



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CLIMATE CHANGE,
BIODIVERSITY AND CARBON REDUCTION**

MONDAY, 22 MAY 2023

Report of the Executive Director - Place

**Development and Publication of the Spatial Renewable Energy Study,
Climate Change Planning Guidance Document and an Associated
Assessment Tool, Progress Update**

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform the Committee of progress in the collaborative working relating to the Derbyshire Renewable Energy Spatial Study, Climate Change Planning Guidance and associated assessment tool (metric).

2. Information and Analysis

- 2.1 The Council has a long history of successful collaboration on strategic planning matters, plan and policy making. Local planning authorities (LPAs) are required by law to prepare local plans and, in principle, planning applications for developments that accord with the policies of an adopted local plan should generally be approved.
- 2.2 The Council plays an important role in co-ordinating strategic planning across the County, working with all the LPAs, including Derby City and the Peak District National Park Authority. This role continues and is now more important than ever. At the heart of this is the Council's ability to help make a long-term difference to their areas by helping facilitate 'good growth' in the County and in Derby City, helping ensure low carbon and climate change objectives are met.

- 2.3 Climate change is now the greatest challenge facing society. The scientific evidence of climate change is overwhelming and the global impacts of climate change will be severe. The UK has a statutory commitment to bring greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 with a minimum 78% reduction from 1990 levels by 2035.
- 2.4 LPAs are bound by the requirement in Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Planning Act 2008, for development plan documents (taken as a whole) to include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the LPA's area contributes to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. At a local level, the County needs to play its part in this by improving resilience, reducing emissions and increasing renewable energy generation. Spatial planning plays a central role in the transition to a low-carbon society, by shaping new and existing developments in ways that reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and in the consideration of renewable energy proposals.
- 2.5 This is particularly important as Derbyshire (outside the National Park) continues to be an area of planned growth up to around 2035, as provided by the relevant local development plans under the 2004 Act. These plans provide a good understanding of how this current growth agenda is expected to distribute the delivery of homes, economic development and key infrastructure within Derbyshire over the next 15 years. It is therefore timely for a range of planning policies to be developed that will help Derbyshire meet the necessary carbon reduction targets, but also will be embedded in helping deliver 'good growth' within the County.
- 2.6 The Planning Guidance has been drafted by the officer working group which includes representatives from the majority of Derbyshire LPAs, including Derby City and the Peak District National Park Authority. It addresses current Derbyshire local plan climate change-related policies and considers good practice from across the UK. It also assists in the development of local planning policy at all levels, including neighbourhood plans. However, it does not suggest draft policies, as these are to be made in light of local circumstances and priorities. The document does, though, introduce the idea of a county-wide 'net zero ambition' and identifies a number of climate-related issues or design considerations that should be taken into account in the design and implementation of development proposals and that can be included in development plan policies.
- 2.7 To support the Guidance, an innovative climate change metric has been produced which at planning application stage, quantifies the degree to

which a development contributes to climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience. The metric does not give an indication of tonnes of greenhouse gas saved through reduced emissions but is intended to identify whether or not a number of issues or design considerations have been included in the development design process and whether they have been included for implementation in the final proposal.

- 2.8 Each of the design considerations is weighted in the metric based on its potential to implement carbon savings and contribute to addressing climate change. The metric highlights potential deficiencies in an application, providing the opportunity for both developers and planning officers to consider revisions and therefore assess the degree to which climate change has been considered in the design of a planning proposal. As such, the Guidance and metric are intended as a web-based resource and have been published on the Council's website in the Planning Policy pages.
- 2.9 In addition, there have been presentations to wider officer working groups including the Derbyshire Planning Policy Officer Group (DPPOG), the national Information Planning Advisory Group (IPAG), the Central Local Information Partnership of the Local Government Association (CLIP), Derbyshire Development Management Heads and Derbyshire Heads of Planning groups.
- 2.10 Both the Guidance and metric are now being used in the revision and drafting of new local plans and in the development management process across the County. As a result of publication and presentations to IPAG and CLIP, both the Guidance and metric have also been taken up by authorities outside Derbyshire, including Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Wokingham Borough Council (unitary authority).
- 2.11 In addition, the Council has commissioned the Derbyshire Spatial Energy Study to help understand current energy usage, future usage scenarios and the potential opportunities for the delivery of renewable energy technologies in the County. Derbyshire is an area of high quality, natural and built heritage and these special qualities have been factored into the Study, identifying and mapping constraints to broadly identify the areas which are 'less constrained' for each of the various types of renewable energy generation.
- 2.12 The planning system has a crucial role to play in delivering effective action on climate change. Local plans need to contribute meaningfully towards reducing emissions and improving resilience. The Derbyshire Spatial Energy Study evidence will help LPAs to shape policies to

