

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

DATE OF MEETING:	15 FEBRUARY 2022
TITLE OF REPORT:	ENERGY EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWABLE/LOW CARBON ENERGY GENERATION
Report of:	Head of Place
Cabinet Portfolio:	Place
Key Decision	No
Confidentiality	Non Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To:

- a) consider the implementation of Hart Local Plan Policy NBE9 Design with regards to energy efficient buildings and the use of low carbon/renewable energy technologies; and
- b) inform a discussion on the planning policy issues around proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation, such as solar farms.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members consider the issues raised in the report and provide their views on the draft Technical Advice Note at Appendix A.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In April 2021 the Council declared a Climate Emergency including a commitment to a carbon neutral district by 2040. A range of actions are needed across Hart district to achieve carbon neutrality and planning is one area that can contribute, particularly in terms of new development.
- 3.2 It should be noted however that Hart district contains approximately 45,000 homes. The Local Plan target is to build 423 homes per annum. Therefore, new homes account for less than 1% of the existing stock each year.
- 3.3 The Hart Local Plan (Strategy & Sites) 2032 was adopted in April 2020. The Plan includes two policies that are particularly relevant to this issue:
- Policy NBE9 Design (criteria i and j) which require carbon reduction in new buildings through energy efficiency measures, and the inclusion of renewable or low carbon/ energy technologies where appropriate.
 - Policy NBE10 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation, which is relevant to proposals such as solar farms.

- 3.4 Recent planning applications for solar farms have raised the profile of large-scale renewable and low carbon energy generation within the district. This led to a good debate at Planning Committee about their visual and landscape impacts, and the need to tackle the Climate Emergency.
- 3.5 There is also national legislation, policy and guidance to take into account, and an interplay between planning policy and building regulations. Building regulations are ramping up in terms of carbon reduction from new buildings, and national planning policies on climate change could change with the Planning Act expected this year.
- 3.6 With regards to Building Regulations:
- from June 2022 buildings will need to show a 31% reduction in CO² emissions compared to the current requirements.
 - from 2025 new homes will need to meet the Future Homes Standard (FHS) which will require:
 - 75-80% lower CO² emissions than current standards, and
 - all homes will need to be 'zero carbon ready' becoming zero carbon homes over time as the electricity grid decarbonises, without the need for further costly retrofitting work.

4 MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 With regards to housing and other built development, Policy NBE9 provides a sound basis for negotiating carbon reduction, but on its own is not prescriptive in terms of targets to be achieved for carbon reduction.
- 4.2 Appendix A sets out initial thoughts for a Technical Advice Note to supplement Policy NBE9. The TAN will be used to clarify the Council's expectations regarding energy efficiency and the incorporation of renewable and low carbon technology in new homes and other buildings.
- 4.3 Appendix B discusses Policy NBE10 and some of the issues around renewable and low carbon energy generating proposals.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 This paper does not recommend that any new development plan policies are formulated at this time. It focusses on the implementation of policies NBE9 and NBE10 and proposes a TAN to support Policy NBE9.
- 5.2 However, new policies will need to be formulated at a future date. Cabinet has agreed to undertake a 'review' of the local plan later this year to establish whether the plan needs updating.
- 5.3 Please note, a 'review' is the correct term used in legislation and national policy for the *process of establishing whether the plan needs updating*. It is not the act of the preparing a new plan. A local plan must be 'reviewed' within five years of adoption to establish whether it needs updating.

6 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

- 6.1 Hart Vision 2040 Theme Three: Enhance the environment to live in, work in and enjoy – enhancing our environment through:
- Reducing the impact of climate change by building in sustainability to any new developments, encouraging re-wilding and using new technologies to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	No
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

- 6.2 There are no legal or constitutional issues arising from this report.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 6.3 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Finalising the TAN to support criteria i and j of Policy NBE9 will require officer time.

Risk Management

- 6.4 This is a discussion paper seeking feedback on the issues raised. There is no decision and no risks associated with this paper.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 This paper does not have any implications regarding equalities legislation.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 This paper discusses policies designed to have a positive impact climate change. Publishing a TAN on energy efficiency and renewable energy in new developments will have a positive impact by making clear the Council's expectations on those matters.

9 ACTION

- 9.1 To finalise and publish the Technical Advice Note at Appendix A.

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Appendices

Ref.	Title of Appendix
A	Draft Technical Advice Note on low carbon development
B	Planning policy issues regarding proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation