

Our Zero Carbon Stockport

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Meetings of the Development Plan Working Party are being scheduled to take place each month up until April 2022. Each meeting will be introduced to different sections of the emerging draft Stockport Local Plan.
- 1.2 This report details what is currently the third topic-based policy chapter of the draft plan, titled "Our Zero Carbon Stockport."
- 1.3 The working title of this chapter has recently been changed (from "Our Net Zero Stockport"). It is suggested that in delivering the Council's Climate Action Now (CAN) Strategy there is a need to move away from taking a net approach to carbon management. There is a concern that a net approach, where carbon emissions are still allowed but must be off-set by measures to absorb equivalent (or greater) quantities, risks perpetuating fossil fuel dependency, thereby reducing the incentive for and imperative of investment in non-carbon based alternatives. Whilst the policies outlined in the draft plan already focus principally on delivering low or zero carbon technologies in the first instance, rather than a net approach where the main focus is on off-setting, the language and terminology used in the plan could help further this point and so has been amended accordingly. Discussions are ongoing with the Council's Head of Climate Action to ensure that the Local Plan plays its full, and significant, role in delivering the CAN agenda.
- 1.4 Stockport continues to lead the way in achieving zero carbon emissions, reflecting the Greater Manchester Net Zero by 2038 target. At the time it was prepared and adopted, the borough's current development plan (the Core Strategy¹) was considered ground-breaking for its approach to carbon management and climate change adaptation. Our Climate Action Now Strategy and action plan² commits the Council to addressing the climate emergency and the Council's planning decisions need to play an even greater key role in delivering that commitment. The draft Local Plan sets out that the Council will continue to expect and support developers to make the changes needed to shift to an inclusive wealth approach to achieving zero carbon, where environmental and social costs are considered alongside project costs.
- 1.5 Sustainable design and construction is an approach which, if applied at the earliest concept stages of a project, can result in cost savings overall. Recognised environmental and social design standards can help to structure development proposals that achieve zero carbon, biodiversity net gain, climate change adaptation, sustainable drainage and transport, whilst delivering affordable, age friendly houses and buildings alongside other social benefits. This also helps to streamline the planning process by ensuring sustainable development which further reduces the costs of projects. The policies in this chapter of the plan address sustainable design and construction together with approaches to zero carbon, updating and furthering the focus on this set out in the current plan (the Core Strategy).
- 1.6 The policies in this chapter will allow the Council to manage development so that it supports or contributes to achieving all Stockport Local Plan Objectives but, in

¹ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/development-plan>

² See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/can-climate-strategy-stockport/can-council-can>

particular, revised objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 9 (see report titled 'Strategic Policies', on this agenda).

2. OUTLINE OF "OUR ZERO CARBON STOCKPORT"

2.1 The policies in this chapter are intended to:

- i. address the climate and ecological crises through requirement and promotion of sustainable design and construction techniques to enable zero carbon and net gain;
- ii. drive a change in considering financial viability of schemes to reflect social and natural capital within project finances;
- iii. require consideration of zero carbon heat networks on certain scales of development including futureproofing smaller scale development to connect later;
- iv. establish net zero carbon targets for new development including Passivhaus and BREEAM requirements for residential and non-residential development;
- v. promote and support renewable energy projects including for communities;
- vi. capture the opportunity to deliver around 1,500 housing retrofits annually through householder applications by requiring / promoting energy improvements to existing dwellings; and
- vii. ensure that energy, heating and cooling needs achieve net zero carbon by 2038.

2.2 A copy of the working draft chapter "Our Zero Carbon Stockport" is set out as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. STAKEHOLDER INPUT

3.1 Members will recall that the Council meeting on 15th July 2021 considered a report providing an update on the Stockport Local Plan³. That meeting resolved, amongst other things:

1. That the refreshed approach to developing a Local Plan for Stockport, including the principles set out in an appendix to the report be endorsed; and
2. That the approach set out in the report to engaging with communities across Stockport during the Summer to assist in developing a draft Plan be endorsed and supported.

3.2 The Local Plan key principles engagement phase, undertaken between July and September 2021 with some continued stakeholder feedback up until the present time, has resulted in engagement and information sharing with over 2,000 residents through presentations, meetings, briefings, workshops, sharing information and an online survey.

