



There are many opportunities for Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) to contribute to tackling the causes and effects of climate change. The purpose of this guide note is to help Neighbourhood Planning groups to understand the actions that can be taken through their NDP and to encourage the exploration of other opportunities outside of planning policy.

Introduction: climate change and sustainable development

Changes in the climate have implications for all elements of life in Cornwall. Climate change will not only have an impact on the environment, but also on society and the economy.

As an Atlantic coastal area, Cornwall has a generally temperate maritime climate. Wetter, stormier winters and hotter drier summers will directly impact upon biodiversity, water resources, infrastructure, health, tourism and agriculture. Increased rainfall, storminess and sea level rise have great significance in terms of Cornwall's vulnerability to the effects of climate change as a particularly exposed peninsula.

Climate Change is a global problem, with significant impacts on the local scale. Changes likely to be experienced in the South West are:

- Temperature - average warming of 1.0 to 2.5°C, very warm years becoming more frequent
- Precipitation - 5-15% wetter winters, 15-30% drier summers, heavy rainfall more common significant decrease in snowfall, greater contrast between summer and winter seasons
- Cloud cover - reduction in summer and autumn cloud cover, small increase in winter cloud cover
- Extreme weather events - more severe and frequent events such as river and coastal flooding

In declaring a climate emergency in January 2019, Cornwall Council has formally recognised the need to increase its contribution to national and international efforts to combat the causes of climate change and reduce its impacts globally.

What can NDPs do about climate change?

“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own”
(Our Common Future, the Brundtland Report, 1987)

There are lots of ways in which NDPs can help to build more sustainable communities, build resilience and minimise their contribution to climate change. Some examples are listed below:

- Making local decisions about the location of new development can help to build more sustainable communities, for example, by ensuring growth is located in close proximity to service and facilities and is accessible by sustainable modes of transport



- Protect local services and facilities and resist change of use. This means that access to local services is maintained, reducing the need to travel and ensuring local communities remain sustainable
- Protect and enhance multifunctional green infrastructure, which can provide safe routes for walking and cycling, places for recreation and play, link wildlife corridors, enhance biodiversity and make space for flood water
- Safeguard areas for flood storage and increase resilience to flooding including coastal change management policies
- Encourage natural sustainable drainage features in new development e.g. swales, raingardens, ponds and wetlands
- Ensure all new development achieves a net gain in biodiversity and looks for opportunities to increase connectivity of habitats
- Allocate sites for renewable energy
- Encourage better quality design in new development

Where can I find more information to help?

The Neighbourhood Planning Team at Cornwall Council will be able to provide you with advice and guidance (email: neighbourhoodplanning@cornwall.gov.uk). There are also a number of helpful guide notes on our [Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit](#). Relevant guide notes include:

- What can Neighbourhood Plans do: topics analysis (an overarching look at the range of topics NDPs might consider)
- Wildlife, Trees and Woodlands
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Flooding and Drainage
- Local Green Spaces and Green Infrastructure
- Planning for the Environment at Neighbourhood Level (national guidance)

The Centre for Sustainable Energy also has some great resources to support Neighbourhood Planning groups to develop low carbon NDPs www.cse.org.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

What can 'made' NDPs do?

As of March 2019, Cornwall has 26 'made' plans (that is they have been through the full process and have been adopted by Cornwall Council). Sustainable development is a key element of planning and all of these plans already contain elements that tackle the cause and/or effects of climate change as detailed above.

There is no statutory requirement for NDPs to review after a set period of time. However, communities may feel that changes are needed (for example regarding climate change or other issues).



The process for review requires groups to go through the statutory processes and checks in the same way as when the NDP was first adopted, carrying out pre-submission consultation and submitting the modified NDP to Cornwall Council – along with a statement on the significance of the changes. Cornwall Council then has to carry out publication consultation and arrange the Examination. The Examiner will decide whether or not the proposed modifications change the nature of the plan and decide whether a referendum is required.

A formal review is an option, but it may not be the best way to embed climate change principles into local communities. Planning can help set the context for sustainable development, but ultimately it is individual behaviour that also has to change.

Think global, act local

Many of the actions we can take to reduce our contribution to climate change are not based in planning policy, but in individual and community actions. The neighbourhood planning process can help to identify community actions and initiatives that can be taken forward independently of the NDP.

The NDP process of consultation and engagement often kick-starts these local action groups; even in an area where an NDP is already made, the projects identified by the NDP may be continuing with local action groups. An informal check of the NDP's contribution to tackling climate change may result in more projects which can be initiated more quickly – rather than the more lengthy process of formal review.

This article and graph give a good illustration of the impact of our personal lifestyle choices and the impact changes in our behaviour can have: [Lifestyle choices that reduce your carbon footprint](#)

There are some fantastic ideas and inspiration on local projects for achieving environmental growth in your area here: [Grow Nature](#)