

Climate change

It is now accepted that the world's climate is changing. It is everybody's responsibility to make sure we all do as much as possible to protect the environment and reduce our contribution to climate change. We must protect future generations from the consequences of our actions. Redditch Borough Council is already committed to taking action against climate change by signing the Nottingham Declaration in 2006 and by being the first local authority in the UK to have a housing development assessed against the Code for Sustainable Homes. The Code for Sustainable Homes is a national standard which assesses the environmental performance of all new build homes and addresses issues including water conservation, biodiversity and energy-efficiency. The Code has 6 categories of sustainability, with Level 6 being the highest.

What did Issues and Options ask?

There were three climate change related issues presented in the Issues and Options document. The first of these asked how sensitive environments could be protected whilst at the same time making sure that the technology associated with renewable energy is compatible with its environment. The second issue asked how much renewable energy should be provided as part of new developments and the last issue asked what the required standards of new development should be.

What you told us

You support the idea of ensuring that all new developments are built to high standards and that any renewable energy produced on-site must not compromise environmental quality. You also told us that the standard request rate for a proportion of renewables to be provided on a site should be the same as that requested in the WMRSS Preferred Option (currently 10%). With regards to the standards to which all development should meet, you preferred to request Level 4 or above of the Code for Sustainable Homes in all new housing and at least a 'very-good' BREEAM rating for non-residential developments.

What the Sustainability Appraisal suggests

In relation to renewable energy and environmental quality, the SA suggests that the most sustainable approach would be for any applicants to demonstrate how their on-site renewable energy production does not compromise environmental quality, so it suggests that your preferred option is sustainable. When considering the proportion of renewable energy appropriate on a site, the SA suggests that the most sustainable approach would be to request the standard of renewable

energy that is being sought regionally (currently 10%) so again this indicates that your preferred approach is sustainable. With regard to the standards of new development to be requested the SA suggests that the most suitable approach should be in line with the WMRSS. This approach states that Redditch Borough Council should be requesting the standard that is being sought regionally (Option 2) and Option 4 to 'require all new non-residential developments to achieve at least a 'very good' BREEAM rating (a recognised independent assessment of the environmental performance of buildings)'. Both of these approaches can be merged to form one preferred approach in the Preferred Draft Core Strategy.

The following draft policy is recommended as the most appropriate after considering all alternatives as part of the Sustainability Appraisal process and following consideration of the Evidence Base.

Combating Climate Change

- Policy X** To achieve sustainability, new developments must have regard to the need to climate-proof. Proposals must be designed and constructed to the highest possible environmental standards in order to ensure long-term viability in adapting to climate change and to work towards the achievement of carbon neutral developments. Therefore the following standards must be met:
- i. new residential development must meet the current regional standards contained within the Code for Sustainable Homes;**
 - ii. offices and other non-domestic buildings should aim for 10% below the target emission rate of the current Building Regulations by 2016;**
 - iii. the production of renewable energy should meet at least 10% of the development's residual energy demand (this applies to all new medium and large scale development (greater than 5 residential units or 1,000 square meters for non residential developments);**
 - iv. proposals for medium and large-scale development (greater than 5 residential units or 1,000 square metres for non-residential developments) should be accompanied by a sustainability statement demonstrating that at least the 'good' standards, and wherever possible 'best practice' standards, as set out in the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist for Development, are achieved for each category in the Checklist;**
 - v. the energy efficiency of the development has been**

maximised through its siting and orientation, through the adoption of energy conservation measures, including natural ventilation and lighting; and

- vi. All development must protect, conserve, manage and enhance natural and built heritage assets; in particular schemes involving the production of renewable energy should enhance, link and extend natural habitats so that opportunities for species migration are not precluded.**

Development generating energy from renewable resources i.e. large scale renewable energy projects must ensure that nationally designated sites are not compromised. Such projects will only be considered favourable following a thorough assessment of their environmental, social and economic effects.