3.3 This early engagement phase has contributed to our aims by:

- Increasing the understanding of our communities about the Local Plan, why we're doing it, and what it is trying to achieve;
- Creating opportunities for our communities to input to the Local Plan and provide their views on our key principles through an online survey and through group meetings;
- Increasing knowledge amongst our communities about future formal public consultation periods and how they will be able to submit their views. The engagement period has resulted in groups, forums and boards expressing that

³ See <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=93437&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI66943>

they want to be kept informed and asking for the Local Plan team to revisit them during the consultation phase;

- Encouraging a broad range of stakeholders and communities with different experiences to input into the engagement period. This has included reaching into underrepresented communities through the Stockport Homes Roadshow, Planning Aid England workshops, and dissemination of information by key networks such as the Cross Sector Forum and
- Ensuring that all engagement activities are accessible for all and are relevant and proportionate to different groups.

3.4 Most stakeholders are supportive of the 6 key principles set out (see <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/our-key-principles>) including the principle that, through the Local Plan, the Council will "ensure everything we do contributes to Stockport's response and resilience to the Climate Emergency."

4. EVIDENCE

4.1 The policies in the draft Our Zero Carbon Stockport chapter have been informed by monitoring of existing Core Strategy policies and The Energy Study 2020. This updates and replaces a 2009 study which informed the Core Strategy and specifically addresses the evidence required to support a robust policy approach. The study builds on work to address the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in March 2019, as well as the Stockport CAN Strategy. In addition, the study reflects the Greater Manchester Zero Carbon target for 2038, the Greater Manchester 5-Year Environment Plan and Government proposals on Future Buildings Standard. The study includes the following elements:

- Energy demand mapping and feasibility which is, in effect, required by National Planning Policy Framework to inform the Local Plan⁴;
- Grid constraints and mitigation: Informing concerns about energy infrastructure pressures of new development including electric vehicle charging likely demands;
- Future proofing: High level strategic assessment of rapidly changing energy and carbon technologies to keep policy writers up to date on current and likely trends over the next 5 plus years;
- Renewable & Community Energy: Reviewing existing relevant planning policy and opportunities for community led renewable schemes;
- New Development: Review of existing planning policies, national and regional policy implications and recommendations for revised Stockport policies on new development (e.g. examination of potential PassivHaus requirement as a path to zero carbon);
- Economic Assessment: Assessment of costs of low carbon design and build; creation of a cost comparison tool and marketing information to inform how uplift in build costs can be offset in sale / rental value, taking account of reduced running costs from low carbon technologies;

⁴ NPPF paragraph 155 sets out that:

To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:

- a) provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);
- b) consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development; and In line with the objectives and provisions of the Climate Change Act 2008.
- c) identify opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for colocating potential heat customers and suppliers.

- Retrofit Opportunities: Examination of current householder policy, discussion of planning concerns and constraints as well as a review of activities emerging to address the massive domestic retrofit need. To inform recommendations for future planning policy options or actions (subject to outcome of Government's Future Buildings Standard review); and
- Reporting: Preparation of Study Report and materials as evidence to inform policy, necessary supporting actions and the Examination in Public of the Stockport Local Plan.

4.2 The updated study has recently been published on the Council's website at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/environment-and-heritage>

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Member are invited to comment and provide feedback on the draft Our Zero Carbon Stockport policies.

5.2 It is important to note that the draft policies in Appendix 1 are set out purely to enable transparent member deliberation and discussion. No comment is sought at this stage from the public or other interested parties; the time for that will come at the next formal stage of consultation as per the schedule established in the Local Development Scheme (see www.stockport.gov.uk/stockport-local-development-scheme).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

See links to documents given within report and associated footnotes.

Anyone requiring further information should contact Richard Wood on 07800617505 or by email to richard.wood@stockport.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – Working draft "Our Zero Carbon Stockport" Local Plan chapter.

Our Zero Carbon Stockport

We continue to lead the way in achieving zero carbon emissions, reflecting the Greater Manchester Net Zero by 2038 target. Our Climate Action Now Strategy and action plan commits the Council to addressing the climate emergency. Sustainable design and construction offers the most cost effective way to deliver zero carbon. We will support developers to make the seismic changes needed to shift to an inclusive wealth approach to zero carbon, where environmental and social costs are considered alongside project costs. We provide a free design tool that shows clear costs of the technologies needed to achieve zero carbon. In addition free marketing guidance can help developers to market lower running costs, cheaper maintenance and lower insurance costs. This offsets a reasonable uplift in sale or rental value of properties whilst highlighting that no further disruptive retrofit will be required. Electric vehicle charging capacity also needs to be taken account of in design as the UK moves to an electric vehicle approach by 2030. We will co-ordinate low and no cost training on achieving zero carbon, supporting our development sector at all scales to develop the skills to move us towards Net Zero 2038.

