



Environmental Statement

Chapter 15: Climate Change

Appendix 15.1: Climate Change Policy Review

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On behalf of
Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited

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Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

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Prepared by:

RPS

Principal Consultant – EIA & Sustainability

101 Park Drive,
Milton Park,
Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14, 4RY

T

E [\[REDACTED\]@rps.tetrattech.com](mailto: [REDACTED]@rps.tetrattech.com)

Prepared for:

Oxfordshire Railfreight Limited

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1 Climate Change Policy Review

- 1.1.1 This appendix to Chapter 15: Climate Change details the policy and legislation applicable to the Proposed Development for the Climate Change assessment.

1.2 International Legislation and Policy

United Nations Conference of Parties (COP)

- 1.2.1 The Conference of Parties are (typically) annual climate summits, attended by world leaders globally, where the effects of measures introduced to limit climate change are discussed.
- 1.2.2 The Paris Agreement (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), 2015) sets out a global framework to avoid dangerous climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius (°C) and pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C. It also aims to strengthen country's ability to deal with the impacts of climate change and support them in their efforts. This Agreement is the first-ever universal, legally binding global climate change agreement, adopted at the Paris climate conference (COP21) in December 2015 by 194 parties, including the UK.
- 1.2.3 The Paris Agreement requires countries to submit a Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United National Framework Convention on Climate Change. The UK's NDCs (Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), 2025) commits the UK to reducing economy-wide GHG emissions by at least 68% by 2030 and 81% by 2035, compared to 1990 levels.
- 1.2.4 In addition, Article 7 of the Paris Agreement establishes a global goal on enhancing climate change adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change.
- 1.2.5 The COP28 summit in November 2023 set out the first 'global stocktake' of global efforts to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement. This stocktake established that progress is at present too slow across climate mitigation and adaptation actions. Parties agreed to triple renewable energy capacity and double energy efficiency improvements globally by 2030, phase-down unabated coal power and transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems (UNFCCC, 2023).
- 1.2.6 The COP29 summit in November 2024 agreed a new climate finance goal from the developed world by 2035, and finalised market mechanism rules for carbon trading, but wider progress on climate adaptation and mitigation was limited (UNFCCC, 2024).
- 1.2.7 The COP30 summit in November 2025 focused on climate adaptation, with agreement regarding indicators to measure progress towards adaptation and to develop a just transition mechanism to financially support countries transitioning to low carbon economies.

1.3 National Planning Policy and Legislation

Climate Change Act 2008

- 1.3.1 The Climate Change Act 2008, as amended created a framework for setting a series of interim national carbon budgets and plans for national adaptation to climate risks. The Act requires the UK Government to set carbon budgets for the whole of the UK.
- 1.3.2 At present, the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth, set through the Carbon Budget Orders 2011, 2016, and 2021 are 1.950 gigatonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO₂e) for 2021-2027, 1.725 GtCO₂e for 2028-2032, and 0.965 GtCO₂e for 2033-2037. The Sixth Carbon Budget is the first Carbon Budget that is consistent with the UK's net zero target, requiring a 78% reduction in GHG emissions by 2035 from 1990 levels.

- 1.3.3 The Climate Change Act also created the Committee on Climate Change (now Climate Change Committee) to give advice on carbon budgets and report on progress. The Committee through its Adaptation Sub-Committee also gives advice on climate change risks and adaptation. The Climate Change Committee advised in the Seventh Carbon Budget (Climate Change Committee, 2025) that the targeted budget would be an “*ambitious target, reflecting the importance of the task. But it is deliverable, provided action is taken rapidly.*”
- 1.3.4 Whilst the new carbon budget – advised to be 0.535 GtCO₂e for 2038-2042 – has not been officially adopted by the UK Government, it is expected to guide future policy, as have previous revisions.

