a range of renewable sources to local electricity networks.
- The Local Transport Act 2008 provided a new opportunity for local authorities to get effectively engaged in the provision and management of public transport.
- *Guidance on Transport Assessment*, published by the Department for Transport on 7 March 2007, set out a new hierarchy of actions which prioritised walking, cycling and public transport. It also reinforced the importance of travel planning. *Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process*, published by the Department for Transport on 29 April 2009, provided further detail.

Evidence-based plan-making remains vital in producing effective local and community plans

and PPS22, will be streamlined and consolidated. The climate and energy PPS issued in draft in March 2010 will now not be published. Regional Strategies have been revoked and regional evidence-gathering has, in most cases, ended. The Decentralisation and Localism Bill will give much greater planning responsibilities to the local level and will remove top-down target-setting. As a result, communities will have both the responsibility and the opportunity to deal with climate change.

The Planning Act 2008 introduced a new planning regime for nationally significant infrastructure projects, including energy generation plant of capacity greater than 50 megawatts (50 MW). The Government is producing new National Policy Statements (NPSs) which will guide decisions on such projects. These will be approved in the spring of 2011. Alongside this new regime, there is a duty (also introduced by the 2008 Act) on Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) to include policies which ensure that they make a contribution to both climate mitigation and adaptation.

Getting the right evidence

Evidence-based plan-making remains vital in producing effective local and community plans. A Sustainability Appraisal, which is used to meet UK obligations under the EU Directive on Strategic

Environmental Assessment (SEA), is a vital tool in securing planning strategies that help to deliver both mitigation and adaptation.

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 the 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*,⁵ commissioned by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), 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 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. It is vital that both communities and energy providers are embedded in this process so that decisions are realistic, viable and legitimate.

The right evidence is also vital for delivering on a range of wider local priorities, such as tackling fuel poverty, ensuring local energy security, facilitating waste management, and meeting targets for renewable capacity. This is why the proposed model Low Carbon Policy 1 (LCP1) set out in this guide recommends that heat sources and demand are mapped as a part of infrastructure planning – to identify strategic opportunities for marrying up heat

⁵ SQW Energy and Land Use Consultants (January 2010) *Renewable and Low-carbon Energy Capacity Methodology: Methodology for the English Regions*. London: Department of Energy and Climate Change. http://www.sqw.co.uk/file_download/246

Nearly all aspects of climate change will require work to be carried out across local authority boundaries

suppliers and consumers. Heat maps can provide such data; and maps developed at local level can assist plan-makers in identifying future opportunities in line with the recommendation in the proposed LCP6.

Opportunities for strategic planning

Nearly all aspects of climate change will require work to be carried out across local authority boundaries. The loss of regional planning creates an even greater imperative for effective co-operation. There will be voluntary opportunities framed within the Decentralisation and Localism Bill to encourage cross-border working, including proposals for Joint Infrastructure Plans (JIPs) and a duty to co-operate. Local authorities should start work now to ensure that the most important strategic partnerships are put in place. JIPs should have climate change at their heart and, where useful, absorb policy that was contained in the former Regional Strategy.

Integrating planning and Building Regulations

Planning low-carbon communities requires joined-up working. This includes taking account of the raft of work taking place 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 the proposed LCP7); 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.⁶

Changes to the Building Regulations and the move to zero-carbon buildings will push the boundaries of current energy efficiency and encourage greater use of decentralised and renewable energy. Local energy planning should support new development to meet progressively more demanding standards for emissions. As a result, authority-wide targets to secure decentralised energy supply to development may, in time, become redundant. This is one of the reasons why the Planning and Climate Change Coalition is proposing in LCP7 that, post-2013, authority-wide targets to secure decentralised energy may be unnecessary – although local authorities can still set site- or development-specific targets where justified by local circumstances.

The proposed LCP3 sets out what communities could expect from local plans and how plans should support renewable and low-carbon energy generation. **Planning for more renewable and low-carbon developments should be at the heart of good planning by communities: it is neither optional nor additional.** This is why the guide recommends within LCP3 a clear set of expectations for local plans. The guide also recommends, in proposed LCP9, that local planning authorities should – in the context of wider sustainable transport policy which should prioritise walking, cycling and public transport – support the take-up of electric and plug-in hybrid cars, setting local requirements for cabling and charging infrastructure where appropriate.

