Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

3 March 2021

**Executive Response to the Report of the
Global Warming & Climate Emergency Task Group - Part Two**

Purpose of the report

1. To present the Executive response to the second report of the Global Warming & Climate Emergency Task Group from the:

    - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts and Tourism, Housing, and Communities
    - Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property

Background

2. The Task Group's second report was formally endorsed by the Environment Select Committee on 13 January 2021.

3. The Environment Select Committee resolved to refer the Task Group's findings and recommendations to the relevant parties for a response.

Executive response to the Task Group's recommendations

4. The Executive has considered the second set of recommendations from the Task Group that relate to the Planning workstream.

5. Like the response to the first set of recommendations reported to Environment Select Committee on 13 January, the Executive is not able to pre-empt key policies and strategies which are in development such as the Local Plan Review, Local Transport Plan 4 and the Climate Strategy. However, the direction of travel for all of these is clear and in line with the recommendations.

6. The consultation on the Local Plan Review will end on 9 March 2021 and the outcome from the consultation will be particularly important in helping the Council shape and develop policies that address climate change. The main issues arising from the consultation are due to be reported to Cabinet on 1 June 2021. Through the Local Plan we are committed to reviewing and, where necessary, updating the policies in the existing Wiltshire Core Strategy to continue to make a positive contribution to managing greenhouse gas emissions and help shape communities that are resilient to the predicted

impacts of climate change such as, higher temperatures and increased flood risk.

7. The specific consultation document that has been prepared, '[Addressing climate change and biodiversity net gain through the Local Plan - raising the ambition](#)', alongside the '[Emerging spatial strategy](#)', seeks to engage the local community and other stakeholders on Local Plan policy development over the period to 2036. A central part of the Local Plan will be the spatial strategy and delivery of a sustainable distribution of new growth that promotes self-containment and reduces the need to travel.

8. Section 4 of the climate change document, summarises the findings of a review of existing Wiltshire planning policy relating to climate change mitigation and adaption that has been undertaken and identifies gaps when assessed against national planning policy and more recent Local Plans that had been found sound. These findings have resulted in five inter-related policy themes, around which the consultation is structured:

    - Tackling flood risk and water management
    - Enhancing green/blue infrastructure and biodiversity
    - Delivering sustainable design and construction
    - Encouraging sustainable, renewable energy generation and management
    - Promoting sustainable transport, active travel and improving air quality

9. The aim of the consultation is to test the Council's thinking and further develop evidence to inform policies in the draft Plan that is programmed for publication towards the end of 2021.

10. At that point the draft Plan will be subject to a formal stage of consultation before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination by an independent Inspector. The Inspector will consider where the plan is sound against the requirements of paragraph 35 of the [National Planning Policy Framework](#). In considering the recommendations, particularly those that relate to policy development, the Executive is mindful of the need to ensure that there is a sound basis on which policies are prepared and not to pre-empt the outcome of the consultation that is currently underway. While the recommendations are commendable and draw on practice from elsewhere, they will need to be assessed alongside the consultation outcome and the development of proportionate evidence necessary to underpin a sound Plan.

11. This response has been considered with the above in mind and is provided in the order of the recommendations as presented by the Task Group by topic area or with a number of recommendations grouped together.

That the Council, in its capacity as Local Planning Authority:

1. **Adopts an outcome focused approach to meeting the Council's 2030 net zero carbon ambition through the Local Plan Review, considering this cross-cutting objective across all policy areas.**

2. **Places substantial and significant weight on climate change mitigation as a core objective alongside delivering a sufficient supply of homes for local needs, building a strong, future-proofed local economy, climate change adaptation and environmental protection.**

3. **Takes a joined-up approach so that Local Plan policies are well aligned and mutually supportive in achieving net zero carbon by 2030.**

4. **Develops an updated evidence base, including in relation to viability, that enhances the ability of Local Plan policies to ensure that new development, including renewable energy, plays a key role in delivering net zero carbon.**

5. **Establishes the county's baseline emissions, to be able to test its policies in terms of their carbon reduction potential.**

6. **Sets a target/ trajectory for achieving net zero carbon emissions in the county by 2030, so that all planning policies can be assessed against and contribute to this target.**

7. **Engages with industry in understanding what is achievable and deliverable, so that developers recognise that it is incumbent on them to address climate change issues.**

Executive response to recommendations 1 to 7:

12.   Policies for tackling climate change (adaptation and resilience) and achieving net biodiversity gain will be outcome focused. Clear performance and monitoring targets will need to be developed in order to test the effectiveness of planning policies that are geared towards contributing to the Council's carbon neutral ambition. These will need to be based on evidence as discussed below.

13.   The Local Plan alone cannot achieve carbon neutrality and the Council's current consultation on the Local Plan Review is designed to seek the views of the local community and other stakeholders about what might be possible. This includes engagement with the development industry as suggested in recommendation 7. The outcome of the consultation will inform the need for further engagement on such matters ahead of the draft Local Plan being published.

