Policy LP* – Climate Change Policy

Introduction

1.1 Climate change has been at the forefront of international concerns in recent years. Climate change refers to the systematic change in weather patterns and average temperatures on a large and long term scale (Met Office: 2019). These have mainly changed due to anthropogenic emissions (i.e. arising from human activity) since pre-industrial times (1850's). The scientific data which has been published has shown that the impacts of climate change can be alarming if stabilisation is not achieved. In the UK we are facing warmer temperatures and a wetter climate; the changing temperatures saw the hottest day ever recorded in the UK in July 2019 with a temperature of 38.7C (Met Office: 2019). The seven wettest years on record in the UK have also occurred since 1998, the top two being in 2014 and 2016 (The National Adaptation Programme: 2018).

1.2 Anthropogenic emissions are estimated to have caused around 1C of global warming since pre-industrial levels, and could increase a further 1.5C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate (*IPCC Special Report: Global Warming of 1.5 Celsius*: 2018). The IPCC report estimates different data sets which could happen if global warming increased to 1.5C instead of 2C. It breaks down environmental, economic and social factors which can be affected by this change including: health risks, economic growth and water scarcity.

1.3 The IPCC and the Paris Agreement (2015) aim to strengthen the response of global stakeholders in dealing with climate change and wants to encourage limiting the increase in global temperature to 1.5C rather than 2C to realistically avoid the worst extremes this change could bring. By encouraging a global participatory approach at local, regional and national levels, stakeholders can bring positive attempts to reduce the local risks we may face by improving mitigation strategies which are required to limit our carbon footprint.

1.4 The Climate Change Act (2008) amended the UK legislation in June 2019 to become carbon neutral by the year 2050. This is expected to be achieved by reducing the greenhouse gas emissions already present in our atmosphere by 100% (previously 80%) from the 1990 baseline levels to 2050. This national reduction

trajectory shows how serious the issue has become and requires all stakeholders, including the borough council, to fully engage and understand the importance of climate change and how we will alleviate and adjust to the changes which are already apparent.

1.5 The NPPF emphasises the important role the planning system must take in supporting the movement towards a low carbon economy. Plans must respond in an appropriate manner, with reference to their local environment, putting mitigation and adaptation measures in place to cope with the risks of coastal change, flood risk and rising temperatures. One example of change has been shown in *the Flood risk assessments: climate change allowances guidance (Environment Agency: 2019)*, whereby the Environment Agency expects that sea level rise will increase the rate of coastal erosion. For the East of England the cumulative rise from 1990 to 2115 is expected to be 1.21m; just one issue that we must acknowledge for future development in West Norfolk. This is built into the strategic flood risk assessment which supports the Local Plan Review.

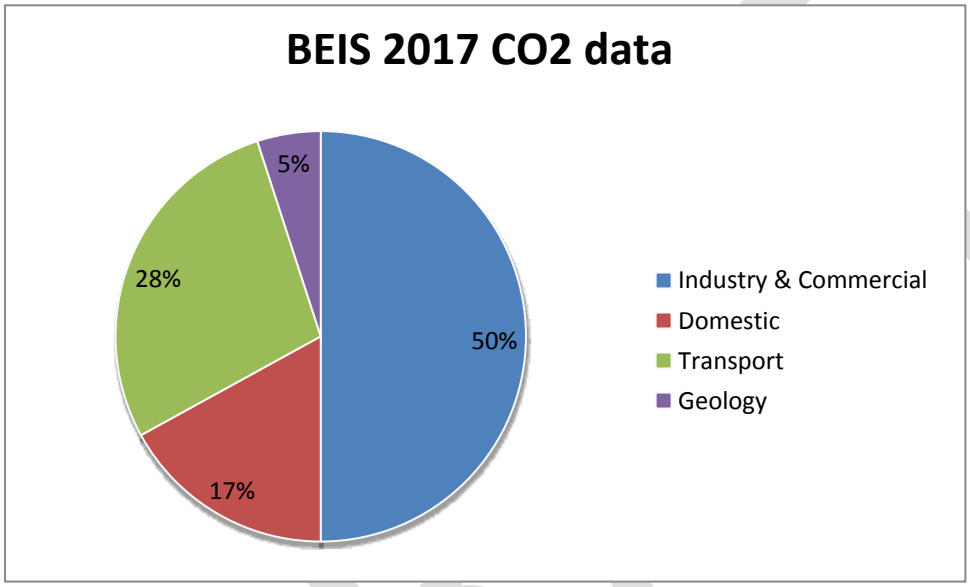
1.6 West Norfolk is the fourth largest district in England and is mainly a rural area with a diverse landscape and sparsely populated, yet it is ranked the 3rd highest district council in the country for total CO2 emissions. The borough has also seen the largest increase (+18%) in emissions from 2016 to 2017 within England, this was solely to do with an increase in industrial and commercial gas emissions (BEIS: 2019). Within Norfolk alone, the borough has the highest level of C02 in the Industry & Commercial category at 671.9Kt (Department for Energy and Climate Change: 2017). Similar districts like North Norfolk and South Norfolk measure at around 200 Kt approximately.

