

Context: Utilising the Planning System to shift towards Net Zero

Liz Hobden, Principal Consultant, Planning Advisory Service

Leadership in the Climate Emergency

- **National net zero framework** - UK's Climate Change Act 2008 sets a legal target to achieve Net Zero by 2050 guiding local governments. Now **embedded in NPPF**
- **Local climate emergency declarations** - Over 300 councils in England have declared a climate emergency
- **Role of Local Authorities** - Local authorities tailor climate strategies through control of their services and how they deliver them – for example, reuse resources, convert buildings, green infrastructure and sustainable drainage.
- **Importance of Local Plans** - Local Plans embed sustainability in spatial planning to support environmental goals and reduce emissions.



BBC

Local Planning Policy as a driver for Net Zero - context

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) climate mandates** - The NPPF 2024 mandates planning systems to address net zero and climate impacts including overheating, flood risks, and coastal change.
- **Alignment with national goals** - NPPF seeks to ensure local plans align with national climate targets, embedding sustainability in planning decisions.
- **Local Plans for climate adaptation** - Local plans must mitigate emissions, enhance resilience, and support renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure.



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Embedding Sustainability in Local Plans - examples

Local carbon neutral commitments

Leeds and Nottingham councils have set ambitious carbon neutrality targets supported by investment in energy efficiency and climate strategies.

Green Infrastructure and Retrofit

Trafford Council promotes retrofit strategies and nature-based solutions to encourage green growth and sustainable urban environments.

Sustainable Transport Integration

Local plans support active travel, public transport and electric vehicle infrastructure to reduce emissions and promote healthier communities.

Environmental and Community Benefits

Embedding sustainability enhances community wellbeing, economic resilience, and protects natural resources over the long term.



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Other Planning Tools – current and future

Current

- **Planning Guidance Documents** – design, cycling, renewables etc
- **Neighbourhood Planning** – local initiatives
- **Development Management** – proactive approach to carbon neutral development

New system

- **Spatial Development Strategies** – supporting delivery of key infrastructure (transport, water and energy) and climate priorities
- **Supplementary Plans** – embed net zero ambitions, design coding.