14.   The Wiltshire Core Strategy has 6 strategic objectives, strategic objective 2 is 'addressing climate change' and sits alongside other objectives including strategic objective 3 'providing everyone with access to a decent, affordable home', strategic objective 1 'delivering a thriving economy' and strategic

objective 5 'protecting and enhancing the natural, historic and built environment'. The strategic objectives are interrelated and all important to achieve sustainable development in Wiltshire. This is in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); which requires three overarching interdependent objectives - 'economic', 'social' and 'environmental' - to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (paragraph 8, NPPF, February 2019).

15.   The policies of the Local Plan will be prepared against these objectives and, also to be mutually supportive of those set within other plans and strategies, including: Local Transport Plan 4 and the Climate Strategy.

16.   The Local Plan will be developed based on evidence, including a proportionate assessment of emissions. Thus far, the evidence has been led by the data provided by the SCATTER modelling, which is referred to in the consultation document. However, we will develop a shared evidence base to ensure consistency between the Local Plan and Climate Strategy, for a which discussion document has now been prepared.

17.   Introducing targets for delivering net zero carbon emissions into the Local Plan needs to be based on evidence and tested through consultation. We are committed to developing our evidence including commissioning technical studies on renewable energy potential, sustainable construction and viability to maximise the Local Plan's potential.

18.   While land-use planning is an important factor in reducing carbon emissions, it is not the only mechanism for effecting change. The Council's Climate Strategy, the new Local Transport Plan, revisions to the Air Quality Strategy and so forth will contribute towards achieving the Council's ambitions.

That the Council in its capacity as Local Planning Authority:

8. **Prioritises mitigation of climate change through spatial planning and at the earliest stages of the Local Plan preparation/ Local Plan Review process, ensuring that proposed new development:**
   - **is allocated and designed around the principle of presumed access on foot, by bike and by public transport, to minimise the need to travel, particularly by private car;**
   - **is located where local employment opportunities exist, to avoid creating large commuter extensions;**
   - **maximises opportunities for local renewable energy and heat generation;**
   - **maximises opportunities for walking, cycling (including e-bikes and scooters) and ultra-low emission public transport, incorporating high quality sustainable transport infrastructure and electric vehicle charging as a matter of course;**
   - **maximises opportunities for community led carbon reduction initiatives.**

Executive response to recommendation 8:

19. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does not seek to prioritise mitigation measures over adaptation as it's clear that both elements of tackling the effects of climate change form the basis of the legal duty set out in s19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 (as amended).

20. That said, many of the measures set out in this recommendation feature in the policies of the Wiltshire Core Strategy already and continue to be relevant considerations informing policy development and decision making in line with the NPPF. For example, paragraph 102 of the NPPF includes the requirement that "*Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that [inter alia] opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued*". In addition, paragraph 103 includes that "*Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes*".

9. **Assesses and makes transparent the carbon impact of alternative strategic site options (including transport emissions, land-based emissions or sequestration potential lost) at the earliest stages of the plan-making process and gives substantial weight to strategic sites generating the least carbon over their lifecycle.**

Executive response to recommendation 9:

21. Whilst we haven't established a mechanism for measuring the carbon impact of alternative site options, the emerging strategy does seek to ensure that site options are reasonably related to the Principal Settlements and Market Towns in much the same manner as the Wiltshire Core Strategy did.

22. Moreover, the process for selecting and appraising draft site options has been led by a methodology that seeks to maximise self-containment and minimise the need to travel. The methodology will be modified where necessary to respond to consultation responses.

10. **Attributes significant weight in its strategy and policies to the protection and/ or restoration of natural assets that are critical to climate change mitigation (as well as having benefits for adaptation and the natural environment), including:**
    - **the best and most versatile agricultural land (refer to Agricultural Land Classification (England)) and land associated with local food production;**
    - **existing woodland and land suitable for woodland creation;**
    - **soils in relation to their stored carbon and the potential emissions and loss of carbon storage as a result of development.**

Executive response to recommendation 10:

23. The Council's emerging Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy has informed the policy themes in the consultation document and will go on to support the development of the Local Plan and wider corporate initiatives.

24. National planning policy already seeks to protect best and most versatile soils as well as key habitats such as ancient woodland and hedgerows.

25. In addition to the above, the measures set out in the Environment Bill will, once enacted, provide for a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain on all development sites. Policies of the Local Plan will need to make allowance for these measures and ensure they are delivered.

