

Notes of a meeting of the Greener Woking Working Group

Held on 8 February 2023, virtually via Zoom

1.0 Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Review

An additional meeting had been arranged for members to review the Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). A presentation on the updated draft Climate Change SPD was received. The draft consisted of updates since the previous 2013 Climate Change SPD, this had a considerable number of changes to areas in line with national policy. The strategy was still in draft form under the review of Officers following updates to Planning guidance and policies at a local and national level.

The draft document had been revised in accordance with updated policies with the following key themes to be included in the SPD:

- Carbon and sustainable energy;
- Design, materials and waste;
- Sustainable transport and electric vehicles (EV);
- Water efficiency;
- Overheating;
- Flood risk; and
- Green and blue infrastructure

Members expressed satisfaction towards the report, however, several suggestions were made to further strengthen guidance for sustainable development in light of the Council's net zero commitments.

Following a query as to whether the borough could move at a quicker rate to achieve its net-zero targets, it was noted that in terms of residential development, it is now harder to seek to exceed the government's minimum national standards. However, Building Regulations are now moving at a much faster pace of change. It was also noted that any proposed policy change to increase local standards, above national requirements, would also need to be subject to viability testing.

There was a query on whether further expected guidance on the government's Environment Act and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) target would impact on the ability to consult on the draft SPD. It was explained that as the SPD offers guidance rather than mandating certain requirements, emerging government policy would not negatively impact on its consultation.

2.0 Climate Change Strategy Review

A presentation was received on the Climate Change Strategy Review. A copy of the draft document had been circulated for consideration and was noted as the follow up strategy to Woking 2050 which had been adopted in 2015.

Within the revised strategy, nine proposed new themes were identified by Officers in order to continue through climate change ambitions with each giving guidance and direction on how the local authority, residents, businesses, and partner organisations could play their part to achieve shared environmental goals.

The draft strategy would be subject to a six-week public consultation following the local elections, starting mid-May until the end of June 2023.