Department for Transport’s National Policy Statement for National Networks, 2024

- 1.3.5 UK Government policy for nationally significant infrastructure rail and road projects within England, and the need that underpins this, is set out in the National Policy Statement (NPS) for National Networks 2024 (Department for Transport (DfT), 2024).
- 1.3.6 A key driver identified for the national rail network is to provide for the transport of freight across the country, and to and from ports, in order to help meet environmental goals and improve quality of life.
- 1.3.7 Paragraph 3.102 states that *‘The government is also committed to growing rail freight due to the environmental benefits of the sector, with rail freight emitting approximately 76% less CO₂ than equivalent transport by road’.*
- 1.3.8 Paragraphs 4.33 to 4.44 discuss climate change adaptation:
- *‘In preparing measures to support climate change adaptation, applicants should consider whether nature-based solutions could provide a basis for such adaptation’* (paragraph 4.38).
 - *‘Applicants must consider the direct (e.g., flooding of road or rail infrastructure) and indirect (e.g., flooding of other parts of the road or rail network) impacts of climate change when planning the location, design, build, operation and maintenance’* (paragraph 4.39).
 - Paragraphs 4.40-4.42 requires that the latest UK Climate Projections and associated research and expert guidance (such as the Environment Agency’s Climate Change Allowances for Floor Risk Assessments) should be used to identify and assess mitigation or adaptation measures. This should cover the estimated lifetime of the project, and demonstrate that projects should remain resilient to a maximum climate change scenario (avoiding any potential design features that are vulnerable to more radical changes to the climate).
- 1.3.9 Paragraphs 5.26 to 5.44 discuss climate change mitigation and GHG emissions:
- Paragraphs 5.28 to 5.30 note that the construction and operation of a project will result in GHG emissions, and as such projects should avoid, reduce or mitigate climate change impacts (in line with the mitigation hierarchy).
 - Paragraphs 5.31 to 5.34 require the applicant to assess GHG emissions across the lifecycle of a project. *‘All proposals for national network infrastructure projects should include a Whole Life Carbon Assessment at critical stages in the project lifecycle’.* The Whole Life Carbon Assessment *‘should be conducted according to the guidance, standards and methodologies set out in Transport Analysis Guidance Unit A3’.* These paragraphs also reference PAS 2080: Carbon Management in Buildings and Infrastructure (BSI, 2023) to guide whole life carbon assessment and identification of decarbonisation measures.

- Paragraph 5.35 sets out that ‘a carbon management plan should be produced as part of the Development Consent Order submission and include:
 - a Whole Life Carbon assessment for the project
 - an explanation of the steps that have been taken to drive down the carbon impacts of the project
 - how construction and operational emissions and, where applicable, emissions from maintenance activities, have been reduced as much as possible using the carbon reduction hierarchy (e.g., as set out in PAS2080) (recognising that in the case of road projects while the developer can estimate the likely emissions from road traffic, it is not solely responsible for controlling them)
 - whether and how any residual carbon emissions will be (voluntarily) offset or removed using a recognised framework (any offsetting of emissions should not be included in the Whole Life Carbon Assessment headline figures)
 - where there are residual emissions, the level of emissions and the impact of those on any relevant statutory carbon budgets’.
- Paragraphs 5.36 and 5.37 note that ‘Applicants should look for opportunities within the design of the proposed development to embed nature-based or technological solutions to mitigate, capture or offset the emissions of construction. Steps taken to minimise, capture and offset emissions in design and construction, should be set out in the carbon management plan, secured under the Development Consent Order. Applicants may wish to refer to the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment Greenhouse Gas Management Hierarchy guidance when drafting their application’.
- Paragraphs 5.38 to 5.42 set out considerations for the decision making process, including:
 - ‘The Secretary of State must be satisfied that the applicant has as far as possible assessed the carbon emissions at all stages of the development
 - The Secretary of State should be content that the applicant has taken all reasonable steps to reduce the total carbon emissions at all stages of development.
 - The Secretary of State should also give positive weight to projects that embed nature-based or technological processes to mitigate or offset the emissions of construction and within the proposed development. However, given the important role national network infrastructure plays in supporting the process of economy wide decarbonisation, the Secretary of State accepts that there are likely to be some residual emissions from construction of national network infrastructure.
 - Operational carbon emissions from some types of national network infrastructure cannot be totally avoided. Given the range of non-planning policies aimed at decarbonising the transport system, government has determined that a net increase in operational carbon emissions is not, of itself, reason to prohibit the consenting of national network projects or to impose more restrictions on them in the planning policy framework.
 - Operational emissions will be addressed in a managed, economywide manner, to ensure consistency with carbon budgets, net zero and our international climate commitments. Therefore, approval of schemes with residual carbon emissions is allowable and can be consistent with meeting net zero. However, where the increase in carbon emissions resulting from the proposed scheme are so significant that it would have a material impact on the ability of government to

achieve its statutory carbon budgets, the Secretary of State should refuse consent’.