11. **Promotes the delivery of new homes on brownfield sites wherever possible, including innovating to achieve higher densities on such sites, so as avoid the permanent loss of agricultural land and associated carbon emissions.**

12. **Promotes the delivery of employment land in advance of new housing development, particularly where existing employment opportunities are limited, and housing development would generate the need for commuting by car.**

13. **Assesses and maps connectivity and accessibility to proposed infrastructure and facilities (e.g. schools, surgeries, shops) in order to optimise sustainable travel within proposed development sites.**

14. **Promotes a sustainable pattern of development in the county using a framework such as the BREEAM Communities International Standard to improve, measure and certify the sustainability of large-scale development plans as part of the master-planning process, before embarking on procurement, detailed design and construction.**

Executive response to recommendations 11 to 14:

26. It is agreed that Local Plan policies should promote the delivery of new homes on brownfield sites and that densities should be as high as possible, appropriate to their local context, without compromising good standards of design.

27. Setting policies that seek to deliver employment opportunities before any new housing is built will not necessarily reduce commuting patterns and carbon emissions. Where people live and work is a personal choice, but what is important is that the Local Plan delivers the right sort of jobs in the right locations in a timely and effective manner linked to the delivery of new homes.

28. The Local Plan is promoting a sustainable pattern of development and uses Sustainability Appraisal to assess how much and where growth should take place. Through the development of policy, we will be able to consider the identification of standards that can be applied to development proposals to

achieve higher standards of design and sustainability to promote energy efficiency. Any standards will need to be capable of implementation.

15. Requires information on climate change mitigation for development proposals at the planning application stage, including documents that must be submitted before an application can proceed.

Executive response to recommendation 15:

29.   Through the review of the Local Plan, policies will be shaped to address both mitigation and adaptation. Any information requirements to support planning proposals to be submitted at planning application stage will be determined and justified as part of the policy formation process.

16. Identifies suitable areas for different types of renewable energy generation and its supporting infrastructure, as part of the Local Plan (e.g. standalone sites and as part of the strategic sites allocation process), including a call for sites.

Executive response to recommendation 16:

30.   We intend to commission consultants to provide local evidence to identify and appraise potential sites for a variety of renewable energy infrastructure. Policies will then be formulated to help deliver renewable energy schemes.

17. Proactively works with the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) (the future Distribution System Operator) in taking a strategic approach to Wiltshire's decarbonisation and the decentralisation of its energy system, supporting the rollout of Smart Local Energy Systems and smart grids.

Executive response to recommendation 17:

31.   The Council intends to continue to work proactively with Scottish and Southern Energy Networks, Western Power Distribution, Wales and Waste Utilities and Southern Gas Networks as the Distribution Network Operators that relate to Wiltshire to help inform their business plans.

18. Takes a strategic approach to the roll out of electric vehicle charging points across the county, ensuring that all new development is future proofed for the cessation of the sale of diesel and petrol vehicles by 2035 (likely to be brought forward to 2032 or 2030).

Executive response to recommendation 18:

32.   It is acknowledged that the council needs to develop a strategy that establishes a coordinated approach to the provision of Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure. Such a strategy will form part of the forthcoming review of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) and will be guided by the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Transport Decarbonisation Plan due in Spring 2021. This will set out an implementation plan of how to put the UK's entire transport system on a pathway to deliver the necessary greenhouse gas emissions

reduction. Plans devised at a local level will have to rely significantly on the key steer given by the DfT's plan.

33. The council is also waiting for the publication of the results of the DfT's / Office for Low Emission Vehicles 'Electric vehicle chargepoints in residential and non-residential buildings' consultation. If this is not forthcoming (including by other means), we will consider including a policy in the Local Plan to support the delivery of EV charge points in new developments.

34. In the meantime, the council has engaged the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and commercial providers to identify possible short-term opportunities to deliver infrastructure and EV provision for its internal fleet. The EST is also providing independent advice on the emerging fleet strategy and aligning outcomes with the council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral in the next 10 years. Beyond that, the council is exploring opportunities for government funding to provide additional electric charging infrastructure in a number of its car parks. The viability of installing renewable energy at council car parks for charging electric vehicles is being investigated so as to establish the most cost-effective way of delivery.

19. **Pursues greater parity between policy expectations for safe and convenient vehicular access, and policy expectations for safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle access, and plans infrastructure provision requirements accordingly, with large developments incorporating dedicated cycle routes connecting with the wider network, proportionate with the scale of development and level of trip generation.**

   Executive response to recommendation 19:

35. Core Policy 61 in the Wiltshire Core Strategy includes that consideration must be given to the needs of all transport users according to the following hierarchy:

   a. Visually impaired and other disabled people
   b. Pedestrians
   c. Cyclists
   d. Public transport
   e. Goods vehicles
   f. Powered two-wheelers
   g. Private cars

36. As part of the Local Plan Review, we will consider the need to adopt a firmer approach to the implementation of the policy.

