

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Updates to the Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document



Updates to the Renewable Energy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Technology, policy and building regulations have all changed significantly since the SPD was prepared in 2007. The Council requires Energy Reports submitted with major planning applications to reflect these changes and encourages similar details to be submitted on smaller scale planning applications. A summary is given below:

Advances in technology and standards

Air Source Heat is now a recognised renewable technology and is classified as such in the Renewable Energy Directive (2009). If this technology is included in new development, it can contribute towards the requirements for the Tunbridge Wells Renewable Energy SPD alongside flue gas heat recovery which is also growing in popularity.

In some circumstances 'low carbon' energy, such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), offers a more appropriate technology choice for new development than renewable energy. Low carbon energy may be acceptable as an alternative or additional technology, on a case-by-case basis. The percentage reduction in carbon dioxide would need to be demonstrated in the Energy Report.

Any energy calculations should include regulated emissions (all carbon dioxide emissions arising from energy use regulated under building regulations) such as fixed heating, fixed lighting, hot water and ventilation. Current Building Regulations do not currently cover unregulated emissions i.e. those relating to cooking, electrical appliance or power generation. However, inclusion of this type of emission is welcomed.

The efficiency of renewable energy technology equipment has improved significantly since 2007 and, in general, costs have reduced. Energy reports should reflect current costs, technology efficiencies and up to date technology specification details and building regulation requirements.

There has been a significant increase in the installation of large scale solar energy in Kent. Kent County Council has produced a Renewable Energy Action Plan (2017) which should be referred to when submitting applications ([see Kent County Council's Renewable Energy Action Plan](#)).

Local policy

The South East Plan and its policy relating to renewable energy have been revoked. The Local Plan policies adopted in 2006 remain saved and the Council adopted its Core Strategy in 2010.

Core Policy 5 within the Core Strategy Development Plan Document states that the Borough Council will apply and encourage sustainable design and construction principles and best practice. This core policy includes reference to having regard to renewable energy and energy efficiency, in addition to making efficient use of water resources and protecting water quality. It also refers to development being designed to minimise waste creation and disposal throughout the lifetime of the development.

The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan. All the latest information about the emerging new Local Plan can be found on the Council's website ([see the Local Plan web pages](#)).

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2018) states:

“The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.” (para 148)

“*To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, plans should:*

- a) *provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources, that maximises the potential for suitable development, while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily (including cumulative landscape and visual impacts);*” (para 151)

The more detailed National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG): Climate Change highlights how important the issue is in planning, noting “*Addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.*” (para 001). Local plans must reflect this principle to be found ‘sound’, and local authorities are expected to adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, in accordance with the Climate Change Act 2008.