National Planning Policy Framework, 2024

- 1.3.10 The Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (HM Government, 2024) (December 2024) highlights the importance of the UK’s transition to a low carbon future.
- 1.3.11 Paragraph 161 states that the planning system should *‘shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience’* and *‘encourage the reuse of existing resources’*.
- 1.3.12 Paragraph 164 states that new development should *‘avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change... care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures’*. Further, new development should be planned in ways that *‘help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design’*.
- 1.3.13 Paragraph 165 supports the deployment of renewable and low carbon energy sources, where opportunities should be identified for development *‘to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems’*.
- 1.3.14 Chapter 9: Promoting Sustainable Transport encourages the pursuit of *‘...opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport’* and states that *‘Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes’* (Paragraphs 109 and 110).

1.4 National Climate Change Policy and Strategy

National Infrastructure Strategy, 2020

- 1.4.1 The National Infrastructure Strategy focuses on the investment and delivery of infrastructure, which is fundamental to delivering net zero emissions by 2050 (HM Treasury, 2020). The strategy sets out the UK Government’s plans to deliver on this target, decarbonising the economy and adapting to climate change, through reforms in power, transport and buildings:
 - enabling heat decarbonisation across sectors is of key importance and will be supported by encouragement of the roll-out of existing technologies, including heat pumps and the development of emerging technologies such as hydrogen;
 - increased investment in and deployment of renewable energy; and
 - taking steps to adapt to climate change impacts.

Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain, 2021

- 1.4.2 This document sets out how the transport sector will align with the UK’s net zero commitments. It identifies six strategic priorities to achieve this goal, including *‘Decarbonising the freight and logistics sector’* (Department for Transport (DfT), 2021). It contains specific policies and commitments for decarbonising railways and roads.
- 1.4.3 Key commitments and ambitions for decarbonising rail networks relevant to the Proposed Development include:
 - committing to *‘a net zero rail network by 2050’*;
 - ambitions *‘to remove all diesel-only trains (passenger and freight) from the network by 2040’*; and

- plans to increase the electrification of the network, alongside supporting the development of battery- and hydrogen-powered locomotives.
- 1.4.4 With regards to decarbonising road networks, key commitments relevant to the Proposed Development include:
- ending sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030;
 - by 2035, all new cars and vans are to be zero emission at tailpipe; and
 - increasing deployment of EVs and infrastructure.
- 1.4.5 Within the strategic priority of ‘*decarbonising the freight and logistics sector*’, the plan states:
- ‘*We are consulting on phase out dates for the sale of all new non-zero emission HGVs*’ by 2035 for smaller HGVs, and 2040 for larger HGVs.
 - ‘*We will support and encourage modal shift of freight from road to more sustainable alternatives, such as rail*’.

Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy, 2021

- 1.4.6 This strategy (BEIS, 2021) sets out the ambition to decarbonise industry in line with the UK’s net zero target, including the construction industry. To achieve this, it is anticipated that all industry will need to reduce emissions by at least two thirds by 2035, and at least 90% by 2050.
- 1.4.7 This strategy supports increased resource efficiency and material substitution within Action 5.5. This action highlights the importance of sustainable use of resources in achieving emissions reductions. Circular economy practices (keeping products and materials in circulation through reuse, repair, recycling and reducing the quantity of materials used within manufacturing) are encouraged as a means to tackle carbon reductions at all stages of a product’s lifetime. Further, it is noted that ‘*individual measures with the most potential in reducing emissions are using more construction materials with low embodied carbon (such as timber)*’ and reusing construction materials.

Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener, 2021

- 1.4.8 This strategy (HM Government, 2021) sets out the UK’s long-term plans to meet net zero emissions by 2050 and gives the vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050. The policies detailed in the strategy will be phased in over the next decade or beyond in order to continue decarbonisation towards net zero. They also aim to keep the UK on track to meet upcoming carbon budgets.
- 1.4.9 This strategy brings forward the ambition for a fully decarbonised power system by 15 years, building on the targets set out in the Energy White Paper and the 10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution. The ambition is to fully decarbonise the UK’s power system by 2035, through the growth in renewable and nuclear power in addition to hydrogen and flexible technologies to increase the flexibility of supply and energy storage capacity.
- 1.4.10 The strategy includes methods to promote the transition to low carbon buildings, which focuses on the phasing out of natural gas, increased energy efficiency, and improved resource efficiency and material substitution (including improved reporting on embodied carbon in buildings and infrastructure).