20. **Sets a high-level target of at least 17% tree coverage across the county and develops an associated strategy to deliver it (see section on re-afforestation below).**

   Executive response to recommendation 20:

37.   See response to re-afforestation section below.

21. **Sets up and administers a carbon offset fund as part of requiring net zero carbon development (see section on net zero carbon development below), whereby payments are ring-fenced to implement projects that deliver carbon reductions within the county, monitored and reported on annually, ensuring that the fund demonstrates clear additionality (i.e. carbon emission reductions which would not otherwise have happened).**

   Executive response to recommendation 21:

38.   See section on net zero carbon development below.

22. **Provides practical advice and guidance for those who may need direction in addressing climate change in relation to proposed development and the retrofit of historic buildings.**

   Executive response to recommendation 22:

39.   Historic England already provides guidance on retrofitting historic buildings.

23. **Increases the institutional capability/ capacity of the Council's spatial planning and development management teams to develop and enforce policies to achieve successful (carbon reduction) outcomes.**

   Executive response to recommendation 23:

40.   It is recognised that the capability of the Council will need to be reviewed to ensure that any future policy is implementable and delivers the outcomes expected. In addition, as recognised below, continued support for training and development of both officers and members will also be important.

Planning Policy - Net zero carbon development (operational carbon)

That the council's new Local Plan and associated policies require the following:

1. **All development be net zero-carbon based upon the UK Green Building Council's Net Zero Carbon Buildings Framework Definition, be mandatory for all development from the commencement of the adoption of the Local Plan 2016-2036, following current Local Plan Review.**

2. **All development achieves an annual operational net zero carbon emissions balance based on metered data by:**
   a) **prioritising energy efficiency through the building fabric;**
   b) **reducing the remaining energy demand through on-site renewable energy sources (e.g. rooftop solar PV and/ or air or ground source heat pumps) (the preferred next option), and;**
   c) **compensating for the residual carbon emissions via a carbon offset fund, into which developers are required to pay a value agreed at the application stage, to deliver carbon savings which would not otherwise have been made (ensuring additionality).**

3. **All development to meet a minimum 35% improvement on Part L (2013) of the Building Regulations through energy efficiency measures (e.g. enhanced insulation, glazing, airtightness and high efficiency heating and hot water heat recovery), and to reach 100% reduction in its remaining operational emissions through on-site renewable energy generation, and the remainder through a carbon offset fund (as described above).**

4. **For all development proposals to demonstrate that sustainable design principles and standards are integral to their proposals and that these have been incorporated from the beginning of the design process, including:**
   - **incorporating passive heating and cooling where feasible;**
   - **making the most of natural systems both within and around buildings;**
   - **incorporating community renewable or low carbon heat generation systems;**
   - **avoiding internal overheating and contributing to the urban heat island effect through landscaping and shade planting, site layout and building design.**

   Executive response to recommendations 1 to 4:

41.   It is agreed that Local Plan policies should be designed to promote sustainable, high quality design and construction, and that new planning permissions assessed following the adoption of the new Local Plan would be required to comply with these. Viability assessment undertaken as part of the Local Plan preparation process will allow for viability of new policy requirements to be tested ensuring their deliverability.

42.   As recognised in the consultation document there are several definitions of net zero carbon development including the UK Green Building Council's definition, which will all need to be considered in setting a specific definition for the Local Plan.

43.   Recommendations 1 to 4 are in effect detailed policy proposals, which appear to be based on current and emerging policies developed in relation to the London Plan and Stroud District Council's Local Plan. While these provide good case studies and challenge to what could be possible in Wiltshire, the outcome of the current consultation and findings from technical studies that reflect the Wiltshire context will also need to be taken into consideration and inform the basis for policies in the Wiltshire Local Plan.

That the council's new Local Plan and associated policies require the following:

5. For all large scale residential and non-residential development proposals to demonstrate how they will achieve net zero carbon through an Energy Statement, to be submitted with the Planning Application, including Part L calculations as evidence, requiring methodologies such as TM54 for predicting in-operation energy rather than SAP or SBEM.

6. For all large scale residential and non-residential development proposals to calculate whole lifecycle carbon emissions using a nationally recognised Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Assessment method and demonstrate how life-cycle carbon emissions will be minimised.

7. For all large scale residential and non-residential development proposals to demonstrate how they will minimise carbon emissions from any other part of the development, including infrastructure, plant or equipment, that is not covered by the above policies.

8. For the minimum standards listed above to be upgraded as soon as legislation allows, to deliver ultra-high levels of energy efficiency consistent with a space heat demand of 15-20 kWh/m2/year.

Executive response to recommendations 5 to 8:

44.   Recommendations 5 to 7 place requirements on 'large scale development' to provide evidence to demonstrate how planning applications have responded to the policy requirements proposed, including preparation of an Energy Statement and Whole Life Carbon Assessment. As set out in paragraph 29, it will be important to first understand what the appropriate policies are for Wiltshire based on local evidence, and then to consider how best to ensure they can be assessed and implemented. This can include requirements for supporting information to be submitted as part of planning applications to help justify proposals and assess compliance with policies. To effectively implement any such policies requirements, it is possible that further guidance would be needed to support implementation. Terms such as 'large scale'

would need to be defined to ensure policy implementation is effective. Technical studies including viability assessments can help inform whether thresholds need to be introduced for policy requirements.