1.7 Emissions in the borough are high due to a number of sectors as shown in figure 1, and the reasons for this are as follows:

- Industry & Commercial - the borough has several large industrial sites such as British Sugar and Palm Paper and a number of old landfill sites.
- Domestic - many houses have oil or solid fuel heating instead of gas as the latter is not available in much of our rural area.

- Transport - there are a number of strategic A Roads which are critical for use in moving around and through the Borough which brings many car and HGV trips (A10, A17, A47, A134, A148, A149, A1101 and A1122).
- Geology - Fen peat deposits are a net contributor due to methane/CO2 emissions.

Figure 1 Main sources of CO2 emissions in King's Lynn & West Norfolk



1.8 In West Norfolk, we acknowledge the impact climate change can have on our unique landscape and we are in support of mitigating strategies which can be tackled in our local plan. The impacts climate change can bring to West Norfolk can threaten our distinctive villages, landscapes and the heritage of the area. Adaptation and mitigation methods are encouraged in this strategy to deal with risks such as coastal or fluvial flooding to our natural assets and ensure strategies are put in place for habitats and species to adapt to climate change. The Wash Shoreline Management Plan identifies that coastal development is likely to be exposed to a much higher risk of flooding within 10 to 15 years, but this could be sooner.

1.9 The reduction of carbon emissions in West Norfolk will be carefully examined and tackled in reference to strategic matters such as: green infrastructure, sustainable transport (encouraging active travel and reducing fossil fuel-based vehicle use), improving building design and encouraging energy efficiency measures.

1.10 With reference to local development plans, the Planning Act states that policies must be designed to "*contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change*". Our Climate Change Policy LP* will contribute to the mitigation of change and assist in adaptation to the following strategic issues:

- Better design and use of materials
- Carbon reduction/ cleaner energy
- Coastal change/ flood risk management
- Green infrastructure
- Protecting our historic/natural environment
- SUDS and improved drainage
- Sustainable transport

Policy LP* Climate Change

The council will take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change in the borough. A target of an X% decrease in the borough's carbon budget by 2036 is set. This plan will can help to achieve this by:

- Reducing and mitigating carbon emissions;
- Recognising the importance of, and future proofing against, the challenges of climate change;
- Supporting the development of sustainable transport systems;
- Reducing reliance on fossil fuel-based vehicles;
- Locating and designing new development to be better adapted to climate change and flood risk;
- Protecting and enhancing our natural and historic environment;
- Managing the sensitive impacts and threats of coastal erosion and flooding;
- Providing, maintaining and improving effective defences to reduce or mitigate areas at risk of coastal or fluvial flooding.

The following policies will assist in delivering the plan's climate change approach:

LP01 - Spatial strategy (growth locations providing the best opportunity to use public transport, brownfield focus, coastal change, flooding, conservation);

LP05 - Implementation (Section.106, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) requirements);

LP11 - Disused railway trackways (potential use as footways/cycle ways - Sustainable Transport);

LP12 - Transportation (encouraging Sustainable Transport methods);

LP14 - Coastal Areas (mitigating measures for Climate Change);

LP15 - Coastal Change Management Area (Hunstanton to Dersingham) (flood risk adaptation);

LP16 - Design & Sustainable Development (climate change development statements, layout/orientation to prevent overheating, water use, EV charging ;points, development renewable energy standards, cleaner energy, SUDS, active travel, SMPs);

LP17 - Environmental Assets (to be split) (protect, mitigate effects on biodiversity);

LP20 - Green Infrastructure (GI) (SANGS, protect open space, improve drainage);

LP21 - Renewable Energy (supporting & encouraging renewable energy);

LP22 - Sites in Areas of Flood Risk Policy (risk assessment - consider Climate Change);

LP34 - King's Lynn Area (flood protection strategies, public transport, Green Infrastructure, walking/cycling);

LPX – Norfolk Coast AONB Policy