Reasoned Justification

This policy provides a framework to ensure new development has regard for the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change. One mechanism to achieve this is through promoting and encouraging renewable and low-carbon energy production. Maximising the potential for decentralised energy systems such as combined heat and power and community heating systems based on renewable and low-carbon energy is one approach to providing the required renewable energy. Opportunities to generate electricity and create and store heat through the use of solar, wind, Combined Heat and Power (CHP), fuel cells or other means is encouraged.

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy, Phase Two Revision Preferred Option (December 2007) Policy SR3 'Sustainable Design and Construction (D)' states that all new medium and large scale development (greater than 10 residential units or 1,000 square meters) should incorporate renewable or low carbon energy equipment to meet at least 10% of the development's residual energy demand, and that Local Authorities may use lower thresholds for the size of developments. Due to the large number of small sites Redditch Borough is likely to accommodate a justified threshold for Redditch is 5 dwellings.

As well as renewable energy production, standards have been set which all new developments proposals must meet. As part of these standards, where appropriate residential dwellings delivered between 2008 and 2012 must meet the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) level 3 as a minimum; those delivered between 2013 and 2015 must meet CSH level 4 as a minimum; and those

delivered from 2016 must meet CSH level 6 as a minimum (zero carbon). This is in accordance with the standards required in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Preferred Option Phase Two Revision (December 2007) Policy SR3 'Sustainable Design and Construction' for clarity these requirements are set out in the table below.

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision Preferred Option (December 2007) Policy SR3 'Sustainable Design and Construction (A)' states that all planning applications for medium and large scale development (greater than 10 residential units or 1,000 square meters for non-residential developments) should be accompanied by a sustainability statement. This statement should demonstrate that at least the 'good' standards, and wherever possible 'best practice' standards, as set out in the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist for Development, are achieved for each category. Due to the large amount of small sites Redditch Borough is likely to accommodate, a justified threshold for Redditch is 5 dwellings.

New development should seek, as a priority, to reduce their demand for energy by maximising the efficiency of the development. Renewable energy systems should then be used to supply 10% of the energy demand remaining (the residual energy demand).

The Sustainability Checklist for the West Midlands is an online tool that identifies a range of different economic, social and environmental sustainability issues covered in National Guidance and the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. The tool enables users to assess to what extent a development site proposal will deliver on the different aspects of sustainability. Applicants are encouraged to use this tool to consider the sustainability of their proposal. The tool can be found at <http://www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk/>.

Natural ventilation is one way of ensuring the efficiency of a building; it means the process of supplying and removing air through an indoor space by natural means.

The standards of new development (as at September 2008)

		As of 1 st May 2008	Later requirements
All Residential housing developments	CforSH (Feb. 2008)	Mandatory rating against Code – can be nil certificate	Code Level 3 by 2010 Code level 4 by 2013 Code level 6 by 2016
	WMRSS	meet the CABE 'Building for life' 'Good' standard	
	WMRSS	Water conservation standards in Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.	
	WMRSS	25% of the total minerals used derives from recycled and reused content.	
Residential housing developments 10 units (or 1,000 square metres) or more	WMRSS	Sustainability statement accompanying planning application which shows how the development has reached the 'good' or 'best practice' standard set out in the West Midlands Sustainability Checklist.	
	WMRSS	Meet the 'very good' standard of CABE 'Building for life'	
	WMRSS	Incorporate renewable or low carbon energy equipment to meet at least 10% of the developments residual energy demands	
All new Government-funded homes		Code level 3	

	WMRSS	25% of the total minerals used derives from recycled and reused content.	
Non-residential development	WMRSS		10% below the target emission rate of the current Building Regulations by 2016.
	WMRSS	25% of the total minerals used derives from recycled and reused content.	
	WMRSS	Offices to meet BREEAM offices scale with regard to water efficiency and other buildings achieve efficiency savings of at least 25%	