45.   Further detailed investigation would also be needed to test the practicalities of bringing in such measures so that the Council has the capability to implement these effectively.

That the Council:

9. Re-instates a revised Core Policy 41 (in line with the above and removing any reference to the Code for Sustainable Homes), as soon as possible to prevent further carbon intensive development sites being built out.

Executive response to recommendation 9:

46.   The Council is due to publish its draft Local Plan by the end of the year, which will include the outcome of the review of Core Policy 41 'Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy' and the development of new evidence to underpin it. It is agreed that it will be appropriate to remove reference to the 'Code for Sustainable Homes', which was withdrawn by Government in favour of bringing in standards via Building Regulations.

<u>Planning Policy – Sustainable (low carbon) construction</u>

That the council's new Local Plan policies require:

1. **All development proposals to demonstrate the integration of sustainable (low carbon) construction principles (including minimisation of embedded and construction phase carbon emissions) have been incorporated from the beginning of the design process, including via:**
    *   **procurement of materials, including emissions associated with their manufacture and transport;**
    *   **on-site construction management, including how carbon emissions will be minimised throughout the construction phase;**
    *   **efficient use of natural resources (including water) during the construction phase;**
    *   **waste minimisation (e.g. through off-site pre-fabrication) and maximisation of reuse and recycling of materials.**

2. **Large scale residential and non-residential development proposals to calculate emissions for embedded and construction phase emissions and explain how they have been minimised.**

3. **Large scale development proposals to evidence their proposals are achieving the Local Plan's policy requirements through one of the BREEAM New Construction or other acceptable relevant standards.**

Executive response to recommendations 1 to 3:

47.   The current consultation seeks people's views on the points outlined in these recommendations. See paragraphs 28, 44 and 45 also.

That the Council:

4. **Ensures that its Sustainable (low carbon) Construction policy is supported, and not undermined, by other Local Plan polices increasing emissions in other areas as a result of decisions made during the design and construction phase.**

5. **Regularly reviews and appropriately upgrades its Sustainable (low carbon) Construction policy requirements to reflect the increasing proportion of life cycle emissions resulting from the pre-construction phase of development.**

    Executive response to recommendations 4 and 5:

48.   It is agreed that policies in the Local Plan will need to be as mutually supportive as possible in addressing the climate change strategic objective and that in developing policies thought will need to be given to the influence policies can have on the design and construction phase of development. However, as explained in paragraph 14 above, the plan will need to balance economic, social and environmental objectives.

49.   Also, it is agreed that policies once adopted should be monitored and kept under review.

Planning Policy - Energy and heating

That the Council's new Local Plan and associated policies:

1. **Include an energy hierarchy, defining the council's preferred heating options for new development. This should:**
    - **promote the use of combined heat and power (CHP), and/or combined cooling, heat and power (CCHP) and district heating where appropriate;**
    - **require development to incorporate infrastructure for district heating and to connect to existing systems where and when these are available;**
    - **support the use of ground, and water source heat pumps where district heating is unfeasible or these technologies form part of a lower carbon solution;**
    - **require development to consider a Decentralised Energy Network is a way of distributing the heat generated from a given clean energy source across multiple buildings or multiple sites;**
    - **exclude the individual gas boilers and resistive heating within new developments as legitimate approaches within the scope of the policy.**

2. **Requires a thermal master planning approach that assesses efficiency/opportunity issues such as mix of uses, anchor loads, density and heat load profiles to maximise opportunities for the use of district heating or decentralised energy networks for large scale development.**

3. **Requires all development applications to submit Energy Statements to demonstrate how they are delivering clean, smart, sustainable development, in line with Wiltshire Council's net zero carbon ambitions.**

Executive response to recommendations 1 to 3:

50.   Recommendations 1 to 3 set out detailed policy wording and requirements. As set out above, the outcome of the current consultation and findings from technical studies that reflect the Wiltshire context will need to be taken into consideration and inform the basis for policies in the Wiltshire Local Plan. This in turn will inform how development should be approached and whether there is a threshold for what scale of development policy should apply to.

51.   It is noted that recommendation 3 seeks Energy Statements for all developments, whereas the recommendation above (see paragraph 44), requires such statements for 'large scale residential and non-residential development'.

