

Summary of the Current Context

Climate change and sustainability are key issues that cut across the whole of the Core Strategy Review. It is a priority for central Government and legislation and guidance is therefore rapidly changing. In particular, Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (PPS1), new building regulations and mandatory assessments such as the Code for Sustainable Homes, have confirmed the role of local authorities in meeting this new challenge.

The Crawley Borough Core Strategy had originally contained two policies that dealt with sustainable design and construction. However, after the Examination in Public the Inspector removed the policies as they were not considered to be locally specific and did not adequately demonstrate why they were needed.

Since then, the Council has adopted its Corporate Climate Change Strategy with a commitment to becoming a carbon neutral town by 2050. This complements the aspirations of the Local Strategic Partnership in the Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Indication of the Key Issues Relating to Climate Change and Sustainability

- The main issue is to ensure that the Council is clear about what it requires from new development, and why. Any policies should ensure that developers are clear about any additional standards, thresholds and targets and when they apply.
- This Topic Paper will also ensure we can have early input from those that use the planning system about how we can make

area of policy easy to use without restricting innovation and technological developments.

CO2 reductions or renewable targets

- The Core Strategy Review will need to consider energy consumption. At this stage there are two main options. Either the requirements for a reduction in CO2 must be met, or that a set amount of low or zero carbon energy is provided. This will also need to be considered against emerging best practice and standards. We will also need to consider how we provide supporting information to make sure we are clear about what we want and why.

Offsite provision or onsite provision

- A key issue is whether developments should be allowed to offset their CO2 outside of the development boundaries. Options could include renewable energy being produced off site, or contributions being made towards funding a large/wider scheme that will benefit areas outside of the development boundary. This option would need to be supported by clear guidance about when other alternatives to providing on site are allowed.

Borough wide blanket policy or site specific targets

- The policies should also consider whether we have a blanket approach/target for the whole Borough or one that defines special areas that require an even higher target. These areas could be where larger scale growth has been identified or key areas such as the Town Centre and Manor Royal where the density and mix of new development proposals may make such measures feasible and viable. The continuing evidence base will need to qualify which areas could be appropriate and why.

Core Strategy Review blanket wide policy or timed/phased targets

- The policy also needs to consider whether we set a single target across the whole of the plan period to 2026 or if we look at requesting a staged/phased approach with targets getting higher over time. Again, this will be developed in line with the evidence base.

Development wide blanket approach or specific development thresholds

- The Core Strategy Review needs to make clear which types of development need to comply with the new sustainability policies. For instance, a policy could be applied that only relates to residential or commercial development. Alternatively, a policy could be related to floorspace or the number of dwellings. Definitions could be included that make

requirements only for major or significant development, and a definition of such terms will need to be included. The alternative approach is that all development (and this may include extensions or single dwellings) need to meet any climate change targets.

Viability and deliverability

- Any policy will need to ensure that it is easy to understand and can be deliverable in terms of the technological requirements placed upon the development. It must also ensure that it does not make the development unviable. The Borough's sustainability requirements must be met alongside any other planning obligations such as affordable housing and therefore, the evidence base will seek to understand how the Council can assist developers in balancing all obligations.

Indication of the Options for Addressing the Key Issues Outlined Above

The Core Strategy Review policies consider:

CO2 reductions or renewable targets

- Should the policy prescribe that sustainable development means cutting CO2 emissions by a set amount? Or should it look at fixing an amount of energy that should be provided through renewable sources?
- What measures can and should we be taking as a Local Planning Authority?

Offsite provision or onsite provision

- Should we allow the option of paying into an offset fund? Should this be allowed all the time or just in exceptional circumstances? What if it is not technically or feasibly viable on site, or should it all be provided on site?

Borough wide blanket policy or site specific targets

- Is it right and appropriate for Crawley to set higher targets than national guidance?
- Should we have an area based policy that places higher targets in identified areas such as Manor Royal, Town Centre, Three Bridges Corridor, and areas identified for growth, or just have one that treats the whole town the same?

Core Strategy Review blanket wide policy or timed/phased targets

- Should the Council set the same targets across the whole plan period or look at introducing a phased approach like the one for Building Regulations?

Development wide blanket approach or specific development thresholds

- Should we have a blanket wide policy

that asks all development to comply or should we require only some to meet our targets? For example should we only look at residential or only larger developments over 10 dwellings or 1000sqm?

Viability and deliverability

- How can we work and assist developers in dealing with the viability of their schemes? What information do we need to ask for, or provide for them? How can we look at sustainability requirements alongside other planning obligations such as affordable housing?

Indication of the Potential Direction

Planning Policy Statement 25:

Development and Flood Risk

- Sets out that flood risk must be taken into account at all stages of the planning process in order to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.
- Where development in a flood risk area is unavoidable, and justified via the exception test, appropriate flood mitigation measures should be undertaken.
- Development should not increase flood risk elsewhere.

Building Regulations Part L

- Part L of the Building Regulations relates specifically to dwellings. It controls the insulation values of building elements; the allowable area of windows, doors and other openings; air permeability of the structure; the heating efficiency of boilers and the insulation and controls for heating appliances and systems together with hot water storage and lighting efficiency. It also sets requirements for SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) and Carbon Index ratings for dwellings. Further regulations also require the advertising of these ratings.

Code for Sustainable Homes

- The Code for Sustainable Homes sets out standards for sustainable home building practice. Dwellings are given a rating (from Code Level 1 up to Code Level 6) depending upon their performance in nine separate categories. Whilst certain categories are mandatory (e.g. energy and water efficiency) in order to be given a rating, further points are available for meeting the other categories (e.g. Pollution, Ecology) although developers have some choice as to which of these