Sustainable design and construction is an approach which, if applied at the earliest concept stages of a project, can result in cost savings overall. Recognised environmental and social design standards can help to structure design that achieves zero carbon, biodiversity net gain, climate change adaptation, sustainable drainage and transport, whilst delivering affordable, age friendly houses and buildings alongside other social benefits. This helps to streamline the planning process by ensuring sustainable development which further reduces the costs of projects. The policies in this section address sustainable design and construction together with low and zero carbon approaches.

These policies will allow the Council to manage development so that, in particular, it supports or contributes to achieving all **Error! Reference source not found.** but particularly 1, 7, 11, 12 and 13.

[REQUIRES UPDATE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PLAN WORKING PARTY FEEDBACK]

Zero Carbon 1: Sustainable Design and Construction

1. Stockport Council seeks to address the climate and ecological crises by ensuring developments aim for zero carbon and provide climate change adaptation. Stockport council is committed to a 100% reduction in total carbon emissions produced in the Borough by 2038 from 1990 levels to limit climate change. It is therefore crucial that design and construction of sites limits carbon emissions from new development wherever possible and delivers appropriate energy improvements to existing buildings taking account of the inclusive wealth approach to economic considerations. Regard should also be had to minimising the gap between the designed and as built energy performance of new buildings.
2. Climate change adaptation can include design of places and buildings that offer both shading from extreme weather and management of rainwater runoff through appropriate native landscaping and sustainable drainage. The council expects all applications to address relevant policies on flood water management, sustainable drainage, biodiversity net gain and sustainable transport as part of sustainable design and construction activities.
3. When a site is planned or a building is constructed, the accessibility of its location, orientation of buildings, density and mix of uses, as well as its detailed design [including demand and capacity for electric vehicle charging] and the mechanical services and materials chosen can all have a major impact on carbon emissions. The council will require all schemes to consider sustainable development principles from the start of the design process and reflect these in the Design and Access Statement and other relevant documents. Preference will be given to

developments that demonstrate greater use of recycled materials and materials with low embodied carbon.

4. Where a recognised building standard is being used, this should be used to structure application documents to highlight sustainable design and construction benefits and constraints. The council encourages use of recognised environmental and social design standards, including but not limited to:
 - a) Building for a Healthy Life
 - b) Passivhaus
 - c) Home Quality Mark
 - d) BREEAM
 - e) CEEQUAL
 - f) Lifetime Homes
 - g) M4(2) of Building Regulations
5. Sites proposing departure from health relevant policies identified in council planning guidance on design, will be required to submit a Basic Sustainability Checklist as a minimum to justify departure from policies and to identify opportunities to mitigate that proposed departure.
6. In all cases, major developments of ten or more dwellings or non residential sites of 1,000 square metres or more will be required to submit the Detailed Sustainability Checklist.
7. Developments in Stockport will be judged as quality developments where they deliver zero carbon, biodiversity net gain, ecological connectivity, sustainable drainage, active travel and adapt to climate change through appropriate Green Infrastructure.

Explanation

This policy sets a framework for achieving the various requirements to ensure a proposal delivers truly sustainable development. By framing applications against recognised environmental and social design standards, developers signal their commitment to delivering high quality sustainable development.

Zero Carbon 2: Designing Zero Carbon Heat Networks

1. In order to ensure zero carbon development, all new development must submit evidence of considering carbon emissions through site layout, building orientation and positioning, alongside evidence of building design that addresses energy demand and supply. The submission of an energy statement is required, in line with the Council's guidance on such documents, for all types of development where new or refurbished buildings are proposed (except householder applications - see Zero Carbon 5). Proposals for development other than buildings should provide a carbon statement to show how the scheme will address carbon emissions.
2. Development should initially consider how heat networks can contribute to reducing carbon emissions on the site. The Council will consider the use of Local Development Orders to facilitate district heating networks. The Council recognises that different development types will have different opportunities, therefore, subject to technical feasibility and financial viability:
 - a) all developments should seek to make use of available low / zero carbon and waste heat;
 - b) development of less than 100 dwellings or non-residential developments less than 10,000m² should connect to any available heat networks. Where a heat network does not yet exist, applicants should install a network where it is technically feasible and financially viable to do so. As a minimum applicants should install heating and cooling equipment