⁶ 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



Some degree of climate change is already inevitable, with increased flood risk one of the consequences

The importance of climate adaptation

Much of the discussion around climate change is about reducing carbon dioxide emissions, but preparing for the effects of climate change is just as important. 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. These effects can have devastating consequences, as seen in the recent floods in Cumbria in 2009 and in Gloucestershire in 2007. Local planning authorities should 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. This is why the Planning and Climate Change Coalition encourages the appropriate use of UK Climate Projections in proposed LCP1b and sets out a proposed planning approach to adapting to a changing climate in LCP4.

Green infrastructure also has a role to play in bringing together crucial considerations of biodiversity, heat, water, healthy living and transport needs to create environments in which people will want to live and work in the future.

Best practice studies and exchange of information gained through the TCPA-led INTERREG IVC funded GRaBS project (Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns) have been used to address this issue, and the project has developed a tool to help local authorities to identify the risks and vulnerabilities of the communities in their areas.⁷

New developments should take all these factors into account. For example, good site selection at the plan-making stage is critical. This is why the guide sets out a proposed list of criteria in LCP5 which should be used when allocating sites to assess their suitability, considering, for example, the type of building and the intensity of use.

When determining applications for major development, local authorities should give great weight to compliance with criteria set out in proposed LCP12. These criteria are intended to ensure that consideration is given to the wide range of measures that can be taken in creating low-carbon communities, on matters such as sustainable drainage, waste management, transport, and the vulnerability of existing developments. There is a clear message that new development should be low-carbon development and well adapted to the impacts of climate change.

⁷ See <http://www.grabs-eu.org/>

part 2

the policy framework

Objectives

Planning should 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 must also continue to sustain biodiversity and protect natural and historic environments. All planning strategies, and the decisions taken in support of them, must, however, help business and communities to build a low-carbon future and prepare for the impacts of climate change.

Plan-making and development management should fully support the transition to a low-carbon future in a changing climate. Local communities should 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 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 and secure more renewable and low-carbon energy.

Model plan-making policies

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

Low-Carbon Policy 1 (LCP1): Evidence base for plan-making

- a A Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment) should be used by plan-makers to identify options for local plans which best reflect the objectives and policies in this guide and to shape planning strategies and policies that support their achievement.
- b A Sustainability Appraisal, in considering the vulnerability of areas to impacts arising from changes in the climate, should draw on published material on projected climate change and its impacts (including flooding) prepared by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Environment Agency. 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 by the latest UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (the first UK Climate Change Risk Assessment will be published in 2012), and also by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments, Surface Water Management Plans and Local Climate Impacts Profiles.
- c Local communities should assess their area for opportunities for renewable energy and

decentralised energy. The assessment should focus on opportunities at a scale which could supply more than an individual building and should include up-to-date mapping of heat demand and possible sources of supply. Local planning authorities can particularly 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; and
- iv* district heating networks based on renewable energy, surplus heat and biomass.

d Local communities are recommended to 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. Local planning authorities can particularly assist this process by looking for opportunities to secure:

- i* better conditions for walking and cycling by lowering speed limits, managing motor traffic levels and increasing route options, such as by improving Rights of Way networks;
- ii* 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
- iii* support for existing and new shops and services within walking distance of people's homes.

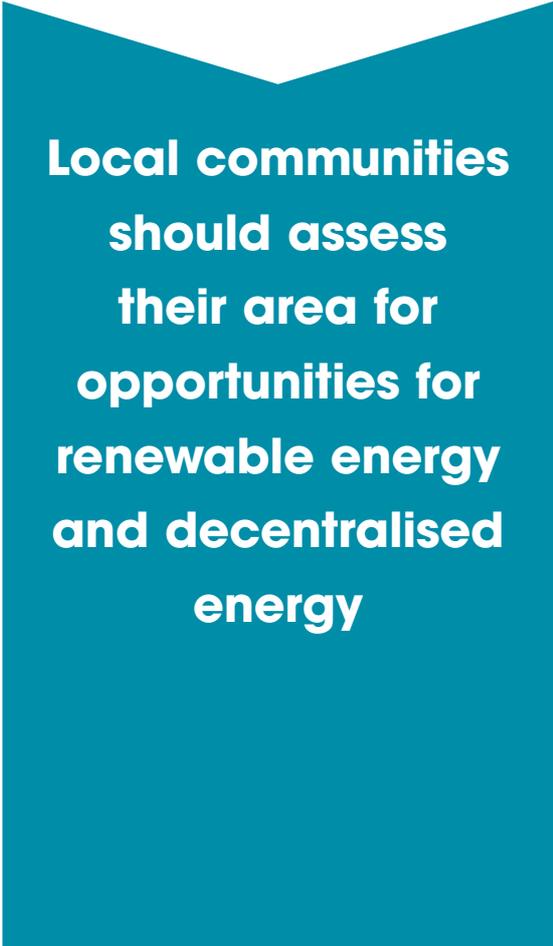
e In preparing the evidence base for plan-making, consideration should be given to joint working across local planning authority boundaries and between tiers (in two-tier areas) to develop assessments for sub-regions, including city-regions and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