Net Zero Highways: our 2030/2040/2050 plan, 2021

- 1.4.11 This plan (National Highways, 2021a) sets out how the strategic road network will be decarbonised in line with the UK’s net zero by 2050 target. In particular, maintenance and

construction emissions are to be net zero by 2040. Key commitments and actions to achieve net zero operational and construction emissions include:

- increasing research and development into low carbon construction materials, focusing on asphalt, concrete, cement and steel;
- working with the supply chain to develop zero carbon roadmaps for key construction materials and processes;
- supporting manufacturers and the government in Carbon Capture and Storage development within the construction industry;
- up to 10% reduction in CO₂e in construction and operation emissions by 2025 compared to 2020, and a 40-50% reduction in CO₂e by 2030; and
- improving the capacity of existing roads to reduce the need for new construction.

Climate Change and the Strategic Road Network – building resilience for a changing future, 2022

- 1.4.12 This plan (National Highways, 2022) sets out how the strategic road network aims to mitigate against the impacts of climate change, particularly in the face of more frequent extreme weather events. To future-proof the road network, National Highways is implementing various strategies, including enhancing drainage systems to cope with heavier rainfall, using more resilient materials like warm mix asphalt, and adopting nature-based solutions to manage flood risks. Collaborative efforts with organizations such as the Environment Agency are crucial for developing comprehensive flood management projects, which protect both infrastructure and local communities. By investing in these adaptive measures and fostering partnerships across sectors, the UK aims to ensure that its transport infrastructure remains robust and effective in the face of a changing climate, ultimately supporting safer and more sustainable logistics and freight operations.

Digital Roads, 2021

- 1.4.13 Digital Roads sets out National Highways' vision for how new roads are to be designed, constructed and operated (National Highways, 2021b). By 2025, it is anticipated that all new roads in the strategic road network will include the following, improving efficiency and minimising emissions at all stages of the project lifetime:
- digitally enabled design and construction;
 - increased offsite fabrication of materials and modular construction;
 - automated construction methods; and
 - enhanced operational capability of roads through increased use of data and sensor technology.

Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan, 2023

- 1.4.14 The UK is actively pursuing a decarbonization strategy for its logistics and transportation sectors, aiming to align economic growth with net-zero emissions by 2050. The Plan (DESNZ, 2023) emphasizes the adoption of low-carbon technologies across logistics, warehousing, rail, and freight operations, supported by government initiatives such as the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund (IETF), which has increased funding to £500 million to help industries cut energy costs and emissions. Key measures include enhancing resource and energy efficiency in warehousing and distribution centres, promoting electrification of freight transport, and exploring the use of low-carbon hydrogen for heavy-

duty vehicles and rail systems. The government aims to replace 50 TWh of fossil fuels by 2035, significantly impacting the logistics sector by reducing reliance on traditional fuels.

- 1.4.15 For the highways and infrastructure sectors, these decarbonization efforts are expected to create substantial job opportunities and stimulate investment in sustainable transport solutions. The focus on low-carbon hydrogen and electrification will influence freight transportation, particularly for non-road mobile machinery and rail systems, which are critical for moving goods efficiently. Additionally, the strategy addresses potential carbon leakage risks to ensure that UK logistics and transportation industries remain competitive while transitioning to greener practices.

Clean Power 2030 Action Plan

- 1.4.16 The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan is a roadmap to the UK delivering a decarbonised power system by 2030 (DESNZ, 2024). This would be achieved by quadrupling offshore wind, tripling solar power, doubling onshore wind and supporting the development of new and extension of existing nuclear power stations. Decarbonisation would be in line with the UK's net zero commitments and, if successful, would significantly reduce UK carbon emissions.

