

15.0 APPENDIX 15.1: RELEVANT POLICIES, GUIDANCE & LEGISLATION

Policy Context

National Planning Policy

Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Actⁱ

- 15.1 The Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act (2006) is an Act of Parliament which aims to boost the number of heat and electricity microgeneration installations in the United Kingdom, helping to cut carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty. It gives powers to the UK Government to require certain organisations to report on how they are adapting to climate change through the Adaptation Reporting Power.
- 15.2 The Act provides that the government must set and meet national targets for the number of installed microgeneration systems and informs that the government must promote community energy projects. Local planning authorities may influence the success of community energy schemes through making planning permission for certain developments conditional on the use of such schemes.

The Clean Growth Strategy

- 15.3 In October 2017, the UK Government published its Clean Growth Strategy (CGS)ⁱⁱ setting out ambitious policies and proposals, through to 2032 and beyond, to reduce emissions across the economy and promote clean growth. The CGS provides an 'ambitious' blueprint for Britain's low carbon future, outlining how investment in green energy goes hand – in – hand with economic growth and industrial, commercial and residential strategies. Core to the strategy are actions that will cut emissions, increase efficiency and lower the amount consumers and business spent on energy. The CGS six key areas that together are responsible for 100% of the UK's carbon emissions. These are:
1. Improving business and industry efficiency (25% of UK emissions): Improving business and industry efficiency, improving energy productivity and commercial building standards, delivering industrial energy efficiency, investing in industrial innovation;
 2. Accelerating the shift to low-carbon transport (24% of UK emissions): Accelerating the shift to low – carbon transport, supporting the take – up of ultra – low emission vehicles, developing electric vehicle charging network, shifting freight from road to rail and innovation in Connected and Autonomous Vehicles and electric batteries;
 3. Improving our homes (13% of UK emissions): Improving our homes, upgrading energy efficiency across a million homes, strengthening building standards, rolling out heat networks, phasing out of high carbon heating;
 4. Enhancing the benefits and value of our natural resources (15% of UK emissions): Enhancing the benefits and value of our natural resources, supporting agriculture, a new network of forests, zero avoidable waste by 2050, managing emissions from landfill;
 5. Leading the public sector (2% of UK emissions): Leading in the public sector, setting a voluntary 30 percent public sector carbon reduction target by 2020 and funding for energy efficiency improvements in England; and
 6. Delivering clean, smart, flexible power (21% of UK emissions): Delivering clean, smart, flexible power, phasing – out of coal, developing new ways of balancing the grid through electricity storage and demand response.

25 Year Environment Plan

15.4 Building on the proposals set out in the CGS, the UK outlined its plans to improve the environment in 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' (2018)ⁱⁱⁱ. The 25 Year Environment Plan was published in January 2018 and sets out the UK's approach to deliver on our ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we inherited, and to fully seize the opportunities of clean growth. At a glance, the key proponents of the 25 Year Plan are:

- **Embedding an 'environment net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure:** reforming developer contributions and tariffs to limit environmental damage and secure investment in natural capital.
- **Clean Air:** meeting legally binding targets to reduce emissions of five damaging air pollutants; this should halve the effects of air pollution on health by 2030 and maintaining the continuous improvement in industrial emissions by building on existing good practice and the successful regulatory framework.
- **Reducing the risks of harm from environmental hazards:** We will reduce the risk of harm to people, the environment and the economy from natural hazards including flooding, drought and coastal erosion.
- **Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste:** achieving zero avoidable waste by 2050 and eliminating avoidable plastic waste by 2042 and reducing food chain emissions and wastage as well as improving the management of residual waste.
- **Using resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently:** ensure that resources from nature, such as timber, are used more sustainably and efficiently.
- **Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment:** making sure that there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, and encouraging more people to spend time in them to benefit their health and wellbeing.
- **Mitigating and adapting to climate change:** We will take all possible action to mitigate climate change, while adapting to reduce its impact.

Environmental Improvement Plan 2023^{iv}

15.5 The Environmental Improvement Plan, published by DEFRA in February 2023 follows on from the 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment published in 2018 which sets out the governments environmental priorities and goals. The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 reports on the progress in delivering these goals and sets key actions to deliver the goals up to 2043 – the remaining duration of the 25 Year Plan.

15.6 The Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) includes a review and revision of the ten goals from the 25YEP, including the goal 'Improving our mitigation of climate change'. In regard to mitigating and adapting to climate change, the EIP states *"The relationship is two-way: we also cannot mitigate and adapt to climate change without Nature-based Solutions."*

15.7 The EIP sets out key objectives to achieve this goal, including:

- *"update on our progress and plans to reach net zero"*
- *publish a Land Use Framework in 2023, setting out how we will balance multiple demands on our land including climate mitigation and adaptation*
- *publish the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) in 2023 that will set out our 5 year strategy to build the UK's climate resilience*
- *continue our role as a global leader in tackling climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation and push for an integrated approach to international action*

- *Climate change is also exacerbating natural hazards and the risk they pose to our health, the environment, and to our economy – hence our goal of a reduced risk of harm from environmental hazards.*
- *deliver our investment plan to improve coastal and flood defences, including £100 million on the most frequently flooded areas.*
- *reward farmers for actions to reduce risks and impacts from floods, droughts, and wildfires through our new future farming schemes.”*

The Environment Act

- 15.8 Furthermore, the Environment Act (2021) mandates for adoption of an ‘environmental improvement plan’. The current environmental improvement plan is “*A Green Future: our 25 year plan to improve the environment*”, which as outlined above seeks to holistically tackle specific environmental issues and the wider climate change challenge.
- 15.9 The Environment Act received Royal Assent on the 10th November 2021 and sets objectives to restore habitats, increase biodiversity, reduce waste, halt species decline, tackle deforestation and make better use of resources. One purpose of the Act is described as: “*to transform our domestic environmental governance based on environmental principles; codify a comprehensive framework for legally binding targets; and the establishment of a new Office for Environmental Protection*”. In effect, the Act aims to replicate a set of overarching European Union (EU) principles into UK law.

References

ⁱ Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Act 2006. UK Public General Acts. 2006 c.19.

ⁱⁱ HM Government (2017): Clean Growth Strategy Link:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700496/clean-growth-strategy-correction-april-2018.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ HM Government (2018): A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Link:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

^{iv} <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environmental-improvement-plan>