

Local Plan Review 2025

Objective

Promote net zero carbon developments, with high sustainable construction standards and low embodied carbon, to ensure new developments deliver the highest viable energy efficiency, including the use of decentralised energy

Ensure the efficient use of resources and support a local zero-carbon energy system that reduces Luton's reliance on global fossil fuels and prioritises community energy

Deliver developments that minimise and are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as flooding, increased rainfall, drought and heatwaves and improve air quality

Climate Change

1. Sustainable Development
 - Carbon assessments: Require major developments to submit a whole-life carbon assessment to minimise embodied carbon in construction
2. Low carbon infrastructure
 - Renewable energy generation: identifying suitable locations for onshore wind, solar schemes, and district heating networks. Supporting community energy renewable generation.
 - Construction waste reduction: require major developments to include circular economy statement, minimising waste.
3. Community & behavioural change
 - Sustainable design codes: Establish local sustainability design guides promoting low-impact materials, passive solar design, and sustainable construction techniques.
 - Green jobs & skills development: support local training and employment in green industries, such as renewable energy, retrofit, and sustainable construction.
 - Climate action & engagement: encourage community-led sustainability initiatives, such as local energy co-operatives, climate action groups, and carbon literacy programmes.

Observation of current planning process

Issue: Lack of clarity when identifying deliverables at development stage

Suggestion: tightening up/ rewording the Energy conditions statement

“Energy Efficiency & Carbon Reduction: The statement must demonstrate:

- a) **How the development will achieve a minimum of X% of carbon reduction beyond current Building Regulations Part L & in accordance with LLP37C energy hierarchy, moving towards net zero operational carbon.**
- b) **The application of a fabric-first approach, ensuring high levels of insulation, airtightness, and passive design to minimise energy demand.**
- c) **The incorporation of on-site renewable energy generation, such as solar PV, wind, or heat pumps, meeting at least 20% of total energy demand where viable.**
- d) **Measures taken to reduce embodied carbon, including material selection, reuse or existing structures, and a whole-life carbon assessment for major schemes.”**

Selected Questions

1. *How can the Local plan help improve quality of housing provided through the private rented sector?*
 - a. Ensuring energy efficiency standards and sustainability
 - i. Min EPC ratings of C for all rentals
 - ii. Low carbon heating and insulation
 - iii. Retrofitting & energy grants
 - b. Incentivising Private Rental Sector (PSR) improvement through Planning & Partnerships
 - i. Retrofit-first approach
 - ii. Private Landlord Accreditation support by integrating scheme into the broader local planning strategy.
 - iii. Partnership with Housing Associations

2. *Are there local benefits from improving connectivity to other locations, cities and markets in the sub region?*
 - a. Reducing car dependency & emissions
 - i. Public transport integration
 - ii. Rail & bus connectivity
 - b. Promoting active & sustainable travel
 - i. Active travel networks
 - ii. Last-mile solutions
 - iii. Workplace travel planning
 - c. Cross-boundary sustainable transport planning

3. *Is there scope for new policies requiring all major developments to submit a Social Value Strategy with measurable criterion at the planning application stage, to address considerations such as local workers, suppliers, skills, apprenticeships and procurement processes?*

A well-structured policy would:

- a. Embed climate and environmental sustainability into its SV considerations
 - b. Ensure accountability
 - c. Maximise benefits for local economy
4. *What type of employment and which sectors should we be encouraging, taking account of growth sectors and the modern economy? Green and sustainable employment is a growing industry and can lead to greater environmental sustainability. It can also tunnel into other types of employment such creative and digital industries.*

Key employment sectors to encourage:

- a. Green construction and retrofit
 - i. Energy efficient construction & retrofitting
 - ii. Sustainable build materials
 - iii. Heat pump & district heating installation
 - iv. Green infrastructure & urban greening
- b. Renewable energy & grid infrastructure
 - i. Solar PV, wind
 - ii. Energy storage & smart grids

- iii. Hydrogen & alternative fuels
 - iv. Community energy projects
 - c. Sustainable transport and mobility
 - i. EV manufacturing
 - ii. Public transport and active travel expansion
 - d. Environmental & land-based sectors
- 5. *Should we use design codes to ensure that placemaking includes provision for high quality homes, active travel, green 36 space, quality environments, designing out crime and improved community safety?*
 - a. Establish local sustainability design guides promoting low-impact materials, passive solar design, and sustainable construction techniques.
- 6. *Do you think we should strengthen our policies around pollution and air quality? If so, how? Yes, by:*
 - a. Reducing transport-related air pollution
 - b. Minimising emissions from buildings
 - c. Enhance green infrastructure to capture pollutants
 - d. Strengthening monitoring, enforcement and mitigation strategies.
- 7. *Should we consider having a Local Plan requirement for higher than 10% biodiversity net gain to be achieved on certain developments (e.g. 20%)? This would be subject to viability testing. Yes, due to:*
 - a. Enhance climate resilience
 - b. Support nature recovery networks
 - c. Offset localised environmental pressures
- 8. *Should we explore different design solutions for new schools due to limited land availability?*

A new Local Plan should explore innovative design solutions which align with the town Net Zero Roadmap. Schools could be energy efficient, adaptable and integrate nature-based solutions.

- a. Flexible modular classrooms
 - b. Multi-story designs
 - c. Incorporate Passivhaus or ultralow energy standards
 - d. Smart building technology
 - e. Urban greening solutions
 - f. Flood-resilient landscaping and SUDs
- 9. *How should the Local Plan build on the work of heritage strategies and projects in Luton?*
 - a. A local plan should integrate heritage strategies and projects which enhance climate resilience, carbon reduction and sustainability.
 - b. Ensures the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic assets.

Best practice for sustainable development:

LA	Key Policy	Key statement
Bath & NE Somerset	Core Strategy, Placemaking Plan and Local Plan Partial Update	<p>Through the submission of a sustainable construction checklist, proposed new dwellings will demonstrate the following:</p> <p>Space heating demand less than 30kWh/m2/annum; Total energy use less than 40kWh/m2/annum; Strong preference for Passive House Planning Package (PHPP) as energy modelling methodology. PHPP deemed suitable for all projects, while SAP only 'suitable for most projects'</p>
Central Lincolnshire	Adopted Local Plan 2023	<p>Target achieving a space heating demand of around 15-20kWh/m2/yr and a total energy demand of 35 kWh/m2/yr, achieved through a 'fabric first' approach to construction.</p> <p>To simplify (and hence speed up) the decision making process, applicants are able to demonstrate that they have met the requirements of this policy if they provide certified demonstration of compliance with:- Passivhaus Plus, Premium or Classic</p>
Eastleigh Borough Council	Local Plan	<p>Aim to deliver at least 1% of all residential units within the whole scheme which achieve full 'Passivhaus' certification.</p>