1.5 Local Policy

Oxfordshire County Council Climate Action Framework, 2020

- 1.5.1 Oxfordshire County Council declared a climate emergency in April 2019 and created a Climate Action Framework in October 2020 (Oxfordshire County Council, 2020). Proposals within this framework specific to the Proposed Development are:
- a reduction in energy emissions across Oxfordshire by 50% by 2050, including through encouraging electric and active travel and increasing the proportion of renewable heating;
 - support of net zero carbon new developments, with high fabric standards, renewables maximised on site and low embodied carbon;
 - improving transport and connectivity by increasing walking and cycling infrastructure, enabling electric public transport and the electrification of rail networks across Oxfordshire; and
 - support policy for net-zero-carbon development in line with industry best practice.
- 1.5.2 These proposals were to be detailed further in The Oxfordshire Plan 2050. However, this Plan has not been brought forward to adoption by local authorities, and Local Plans will now provide the frameworks for long term planning in Oxfordshire.

Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Report, 2021

- 1.5.3 The Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire report (Hampton et al., 2021) emphasises the need for sustained action to deliver county-wide net zero emissions. It assesses a set of scenarios and their sectoral implications, and concludes that substantive changes to surface transport are essential across all credible pathways. The scenarios modelled, compared with a business-as-usual baseline ("Steady Progression"), are: Societal Transformation; Technological Transformation; and Oxfordshire Leading the Way. All net-zero scenarios require the near-complete phase-out of fossil-fuel powered vehicles and a reduction in overall travel demand.
- 1.5.4 Reductions in freight emissions rely on a modal shift from road to rail, supported by railway electrification, and on consolidation of loads to minimise empty (deadhead) journeys. In the Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario, provision of freight consolidation centres, localised

warehousing and distributed production is identified as a principal measure to enable low-carbon last-mile deliveries across urban areas.

Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map & Action Plan, 2022

- 1.5.5 The Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map & Action Plan (2022) sets out a coordinated programme of joint actions to deliver a net zero Oxfordshire. It underpins local climate action and models the ‘Oxfordshire Leading the Way’ scenario as set out in the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire report (Hampton et al., 2021). Under that scenario, freight trip efficiency must increase by 10% by 2050, and 100% of HGV and LGV trips must be completed by vehicles with zero tailpipe emissions.

Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan 2022 – 2050

- 1.5.6 The Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) (Oxfordshire County Council, 2022a) outlines a clear vision to deliver a net-zero Oxfordshire transport and travel system that enables the county to thrive whilst protecting the environment. Its targets are to deliver a net-zero transport network by 2040 and a transport system that contributes to a climate-positive future by 2050.
- 1.5.7 The Strategy acknowledges that rail freight currently emits approximately 76% less CO₂ per tonne of cargo than road haulage and, with electrification, can make a significant contribution to achieving net-zero transport emissions by 2040. Consequently, the Strategy prioritises supporting a modal shift from road to rail for long-distance freight, thereby capitalising on the county’s rail network and reducing HGV numbers, freeing road space, lowering congestion and emissions, and improving overall road-network efficiency. It also identifies limited rail capacity through Oxfordshire as a constraint that must be addressed to realise these benefits.

Oxfordshire Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement

- 1.5.8 The Oxfordshire Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement (Oxfordshire County Council, 2022b) reinforces Oxfordshire County Council’s commitment to lead positive change through partnership. It aims to make Oxfordshire greener, fairer and healthier by prioritising environmental resilience and nature recovery within policy and delivery.
- 1.5.9 The Policy Statement sets out the Oxfordshire Environmental Principles, aligned with the government’s 25 Year Environment Plan. Its strategic objectives include:
- *‘Bring Oxfordshire to net zero carbon as early as possible in the 2040s; and*
 - *Adapt to the challenges of climate change’.*

OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail

- 1.5.10 The OxRAIL 2040: Plan for Rail (Oxfordshire County Council, 2025) sets an ambitious vision to position rail at the centre of a greener, better-connected Oxfordshire, supporting accessible, thriving communities. By shifting freight from road to rail the Plan aims to relieve congestion on corridors such as the A34, reduce road-maintenance costs and improve air quality and public health. It commits to decarbonising the railway, targeting a diesel-free network by 2040, while enhancing climate resilience and delivering station redevelopments and new infrastructure to high environmental standards through collaborative partnership working.
- 1.5.11 The Plan identifies four strategic priorities to transform the county’s rail offer and deliver wider economic and environmental benefits, including the Oxfordshire Electric Freight Spine: an electrified Didcot-Bicester corridor, coordinated with electrification towards

Bletchley, to create a continuous low-carbon backbone for passenger and freight services. Complementary measures include capacity enhancements, last-mile freight facilities and operational reforms to unlock modal shift, improve efficiency and concentrate investment where it will most effectively support the County's net-zero objectives.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031