Planning Policy - Retrofitting

That the Council's new Local Plan and associated policies:

1. **Include an obligation to improve energy efficiency (and demonstration thereof) in relation to construction or modification of buildings for which planning permission is required.**

2. **To require that improvements meet appropriate BREEAM, Passivhaus EnerFit for other recognised national standards to make these requirements quantifiable.**

3. **Encourages retrofitting of energy efficiency and renewable energy generation technology in Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, including liaising with Historic England to explore how to appropriately adapt heritage buildings to reduce carbon emissions.**

4. **Provides locally relevant planning guidance for homeowners and businesses regarding retrofitting of historic or listed buildings.**

5. **Prioritises carbon reduction through retrofitting at whole street or neighbourhood scales to reduce costs, improve viability and support coordinated programmes of improvement.**

6. **Requires large scale development proposals to demonstrate that opportunities for retention and retrofitting of existing buildings within the site have included in the scheme.**

Executive response to recommendations 1 to 6:

52.   Retrofitting is considered in the consultation document in relation to both sustainable design and construction and sustainable energy, and specific questions asked. However, while improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings is supported there is a limitation in that the Local Plan can only influence such measures, if proposals require planning permission or prior approval.

53.   The recommendations build on current Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy, which encourage retrofitting of 'Existing Buildings', including at whole street/neighbourhood levels and the use of sensitive approaches where proposals relate to the historic environment.

54.   What is reasonable will require consideration of the outcome of the consultation and be informed by technical studies including viability assessment. The need for additional guidance to support policy implementation can be looked at as part of this process.

That the Council:

7. Provides training to its Conservation Officers to enable them to:
- **understand of the relevance of the Climate Emergency to their work;**
- **support carbon saving measures in historic buildings where possible; and**
- **take a constructive, supportive approach with homeowners, setting out what might be possible.**

Executive respond to recommendation 7:

55.   It will be important for relevant Council officers and members to undertake appropriate training to support implementation of Local Plan policies and associated initiatives.

Planning Policy - Transport

That the Council's new Local Plan and associated policies:

1. **Promote a sustainable pattern of development that minimises the need to travel by promoting a modal shift to sustainable transport and reduced dependence on the private car.**

2. **In allocating sites or permitting development, attribute significant weight to minimising the quantity of carbon emissions arising from travel associated with accessing employment and community facilities (schools, health centres, shops), associated with the site's location and layout.**

3. **Require all developments include community facilities (schools, health centres, shops) that are accessible by public transport, bike or on foot.**

4. **Require all development proposals to integrate the provision of properly dedicated (rather than shared use) walking, cycling and electric scooter infrastructure (paths) and its connection to existing walking and cycling routes linking with employment and community facilities (schools, health centres, shops) or onward travel (e.g. bus and train stations).**

5. **Require segregated cycle routes for large scale development proposals be designed in accordance with Local Transport Note 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design, (DfT) July 2020.**

6. **Require all development proposals to integrate the provision of appropriate secure and covered cycle parking facilities of a specified minimum standard, including provision of showers, changing facilities, drying rooms and lockers for cyclists for non-residential proposals.**

7. **Require development proposals to allocate on-road cycle storage bays (in place of an on-street parking bays) for residents' use, where there is no viable alternative bike parking provision.**

8. **Require at least 30% of cycle parking provision to be of the most accessible type, such as 'Sheffield' stands and 10% of overall provision to be designed and designated for disabled use, plus at least one charge point, and a minimum of 1 per 10 parking spaces, to allow for recharging of electric bikes.**

9. **Require development proposals to consider, and include where appropriate, provision for non-standard bikes, such as cargo bikes, particularly in relation to urban and town centre deliveries.**

10. **Require all development proposals to integrate the provision of infrastructure into the design and layout of the development to enable the charging of electric vehicles such that:**
    - **all individual dwellings with one or more dedicated parking spaces or garages includes infrastructure for electric vehicle charging;**
    - **where off street parking is not provided within a development proposal, the design and layout of the development incorporates infrastructure to enable the on-street charging of electric vehicles;**
    - **for residential development with communal off-street parking provision, at least 50% of spaces have active charging facilities, with passive provision for all remaining parking spaces, ensuring that all spaces can be easily activated with minimal disruption as demand increases;**
    - **for high density or large scale residential/mixed use developments, there is at least one rapid charging point clustered with a fast charging point and dedicated spaces with active charging facilities for use of an electric vehicle car club;**

- **for all non-residential developments providing one or more car parking bays, ducting is installed to enable provision of charging facilities for electric vehicles;**
- **where 10 or more car parking bays are provided, at least 50% of those bays provide active charging facilities for electric vehicles, with passive provision for the remaining bays; and**
- **in non-residential development where provision is made for taxis stopping, the taxi spaces include appropriate active charging facilities.**

Executive response to recommendations 1 to 10:

56.   We agree that the promotion of a sustainable pattern of development that minimises the need to travel as recommended in 1 is a fundamental principle that underpins the Local Plan. This is already enshrined in the approach we are taking to review the Wiltshire Core Strategy and supported by national planning policy as well as existing policies including Core Policy 60, 'Sustainable Transport'. See paragraph 20 above also.

