

Notes by: Northstowe Town Council Councillor Cllr Bros Sabria

TCPA event - Launch of “Report: The Climate Crisis – a guide for local authorities on planning for climate change” 19th October

Launch event of guidance, 3rd version of the guidance (first in 2018), now covering whole of UK (previously only England). Recording <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/planning-for-climate-change>

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=ebf95a2f-490a-43ce-b2d0-73acb9b8b4fd>

Intro messages - perspective

- Key moments since first editions, there is different legal context. But despite new strategies and targets on climate change and emissions it is unclear of whether they will be achieved.
- Net Zero strategy (brand new) mentions key role of planning and sustainable growth.
- Local authorities – many who have declared climate emergencies – must take actions to achieve reduction in emissions and tackle climate change.

Intro to guide

- What underpins the guidance: every aspect of built environment needs to be reconsidered to achieve net zero.
- Impacts of climate change will be severe, planning needs to consider this (relocation, adaptation like cooling, greening of cities, flood management)
- Planning system role and power of planning is key, but it has been underestimated for potential to make all the changes needed for achieving targets and adaptation to climate change.
- Planning needs to work with communities for practical communities
- Governments, local authorities, agencies, communities need to work together
- Theme in the latest version of the guide: local plan strategies need to reflect the Sixth carbon budget (see <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/sixth-carbon-budget/>)
- Adaptation – opportunity of planning is to start now. Longer term strategies. Flood management and scenarios that take this into account needs to be part of planning documentation and strategies.
- There is gap in government guidance on this topic. This is joint shared professional message and it is hoped that officers will follow.

Content of guide

- Highlight what can be achieved by planning, good practices, and experiences on actions on climate change.
- Guidance divided in 6 sections: role of planning, legal aspects, plan making, development management process (adaptation and mitigation), conclusions, further resources.

Key messages of the guide

- a) Climate change to be considered in every policy area and planning decision.**
- b) Choose the option that reduce carbon emissions the most**
- c) Prepare for impacts of climate change – make places resilient**

d) Seek to deliver well designed measures to reduce carbon emissions – and multiple benefits for communities

e) Climate justice – most vulnerable communities will be most affected

Speakers – Panels

Baroness

Key challenges with NET zero come with transport, buildings and infrastructure – Planning is key!

Guide also addresses adaptation - how to build resilient communities, will be necessary even if 1.5 increase target is reached (and no more). Every decade is going to be the hottest on record from now on. 10 principles of adaptation are addressed in the guide, but there is not enough mention of water efficiency (overheating and flooding mentioned a lot already). Particularly important for Cambridgeshire.

Environment Agency

Flood and coastal risk management: statutory planning consultee role on flood risk aspect. 1/3 of applications do not have proper flood risk assessments. But 97% of applications are decided in line with EA advice. But too many against EA advice!

Strategy published: need to start planning and adapting unavoidable climate change impacts. Broader range of solutions – place making, sustainable building.

Nature based solutions: integrated solutions, use power of nature to achieve net zero gain. E.g. natural flood management (advice and funding from EA available). It also provides much broader benefits, quality of life, etc.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/use-nature-based-solutions-to-reduce-flooding-in-your-area>

Discussion and final remarks

Where are the teeth? How can local authorities push back poor applications? This is only guidance, and local authorities do not have power to implement this. Particularly in England. Guide works within existing powers.

Many local authorities have declared climate emergency, but little change was implemented. General problem. Supplementary Planning Document are helpful, as well as partial reviews.

Local plans must have a policy mitigation and adaptation – it is a legal requirement by the Climate Act. Local plans need to be Carbon Budget.

Development management – every decision counts. Climate change needs to be reflected.

National model design code provides tools, restated in net zero strategy. There are tools available even if powers and government action as well as funding is lacking.

All houses in new developments should be passive, but language to be used need to be clear and evidence based. Houses should have insulations, ventilations, and water efficiency standards.