- that is capable of connection to a wider network at a later date and which could serve (or could be easily adapted to serve) that wider network if and when required;
- c) developments of 100 dwellings or more, or non-residential developments of 10,000m² or more should install a heat network to serve the site. The Council's ambition is to develop strategic area wide networks and so the design and layout of site-wide networks should be such as to enable future expansion into surrounding communities. Developments may be required to provide land, buildings and/or equipment for an energy centre to serve existing or new properties;
 - d) new development should be designed to maximise the opportunities to accommodate a heat network solution, considering density, mix of use, layout and phasing; and
 - e) where investment or development is being undertaken into or adjacent to a public building, full consideration should be given to the potential role that the public building can have in providing an anchor load within a decentralised energy network.
3. Where applicants can demonstrate that achieving the requirements of this policy is technically infeasible and / or financially unviable on a particular site, they should address other options for reducing carbon emissions from heating, cooling and energy demand for the scheme.
- [Targets: SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT BUILDING REGS FINALISATION]
4. In addition all new development must achieve a minimum 31% reduction in emissions beyond current Part L building regulations.
- [or]
5. In addition all new development must demonstrate how the scheme will go beyond updated Part L regulations. [Subject to local authority permissions being preserved as set out in finalised Future Buildings Standard]
6. From 2025 there will be a further increase to a requirement of a minimum 80% reduction in carbon emissions in line with the Future Buildings Standard in 2025.
7. All new development will be zero-carbon from 2028.

Explanation

The requirement for an energy statement in policy helps clarify the proposed zero carbon approaches to design for energy, heating and cooling. This document can clearly layout how site wide considerations plus possible heat networks and / or zero carbon energy options can achieve sustainable development. This identifies any site specific constraints and highlights the best opportunities for zero carbon on a site.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) explicitly highlights the role of local planning authorities in:

- Promoting low-carbon and renewable energy and heat;
- Setting policy that will “expect new developments to take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption”; and
- Identifying opportunities for developments to draw their energy supply from decentralised, renewable, or low carbon energy supply systems.

Zero Carbon 3: Zero Carbon Technologies and Targets

1. In addition to the requirements of Policy Zero Carbon 2, developments should aim for zero carbon through the following relevant targets.

2. Residential Development

In addition to the carbon reduction requirements through district heating provision outlined in Policy Zero Carbon 2, all new residential development must address the following relevant targets and include site specific evidence on how the target will be addressed via an energy statement:

- A minimum 20% proportion of PassivHaus units are required, where feasible and viable, for all residential developments of 5 or more dwellings. This delivers a minimum of 1 unit on sites triggering this target.

3. Non-Residential Development

All new non-residential development must address the following target and include evidence on how the target will be addressed via an energy statement.

- All non-residential development should include low / zero carbon technologies that will cover a minimum 20% of energy, heating / cooling demand.

4. All Development

Any proposed use of direct electric heating, rather than heat pumps or connection to a low carbon heat network, will require the case to be made for very special circumstances.

5. Evidence of consideration of energy and heat storage systems as well as smart energy systems and any energy demand for electric vehicle charging should be included in all energy statements.
6. The Council will consider the use of Local Development Orders to help facilitate heat network delivery.

Explanation

The council has established ambitious carbon reduction targets in line with evidence and the ambitions set out in Stockport's Climate Action Now Strategy and achieving Greater Manchester's net zero target by 2038. However other levels of ambition have been considered.

The following documents and targets lay out the need to address the climate crisis and commit to reducing carbon emissions from new development. This reflects the advice in Stockport's updated Stockport Energy Study 2020:

- a) Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis [6th Assessment Report by IPCC]
- b) Paris Agreement 2015 to limit global temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Centigrade
- c) UK Climate Change Committee 6th Carbon Budget 2020
- d) Government net zero target by 2050 / 78% reduction over 1990 levels by 2035
- e) Greater Manchester Zero Carbon Target 2038
- f) Stockport Council Climate Emergency declared 2019
- g) Stockport Climate Action Now 2020 / SCATTER Borough carbon budget
- h) One Stockport Borough Plan ambition: A climate friendly and sustainable Borough
- i) Avoiding the need to retrofit (current retrofit target for Stockport of 6,100 homes / year for ten years)

Zero Carbon 4: Renewable Energy Development

1. The Council recognises the important role that community owned energy schemes play in reducing carbon emissions, increasing installed low/zero carbon and renewable energy capacity, as well as providing social and economic benefits to communities.