- 1.5.12 The Cherwell Local Plan (Cherwell District Council, 2015), adopted in July 2015, sets out how Cherwell district will achieve sustainable growth, with a focus on how developments will mitigate and adapt to climate change. The policies relevant to the Proposed Development are as follows:
- 1.5.13 **Policy ESD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change.** This policy describes aims to mitigate the impact of development on climate change, including the following:
- *'Delivering development that seeks to reduce the need to travel and which encourages sustainable travel options including walking, cycling and public transport to reduce dependence on private cars;*
 - *Designing developments to reduce carbon emissions and use resources more efficiently, including water; and*
 - *Promoting the use of decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy where appropriate'.*
- 1.5.14 The policy also specifies requirements with regard to climate change adaptation for developments. New developments require:
- *'Taking into account the known physical and environmental constraints when identifying locations for development;*
 - *Demonstration of design approaches that are resilient to climate change impacts including the use of passive solar design for heating and cooling;*
 - *Minimising the risk of flooding and making use of sustainable drainage methods; and*
 - *Reducing the effects of development on the microclimate (through the provision of green infrastructure including open space and water, planting, and green roofs)'.*
- 1.5.15 **Policy ESD 2: Energy Hierarchy and Allowable Solutions.** This plan details requirements to achieve carbon emissions reductions during construction and operation of a development. An energy hierarchy must be followed to achieve this, as set out below:
- *'Reducing energy use, in particular by the use of sustainable design and construction measures;*
 - *Supplying energy efficiently and giving priority to decentralised energy supply;*
 - *Making use of renewable energy; and*
 - *Making use of allowable solutions'.*
- 1.5.16 'Allowable solutions' include measures which secure carbon savings off site, where it is not possible to deal with all carbon emissions through on-site measures.
- 1.5.17 **Policy ESD 3: Sustainable Construction.** This policy outlines that zero carbon development should be achieved through a combination of fabric energy efficiency, carbon compliance and allowable solutions. It is stated within this policy that *'All new non-residential development will be expected to meet at least BREEAM 'Very Good' with immediate effect, subject to review over the plan period to ensure the target remains relevant'*. Further, it states that sustainable construction methods must be followed, including:
- *'Minimising both energy demands and energy loss;*

- *Maximising passive solar lighting and natural ventilation;*
- *Maximising resource efficiency;*
- *Incorporating the use of recycled and energy efficient materials;*
- *Incorporating the use of locally sourced building materials;*
- *Reducing waste and pollution and making adequate provision for the recycling of waste;*
- *Making use of sustainable drainage methods;*
- *Reducing the impact on the external environment and maximising opportunities for cooling and shading (by the provision of open space and water, planting, and green roofs, for example); and*
- *Making use of the embodied energy within buildings wherever possible and re-using materials where proposals involve demolition or redevelopment’.*

1.5.18 **Policy ESD 4: Decentralised Energy Systems.** This policy supports the use of decentralised energy systems in principle, *‘providing either heating (District Heating (DH)) or heating and power (Combined Heat and Power (CHP)) ... A feasibility assessment for DH/CHP, including consideration of biomass fuelled CHP, will be required for...all applications for non-domestic developments above 1000m² floorspace’.*

1.5.19 **Policy ESD 5: Renewable Energy.** This policy states that the provision of renewable energy within developments will be supported, and that *‘a feasibility assessment of the potential for significant on site renewable energy provision (above any provision required to meet national building standards) will be required for...all applications for non-domestic developments above 1000m² floorspace’.* If this assessment demonstrates that it is possible to deliver renewable energy on-site, this would be required as part of the Proposed Development.

1.5.20 **Policy ESD 8: Water Resources.** This policy states that *‘The Council will seek to maintain water quality, ensure adequate water resources and promote sustainability in water use’.* The policy will be used to ensure that new development is located in areas where adequate water supply can be provided from existing and potential water supply infrastructure. Supporting Policies ESD 1 and 3, it will also ensure new development incorporates water efficiency measures, reducing demand.