f Communities must be fully involved in plan-making from the earliest stage and must be given the information and support to enable effective

participation in decision-making. Neighbourhood plans provide a particular opportunity to work with community and third sector groups already blazing a trail on locally based low-carbon measures.

Low-Carbon Policy 2 (LCP2): Local planning approach for a low-carbon future in a changing climate

- a** Local development plans should support the move to a low-carbon economy and secure low-carbon living in a changing climate. This should be reflected in the vision for how the area, and the places within it, should develop and respond to local challenges and opportunities.



**Local communities
should assess
their area for
opportunities for
renewable energy
and decentralised
energy**

Low-Carbon Policy 3 (LCP3): Local planning approach for renewable and low-carbon energy and associated infrastructure

- a Local planning authorities should:
 - i design their policies to support and not unreasonably restrict renewable and low-carbon energy developments;
 - ii 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:
 - I 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;
 - II require the scale and impact of developments in or affecting nationally recognised designations (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves, National Parks, the Broads, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Heritage Coasts, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Registered Historic Battlefields and internationally recognised designations (Natura 2000 sites) and Registered Parks and Gardens) to be compatible with the purpose of the designation;
 - III are informed by the approach and policies set out in the National Policy Statements for nationally significant energy infrastructure;
 - iii identify the most, and least, environmentally sensitive areas for deployment of different renewable technologies and communicate this information to developers and other stakeholders;

- iv set out how any opportunities for district heating (to supply existing buildings and/or new development) identified through heat mapping will be supported;
- v set out the decentralised energy opportunities that can supply new development proposed for the area; and
- vi support opportunities for community-led renewable and low-carbon energy developments, including the production, processing and storage of bio-energy fuels.

- b Strategic sites which are central to delivering the local planning approach for decentralised energy should be allocated in the Core Strategy.

Low-Carbon Policy 4 (LCP4): Local planning approach for adapting to a changing climate

- a Local development plans should set out how the local authority area will be planned to adapt to the opportunities and impacts arising from changes in the climate. In their local development plans, local planning authorities should therefore:
 - i set out how new development should be planned to avoid significant vulnerability to impacts arising from changes in the climate;
 - ii ensure that when new development is brought forward in areas with significant vulnerability to impacts arising from changes in the climate, risks can be 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 should be provided by setting standards for water usage in new development (any proposed

Local planning authorities should set out how new development should be planned to avoid significant vulnerability to impacts arising from changes in the climate

standard should comply with LCP8 and LCP10);

- iii* bring forward adaptation options for existing development in areas with significant vulnerability to impacts likely to arise from changes in the climate;
- iv* pay particular attention to vulnerable groups, as different impacts (and options to manage impacts) will affect parts of the community differently; and
- v* 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, and local access to shady outdoor space.

Low-Carbon Policy 5 (LCP5): Local planning approach for selecting sites for new development

- a** 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* the extent to which existing or planned opportunities for decentralised energy could contribute to the energy supply of new development on the site;
 - ii* the potential for new development on the site to contribute heat demand where a heat network exists or could be provided;
 - iii* 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 trips to service it;
 - iv* whether development of the site would result in the loss of a significant carbon sink;

- v* whether developing the site would provide opportunities to help the existing community 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;
 - vi* the effect of developing the site on the capacity of biodiversity to adapt to likely changes in the climate; and
 - vii* whether developing the site is appropriate, having regard to increases in risk resulting from changes in the climate to known physical and environmental elements such as sea level rises, flooding, stability and extremes of weather.
- b** Where sites perform poorly against any of the criteria in LCP5a, they should not be allocated or identified for new development unless:
 - i* there are proposals in the local plans which would improve their performance; and/or
 - ii* their performance would be improved by, for example, limiting development on the site to particular uses and/or changing density.