2. While the Council will consider favourably all applications for standalone or onsite low carbon and renewable energy, the Stockport Local Plan energy mapping [\[INSERT LINK\]](#) identifies a number of principal opportunities:
 - a) Wind and hydro energy generation sites deliverable by community groups and/or commercial developers; and
 - b) New building developments that are in locations that have potential for a wind or hydro energy scheme as identified on the mapping, should consider wind/hydro energy as their first option for meeting the requirements of Policies Zero Carbon 2 and Zero Carbon 3. Areas with technically feasible wind energy (average wind speed of 4+ metres/second have been identified to encourage applications for large and small turbines, particularly but not exclusively:
 - i. from community groups, co-operatives and individuals;
 - ii. related to new domestic and non-domestic developments;
 - iii. large and mixed-use developments in appropriate locations should consider installing a wind turbine or turbines to serve the site's energy needs.
3. All wind energy applications must take account of the requirements for consideration of wind proposals in Stockport's Landscape Character Assessment 2018 which provides information on sensitivity of Landscape Character Areas to wind schemes.
4. To support the flexibility required to achieve Zero Carbon by 2038, other low and zero carbon technologies can also be considered for suitable community energy opportunities as well as potential retrofit energy efficiency schemes.
5. All applications must address the benefits of flexibility of electricity supply for all renewable energy applications. In addition, local benefits of renewable schemes must be included in application documents (e.g. carbon savings, security of supply, reduced fuel costs, community benefit schemes, reinvestment of revenues into local schemes / areas).

Explanation

The Greater Manchester Community Energy Action Plan promises that at least 10% of the Greater Manchester Renewable Energy target will come from community energy. Identification of potential sites undertaken through Stockport Council's Energy Study 2020 is an important step in enabling community renewable projects.

This policy allows the Council to deliver local targets and set realistic targets for local renewable energy generation whilst assessing the earning potential of assets. Returns from community energy projects are often invested into other community projects, as is the case with Stockport Hydro. Such schemes offer reductions in electricity costs for community facilities, individuals and businesses. With the abolishment of the feed-in tariff, community energy projects are significantly harder to finance so supportive planning policy can help to provide certainty to schemes seeking finance.

Zero Carbon 5: Housing Retrofit

1. Planning applications for changes to existing domestic dwellings are required, where possible and practical, to undertake reasonable improvements to the energy performance of the existing dwelling. This is in addition to the requirements under Part L of the Building Regulations for the changes for which planning permission is sought. Improvements should include, but not be restricted to: loft and cavity wall insulation, draught-proofing, improved heating controls and low carbon heating and hot water provision.
2. Applicants will be asked to complete a checklist (see Appendix 'Retrofit Checklist') [TO BE INSERTED] to identify which measures are appropriate to their home. The total cost of the

measures should be no more than 10% of the total build cost and payback in less than 7 years. The Council supports homeowners in delivering carbon reduction improvements by identifying financial support initiatives both regionally and nationally. The Council also supports homeowners through signposting retrofit programmes and schemes that could assist with a whole house retrofit.

Explanation

The 5-Year Environment Plan for Greater Manchester sets specific and ambitious targets for retrofitting the current building stock, recognising the importance of retrofitting for achieving reduction of carbon emissions: “Retrofitting of existing residential properties is the most significant issue in achieving our aims for carbon neutrality.” The plan sets a target of deep retrofitting 61,000 homes per year in Greater Manchester, which would equate to 6,100 retrofits a year in Stockport as one of ten districts in the GM city region.

Stockport has the third largest population of the ten Greater Manchester districts and correspondingly is the third largest emitter in terms of domestic carbon emissions, behind Manchester and Wigan. In addition, Stockport’s domestic emissions are the highest source of emissions in the Borough at 39%.

Methods to address domestic emissions need to be a mixture of energy-efficiency measures and a shift to low carbon heating. Stockport Energy Study 2020 summarises the housing stock condition as well as levels and types of retrofit recommended to achieve the carbon emissions reductions required.

The Council receives on average around 1,500 householder planning applications per year. If the policy is successful in addressing whole house retrofit for that number of homes, then it would make a considerable contribution to the task of retrofitting more than 6,000 houses per year for ten years in Stockport to achieve the Greater Manchester zero carbon 2038 target.

Stockport has implemented a version of this policy since 2011 and the energy checklist has been established as a requirement with householder applicant agents across the Borough and beyond. This policy approach aims to use an important lever to bring about energy improvements in owner-occupied dwellings.