Cherwell Local Plan Review 2040

1.5.21 Cherwell District Council have undertaken consultation in relation to a review of the Local Plan (Cherwell District Council, 2021). Meeting the challenge of climate change was one of the three key themes of this Local Plan review, published in July 2020. The key objectives associated with meeting the challenge of climate change were to:

- *‘Promote net zero carbon new developments, with high sustainable construction standards, and low embodied carbon to ensure new developments deliver the highest viable energy efficiency, including the use of decentralised energy;*
- *Support a local zero- carbon energy system that reduces Cherwell’s reliance on global fossil fuels and prioritises community energy;*
- *Deliver developments that minimise and are resilient to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as flooding, drought and heatwaves;*
- *Protect and maximise opportunities for biodiversity net gain and the enhancement of Cherwell’s natural capital, and minimising pollution across the whole of Cherwell;*

- *Secure new green and blue infrastructure provision to improve sustainable connectivity, improve habitat connectivity to mitigate climate change impacts on biodiversity, and mitigate against the effects of development on the microclimate;*
- *Protect, conserve and enhance ‘natural capital’ assets such as soils, woodlands, hedges and ponds in order to capture and store carbon;*
- *Prioritise active travel and increase the attraction of and opportunities for public transport, ensuring high standards of connectivity and accessibility to services for all. Reduce dependency on the private car as a mode of travel, facilitating the creation of a zero-carbon transport network;*
- *Support the efficient use of our local resources (particularly water efficiency);*
- *Recognise the contribution the historic environment can make to climate change mitigation through the reuse and recycling of existing buildings which retains embodied carbon and diminishes carbon emissions through the demolition and construction of new buildings; and*
- *Ensure a whole building approach is used for climate change mitigation measures for historic buildings, that allows for the unique circumstances of the historic building to be taken into account’.*

Cherwell Local Plan Review 2042

- 1.5.22 Cherwell District Council have prepared a new local plan, which will be submitted to the government for independent examination (Cherwell District Council, 2024). This plan is expected to carry on the legacy of the 2015 and 2020 local plans, providing a policy framework up to 2042.
- 1.5.23 The three overarching themes of the Plan are:
- *‘Meeting the challenge of climate change and ensuring sustainable development;*
 - *Maintaining and developing a sustainable local economy; and*
 - *Building healthy and sustainable communities’.*
- 1.5.24 The policies specific to climate change and relevant to the Proposed Development are as follows:
- 1.5.25 **Policy CSD 1: Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change.** This policy describes aims to mitigate the impact of development on climate change, which are laid out as in 1.5.13.
- 1.5.26 **Policy CSD 3: Achieving Net Zero carbon development, non-residential.** This policy details requirements to achieve carbon emissions reductions during construction and operation of a development. All new non-residential development of 500m² or more should achieve net zero operational carbon emissions from regulated energy uses by implementing the energy hierarchy as follows:
- Achieve at least a 45% reduction in regulated carbon emissions on site, compared to the carbon target emissions rate set by the building regulations part L 2021;
 - Positive weight will be given, where space heat demand is limited to ≤20kWh/m²/year and where total energy use intensity is limited to ≤65kWh/m²/year;
 - *‘Subsequent to points above, deliver sufficient renewable energy generation capacity on-site (or near-site with a private supply to site) to at least equal the development’s estimated annual regulated energy demand, or 120kWh/m² footprint/year wherever feasible;*

- *Where it is demonstrated not feasible to fully meet the renewable electricity provision sought in point above, the shortfall should be calculated and offset to zero;*
- *Developments of 5,000m² or more will be required to monitor and report energy performance for the first 5 years of occupation. The use of fossil fuels or connection to the gas grid will not generally be considered acceptable’.*

1.5.27 **Policy CSD 5: Embodied carbon.** This policy details steps to accurately report embodied carbon emissions for new projects and states that:

- *‘Major development (≥10 homes or ≥1,000m² floorspace) that contains existing buildings/structures should carry out a pre-redevelopment or pre-demolition audit following an established industry best practice method , with the aim of maximising retention and/or reuse of existing materials;*
- *All major new developments (≥10 dwellings or ≥1,000m² floorspace) should also complete a whole-life carbon assessment in accordance with RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment method, unless this would demonstrably be non-viable; and*
- *All large-scale major development (≥50 dwellings or ≥5,000m² floor space) should limit up-front embodied carbon to 675kgCO₂e/m² GIA. ‘Up-front’ means modules A1 – A5 in the RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment methodology, which should be used to demonstrate compliance with the target limit’.*

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Appendix 15.1 – Climate Change Policy and Legislative Context

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