Low-Carbon Policy 6 (LCP6): Local planning approach to setting requirements for using decentralised energy in new development

- a Local requirements for decentralised energy should be set out in a Development Plan Document (DPD) and should be derived from an assessment of local opportunities in line with LCP1. Local requirements for decentralised energy should:
 - i relate to identified development areas or specific sites;
 - ii be 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 Local requirements should be consistent with national policy on allowable solutions set out in support of the zero-carbon policy.
- c 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 be designed to be able to connect in future. In such instances, and in allocating land for development, local planning authorities should set out how the proposed development would be expected to contribute to the decentralised energy supply system.
- d If a local requirement is set out as a target for the use of decentralised energy in new development the target should be expressed as:
 - i the percentage reduction in CO₂ (carbon dioxide) emissions to be achieved – in doing so, local planning authorities should set out

- ii how the target relates to standards for CO₂ emissions set by the Building Regulations; or
- ii an amount of expected energy generation expressed in KWh (kilowatt-hours).

- e Where a local requirement relates to a decentralised energy supply system fuelled by bio-energy, local planning authorities should **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.

Low-Carbon Policy 7 (LCP7): Local planning approach to setting authority-wide targets for using decentralised energy in new development

- a The progressively demanding standards for CO₂ 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. At the local level, it is recommended that any target should be set in a DPD and should have met the tests in LCP10.



Brookwood Farm, near Woking – Code for Sustainable Homes Level 5 family housing

Low-Carbon Policy 8 (LCP8): Local planning approach to setting requirements for sustainable buildings

- a Any local requirement for a building’s sustainability should be set out in a DPD and should:

 - i normally relate to a development area or specific sites and not be applicable across a whole local authority area unless there is a clear justification for the requirement;
 - ii 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 *(i)* in the case of electric vehicle charging infrastructure/cabling this is a local requirement set out as recommended in LCP9 or *(iii)* in the case of green roofs this supports a local planning approach to adaptation set out as recommended in LCP4);
 - iii be specified in terms of 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/CO₂ emissions standard and/or water standard in an identified level of the Code.

Low-Carbon Policy 9 (LCP9): Local planning approach for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles

- a Local planning authorities should prioritise walking, cycling and public transport. In this context they should then support the take-up of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles and, in particular, encourage new developments with parking facilities to:

 - i be designed to provide opportunities for charging such vehicles;
 - ii include cabling for charging infrastructure;
 - iii provide charging infrastructure; and
 - iv encourage the use of car-clubs, in particular for such vehicles.
- b Any local requirement relating to electric and plug-in vehicles, including for cabling or charging infrastructure, should be set out in a DPD. In bringing forward a local requirement, local planning authorities should be able to demonstrate that it satisfies the tests in LCP10.

Low-Carbon Policy 10 (LCP10): Testing local planning requirements

- A local requirement relating to decentralised energy, a building’s sustainability, or electric vehicle charging infrastructure is only likely to be acceptable where the local planning authority can demonstrate that it:
 - i* would not make new development unviable having regard to the overall costs of bringing sites to the market, including the costs of any necessary supporting infrastructure;
 - ii* is, in the case of housing development, consistent with securing the expected supply and pace of housing development, and does not inhibit the provision of affordable housing; and
 - iii* will be implemented and monitored without duplication of applicable rating or assessment systems.

**Local planning
authorities should
only require
information
proportionate
to the scale of
the proposed
development**

Model development management policies

Low-Carbon Policy 11 (LCP11): General approach

- Local planning authorities should:
 - i* ensure that their approach complements building control and other regulatory regimes and avoids duplication;
 - ii* only require information from applicants which is proportionate to the scale of the proposed development and its impacts and is consistent with the need to demonstrate conformity with the development plan;
 - iii* not require specific and stand-alone assessments of new development where the requisite information can be provided through:
 - I a Design and Access Statement;
 - II a national rating system such as for the Code for Sustainable Homes; or
 - III any Environmental Impact Assessment or other regulatory requirement.

Low-Carbon Policy 12 (LCP12): Designing for a low-carbon future in a changing climate

- 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.