contribute to the transition to a net zero carbon society. A key element of the Study has been to develop a reproducible methodology to enable comparable studies to be replicated in other local authority areas. This was a condition of the Midlands Net Zero Hub funding support which also contributed to a number of local authority workshops to promote the Study and methodology.

- 2.13 It is important to stress that the Derbyshire Spatial Energy Study is a high-level study seeking to define more or less constrained areas for the various renewable energy technologies and does not mean automatic approval of any scheme. Where an application is made for planning permission for a renewable energy scheme, all relevant matters are required by law to be considered through the planning decision process.
- 2.13 All three elements of the Planning and Climate Change work stream are now published in the Planning pages of the Council's website.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The Study, Guidance and metric do not require formal consultation. They have been developed through engagement with Council officers and planning/climate change officers from Derbyshire's Borough and District Councils, the Peak District National Park Authority and Derby City Council. The Guidance and metric were sent for comment to the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) which co-authored the publication, 'The Climate Crisis: A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change' with the Royal Town Planning Institute; and to the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research (a partnership of universities). Current indications are that both consultees like the approach.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 In developing this collaborative approach, alternative approaches to climate change planning policy were considered. The preferred approach remains to continue working closely with all the Derbyshire LPA partners, which is considered achievable within the Council's planning statutory duties. The study, guidance and metric have been published, withdrawal is considered untenable.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 The Derbyshire Spatial Energy Study, 2022
- 6.2 Climate Change and Planning Guidance, 2023
- 6.3 Climate Change Assessment Tool, 2023
- 6.4 All documents published in the Planning Policy pages of the Council's website.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Implications

8. Recommendation

That the Committee:

- a) Resolves to acknowledge the progress in the collaborative working, relating to the Derbyshire Renewable Energy Spatial Study, and the Climate Change Planning Guidance and associated assessment tool, that is summarised in this report.

9. Reasons for Recommendation

- 9.1 This work is within the Climate Change theme work streams of Vision Derbyshire and the priority actions of the Council' Climate Change Strategy. The Planning Guidance, assessment metric and the Renewable Spatial Energy Study provide important strategic evidence to support development of consistent local planning policies on climate change and contribute to delivery of the Climate Change Strategy. The metric, its ongoing development and refinement, has the potential to make a significant contribution to the development management process across Derbyshire and beyond.

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Implications

Financial

- 1.1 The delivery of the work streams has been shared across the local planning authority (LPA) partners and has no financial implications for the Council. Successful grant submissions were made to the Midlands Energy Hub, Derby and Derbyshire (D2) Energy Board and Business Rate Funding, to raise £50,000 funding, which has enabled the Renewable Energy Study to be delivered.

Legal

- 2.1 The Council, by powers contained in the Local Government Act 2000, Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 and the Localism Act 2011, is empowered to engage with other agencies and stakeholders for helping to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- 2.3 LPAs are bound by the requirement set out in Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended by the Planning Act 2008, for development plan documents (taken as a whole) to include policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the LPA's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

Human Resources

- 3.1 This collaborative working is undertaken as part of core business by Council officers.

Information Technology

- 4.1 None of significance.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 In this respect, children and younger people therefore have greater potential than older generations to benefit directly over their lifetimes from the operation of any development plans and policies that are effective in climate change mitigation, and/or appropriate adaptation. Nevertheless, since older people tend to be more at risk from excessive air temperature and humidity, any appropriate measures for more immediate adaption to periods of very hot weather (such as the record-

braking heat over the UK in July 2022), which may already be less uncommon and /or more intense due to climate change, could be most directly relevant to the most senior age groups.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1 The collaboration with other LPAs supports the Council's ambition to be a net zero organisation by 2032, or sooner, and for the County to be net zero by 2050 and informs the action that needs to be taken to achieve these ambitions.

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

7.1 None.