57.   With regard to recommendation 2, therefore the approach taken looks to minimise carbon emissions arising from travel to jobs and community facilities by focusing growth towards Wiltshire's larger settlements - Principal Settlements and Market Towns - where there are better: opportunities to access jobs and services locally; public transport facilities and opportunities to walk or cycle. In considering the merits of different sites accessibility is built into the methodology, and in planning for new growth the need to provide new community facilities as an integral part of development proposals will be considered and planned for where this can be justified. It is unlikely that all developments would be able to include community facilities due to the different scale of development proposals and the fact that community facilities can only be sought where they can be justified by the scale and type of the development concerned (recommendation 3). Nonetheless, where appropriate, residential developments should be planned to be accessible by public transport, bike and foot.

58.   Recommendations 4 to 9 set out detailed requirements for development proposals in relation to: dedicated paths for walking, cycling and electric scooters; and cycle parking facilities including for non-standard bikes. In reviewing the transport policies in the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Cycling Strategy in the Local Transport Plan which includes requirements for cycle parking and associated facilities, consideration will be given to the guidance included in Local Transport Note 1/20 'Cycle Infrastructure Design' (July 2020).

59.   Recommendation 10 sets out a comprehensive policy to provide charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. Such matters will be considered in the review of the Local Transport Plan Car Parking Strategy (referenced in Core Policy 64 'Demand Management', Wiltshire Core Strategy) and the development of a Low Emissions Vehicle Strategy (or similar) that will form

part of the forthcoming development of a fourth Wiltshire Local Transport Plan.

That the Council:

11. **Provides training to key members of its Highways team to enable them to:**
    - **understand of the relevance of the Climate Emergency to their work,**
    - **promote carbon saving measures in transport planning, infrastructure development and highways maintenance; and**
    - **take a collaborative and innovative approach with their spatial planning colleagues about what might be possible to reduce transport emissions in the context of the Local Plan.**

    Executive response to recommendation 11:

60.   See paragraph 55 above. The need to support the continued training and development of all officers is agreed.

Planning Policy - Standalone renewable energy development and grid decarbonisation

That the Council through its Local Plan policies:

1. **Takes a joined-up approach to early investment in developing Wiltshire's renewable energy capacity to meet its commitment to net zero carbon by 2030, including both heat and power and their generation, transmission, storage, local consumption and associated social, economic and environmental benefits.**

2. **Encourages proposals and applications for renewable energy developments, including large-scale freestanding installations, renewable energy storage and improvements to the distribution network that support a decarbonised, distributed grid and smart local energy systems.**

3. **Adopts a strong presumption in favour of proposals for standalone renewable energy and energy storage developments that have:**
   - **considered all site-specific constraints to the satisfaction of the LPA;**
   - **demonstrated effective community and stakeholder engagement from project conception;**
   - **demonstrated additional local social, economic and environmental benefits over the lifetime of the project.**

4. **Places additional weight on the contribution renewable energy projects make towards delivering the council's climate emergency declaration.**

5. **Requires provision of renewable energy generation on large scale development sites, including consideration of smart energy technology being incorporated in new development in support of wider grid**

decarbonisation, as part of an obligation on developers to achieve net zero carbon development.

That the Council:

6. Promotes allocation of sites for renewable energy generation through Neighbourhood Plans.

Executive response to recommendations 1 to 6:

61.   Recommendations 1 to 5 seek to set a positive framework for supporting the delivery of renewable energy across Wiltshire including direct delivery as part of 'large scale' development sites. We are committed to reviewing the existing policy - Core Policy 42 'Standalone Renewable Energy Installations' - which is a supportive policy to develop this further. The consultation asks specific questions about the theme - Sustainable Energy Generation and Management, which will inform this; and together with technical studies enable a positive policy framework to be developed considering the recommendations and national planning policy. This framework can consider the role of neighbourhood plans.

7. Engages with and consults Community Energy groups working in the county in developing relevant Local Plan policies, promoting suitable areas for standalone renewables and on the potential for their involvement in applications that could bring local economic, social and environmental benefits.

8. Engages proactively with Scottish and Southern Energy Network (SSEN) through forward planning, to support the rollout of smart, local energy systems and their transition from Distribution Network Operator (which manages the physical distribution system/ upgrades through engineering works) to Distribution Services Operator (which actively managing the distribution system and electricity demand to support grid distribution and decarbonisation).

Executive response to recommendations 7 and 8:

62.   The Council is engaging directly with community energy groups and it is anticipated they will respond to the current consultations. As set out above, a technical study is being commissioned to understand where standalone renewable energy should be promoted within Wiltshire. In developing policies, we will look to create a positive framework to support community energy projects.

63.   As set out in paragraph 31, the Council intends to continue to work proactively with Scottish and Southern Energy Networks, Western Power Distribution, Wales and Waste Utilities and Southern Gas Networks as the Distribution Network Operators that relate to Wiltshire to help inform their business plans. It is agreed that resilient energy infrastructure that supports clean energy will be critical to underpin Wiltshire's growth.

Planning Policy - Re-afforestation and Tree Planting

That the Council through its Local Plan policies:

1. **Targets at least 17% canopy cover across the county, in line with the Committee on Climate Change recommendations of 17-19% and 30% canopy cover in new developments, with 50% of new trees being large canopy trees such as oak, lime and beech.**

2. **Introduces a protection status for existing woodland which is aligned with the Council's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.**

3. **Does not permit the felling of protected trees, groups of trees or woodland (i.e. irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and veteran trees as per NPPF para 175c, those protected by Tree Preservation Orders, those in internationally, nationally and locally designated sites for nature conservation, and those assessed as important to habitat connectivity and continuity) apart from in wholly exceptional circumstances, in which case replanting will compensate the carbon impact of their removal, with notable, veteran or ancient trees compensated on-site accordance with a recognised methodology such as CAVAT.**

4. **Requires development proposals to conserve and enhance all woodland, trees and hedgerows in line with the mitigation hierarchy and to compensate permitted tree removal and associated carbon impact with plantings on other parts of the site, and/or an offset payment that meets the loss in tonnes of sequestered carbon.**

5. **Requires large scale development proposals to include a carbon storage calculation (showing the difference between the carbon storage capacities of the pre and post development habitat on the site) and to compensate any loss of carbon storage with a carbon offsetting contribution towards natural climate schemes within the local Nature Recovery Network or through a suitable carbon reduction technology.**

6. **Requires damage to trees (e.g. through soil compaction), as assessed by a suitably qualified Tree Officer, to be compensated though replanting on site and/or payment that meets the loss in tonnes of sequestered carbon.**

7. **Requires development proposals that affect trees, hedgerows and woodland to undertake a survey in accordance with British Standard BS 5837:2012 and include a management plan, including calculation of net increase in carbon and how this is compensated on site.**

8. **Requires a minimum buffer of 20 metres between the development and ancient woodland or veteran trees, Root Protection Zones (RPZ) for**

ancient, veteran and notable trees with a radius 15 times the diameter of the tree at breast height or 5m beyond the crown, whichever is greater.

9. **Requires that development proposals highlight other trees that are not currently ancient, veteran or notable, as the future veteran and notable and with appropriate mitigation of the tree populations on site.**

10. **Requires that all new trees, whether replacement, landscaping or additional planting, be ecologically appropriate, sited to maximise their green infrastructure value (for wellbeing, wildlife and water) and, to reduce the risk of spreading disease, sourced and grown in the UK, or from a nursery with acceptable biosecurity practices (e.g. quarantine).**

11. **Encourages the creation and natural regeneration of standalone woodland that is compliant with the EIA regulations, including identifying areas in which the Council would like to see this happen.**

That the Council:

12. **Works with local community groups, landowners and developers to identify suitable land, including a call for sites for the development of commercial and community woodland.**

   Executive response to recommendations 1 to 11:

64. The Council is supportive of increasing tree cover and recognises that planting trees can assist with climate objectives. The Local Plan, however, can only go so far on in its own and will need to be complemented by other strategies. It is influential when considering development proposals.

65. The emerging Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy will inform the review of Local Plan policies and support its implementation; as well as providing a wider corporate strategy. It will sit alongside the Climate Strategy and focus on achieving biodiversity net gain including tree cover and woodlands, as well as other valuable biodiversity habitats and carbon sequestration opportunities. In addition, a community environmental toolkit is in preparation that will support local communities to develop their own projects to improve biodiversity locally.

66. A tree and woodland planting strategy will also be prepared, which will supplement the GBI Strategy and ensure the right trees are planted in the right places. It is these wider initiatives that will collectively deliver substantive improvements to tree cover where it is appropriate, rather than only the Local Plan.

67. The 17% suggested target, also included in recommendation 20 above, is understood to be based on a national target to 2050. Wiltshire currently only has 9% coverage, compared to the national average of 13% and it is considered that achieving a doubling of canopy coverage in a sustained and meaningful way would need to be pursued over a longer term than 2036. This

is because woodlands work best when there are a variety of ages present. In addition, the character of Wiltshire's protected landscapes and ecologically important sites are factors that may influence tree cover.

68.   Recommendations 4 to 10 relate to development proposals and seek, amongst other things, to: preserve and enhance tree cover; compensate for their removal or any damage; identify notable trees for protection; and protect tree roots. Tree and habitat surveys' all form part of current planning practice. The introduction of biodiversity net gain into the planning system will provide additional measures to allow the value of trees to be assessed on a site and to secure greater coverage as part of an overall biodiversity net gain.

Proposal

69.   To note the Executive response to the second Report of the **Global Warming & Climate Emergency Task Group**.

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts and Tourism, Housing, and Communities

Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property

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