- b** In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect proposed new development to:
 - i* be designed to contribute to achieving national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by:
 - I using landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to reduce likely energy consumption;
 - II using the layout, density and mix of development to support identified opportunities for decentralised energy;
 - III 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;
 - IV 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;
 - ii* 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;
 - iii* 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;
 - iv* support sustainable waste management by providing space for recycling and composting;
 - v* increase the proportion of trips in the local area made by sustainable modes, in particular by active travel modes, by:
 - I giving comparative advantages to sustainable travel, such as by placing cycle parking closer to the main entrance than car parking (other than disabled parking);
 - II implementing travel plans, unless the scale of the development is small, so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
 - III providing for safe and attractive walking and cycling opportunities, including secure cycle parking and, where appropriate, showers and changing facilities;
 - IV 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;
 - vi* be designed to avoid adding to the vulnerability of existing or other proposed development to impacts arising from changes in the climate; and
 - vii* (if the site has not been allocated for development in a DPD) reflect the site selection criteria set out in LCP5a.
- c** Local planning authorities should 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 in LCP12b. In determining planning applications for major development, great weight should be given to compliance with the criteria. Where a proposal for major development fails to meet one or more of the criteria, the application should 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.
- d** Local planning authorities should support innovation which secures well-designed, sustainable buildings. Some features which are essential for securing a low- or zero-carbon

**Local planning
authorities should
give significant
weight to the wider
benefits of
renewable or low-
carbon energy
projects whatever
their scale**

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 should 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.

**Low-Carbon Policy 13 (LCP13):
Renewable and low-carbon
energy generation**

- 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 policies in this guide.
- b In determining planning applications for the development of renewable or low-carbon energy, and associated infrastructure, existing Government policy and regulations state that local planning authorities should:
 - 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 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, 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 where the proposed development is for a renewable energy technology included in the draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure, or associated infrastructure, expect applicants 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.

Low-Carbon Policy 14 (LCP14): Safeguarding renewable and low-carbon energy supplies

- a In determining planning applications, planning authorities should 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.
- b Where proposed development would prejudice renewable or low-carbon energy supply, consideration should be given as to how the proposed development could be amended to make it acceptable. Where this is not achievable, planning permission should be refused.

conclusion

The current age of austerity creates big challenges for the future of all our communities. But dealing with climate change is not a luxury: it is an absolute necessity. While communities can benefit from decentralised energy directly, they can also build a resilient economic future by anticipating and responding to those climate changes which are now inevitable. While the opportunities are clear, so too are the risks. 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.

Communities that ignore the challenge will find the cost of impacts and of insurance rising sharply, threatening their economic and social fabric

practice guidance

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

- BRE <http://www.bre.co.uk>
- Carbon Trust <http://www.carbontrust.co.uk>
- Centre for Sustainable Energy <http://www.cse.org.uk>
- Combined Heat and Power Association <http://www.chpa.co.uk>
- Department for Communities and Local Government <http://www.communities.gov.uk>
- Department of Energy and Climate Change <http://www.decc.gov.uk>
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs <http://www2.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://skills.homesandcommunities.co.uk/
planning-and-climate-change](http://skills.homesandcommunities.co.uk/planning-and-climate-change)
- 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>
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds <http://www.rspb.org.uk>
- Royal Town Planning Institute <http://www.rtpi.org.uk>
- South West Regional 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:

- Action for Market Towns
- Addison & Associates
- AECB, the Sustainable Building Association
- AECOM
- BioRegional
- Birmingham City Council
- Butterfly Conservation
- Campaign for Better Transport
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Combined Heat and Power Association
- The Co-operative
- Council for British Archaeology
- Friends of the Earth
- GRaBS project*
- Grasslands Trust
- Instinctively Green Ltd
- Landscape Institute
- Roger Lawes
- LDA Design
- London Borough of Islington
- London Borough of Sutton
- Marks Barfield Architects
- National Housing Federation
- National Trust
- Hugh Roberts
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Royal Town Planning Institute
- Rutland Group
- Scott Wilson
- Chris Shepley CBE
- Sheppard Robson
- Sustainable Works
- Sustrans
- Thameswey Group
- Chris Tivey Associates
- Town and Country Planning Association
- Urban Roots
- URBED Ltd
- UK Green Building Council
- White arkitekter AB
- John Zetter

* Green and Blue Space Adaptation for Urban Areas and Eco Towns (GRaBS) Project – co-financed by the European Union European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and made possible by the INTERREG IVC Programme

acknowledgements

The Planning and Climate Change Coalition is very grateful to the following bodies for providing financial support for the production of this report:

- Friends of the Earth
- Landscape Institute
- National Trust
- Royal Town Planning Institute
- Rutland Group

Planning for Climate Change Guidance and Model Policies for Local Authorities
Published by the Town and Country Planning Association for the Planning and Climate Change Coalition
November 2010

Printed with vegetable-based inks on chlorine-free paper from sustainably managed sources by RAPSiderweb Ltd, Oldham



Town and Country Planning Association
17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AS

+44 (0)20 7930 8903 tcpa@tcpa.org.uk www.tcpa.org.uk