



Climate change and sustainable building





Headlines

Planning has a key role in meeting the UK's commitment to reduce greenhouse emissions by at least 80% in 2050 from 1990 levels to keep global warming below 2 degrees Celsius (Climate Change Act, 2008).

The National Planning Policy Framework, 2019 states 'The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate'. To do this it states that Local Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change'.

The government places great importance on National Parks being at the forefront in the response to climate change; pioneers of innovation and change where climate change is 'central to [national park] objectives' whilst conserving its special qualities.



What has worked well

The Core Strategy contains a number of local planning policies that address climate change mitigation and adaptation (policy CC1), low carbon and renewable energy development (policy CC2), waste management (policy CC3), on-farm anaerobic digestion (Policy CC4) and flood risk and water conservation (policy CC5).

These policies are supported by the Landscape Strategy, the Climate Change and Sustainable Building Supplementary Planning Document (2013), Annex 1 - Landscape Sensitivity Assessment and Guidance for Wind Turbine Applications, and the Design Guide (2007).

All of these documents support the positive contributions that renewables/low carbon and energy efficiency installations make when located sensitively within the National Park landscape



What has not worked so well

Since the Core Strategy was adopted the use of renewables/low carbon technologies in new development has been variable, reflecting the government's position at that time and people's appetite to make changes.

Updates to Building Regulations will improve the energy efficiency of new buildings and there will be opportunities to do more. The Residents Survey (2019) identified the 'potential for the PDNPA and its partners to encourage more residents to take this action, and that there may be appetite from residents to undertake more environmentally friendly actions to their homes.'

It is not possible to report on what has been achieved under Permitted Development.



What are the big issues for the Plan review?

We need to improve our understanding of building carbon life cycles and embedded and operational carbon. Making use of what exists and retrofitting/ adapting it invariably uses less carbon than knocking down and rebuilding. Retrofitting the National Park's existing built stock with energy efficiency measures will be key to meeting the 2050 target. A revised Design Guide will be a key driver in helping people to make changes, which are sensitive to the National Park landscape.

Ultimately, we need to assess whether existing local plan climate change policies are 'fit for purpose' and have the flexibility to respond positively to new thinking and innovations.