

## **Home Builders Federation (HBF) Response to Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) for the Bristol Local Plan- Matter 14: Climate Change and Flood Risk**

HBF is the principal representative body of the housebuilding industry in England and Wales. Our representations reflect the views of our membership, which includes multi-national PLC's, regional developers and small, local builders. In any one year, our members account for over 80% of all new "for sale" market housing built in England and Wales as well as a large proportion of newly built affordable housing.

We have not commented on every policy on those of interest to our members.

We have not repeated our Regulation 19 concerns which remain outstanding but have referred them where we feel this is helpful. This response should therefore be read in tandem with our Regulation 19 comments.

### **Matter 14: Climate Change and Flood Risk**

#### **Issue 14.1: Whether policies relating to climate change and energy efficiency are justified, effective and consistent with national policy.**

*The Government published a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) in December 2023 relating to energy efficiency standards. EXA002.1 sets out some proposed main modifications to Policy NZC2 which the Council consider reflect these changes.*

#### **General matters**

#### **Q14.1: Do any other elements of policies NZC1, NZC3, NCZ4 or NCZ5 fall within the scope of the WMS? If so, do any of the requirements exceed current or future building regulations? If so, are these elements justified and consistent with the requirements of the WMS?**

HBF's response to Policy NZC1 is set out in para 140 and 141 of our Regulation 19 statement. We do not believe the Council's approach is justified or supported by local evidence.

#### **Q14.2: Have the requirements of policies NZC1 to NZC5 been subject to robust assessment of viability?**

No. HBF have made detailed comments highlighting our concerns about the viability study elsewhere in our MIQ response and in our Regulation 19 response, which are not repeated here.

#### **Policy NZC1: Climate change, sustainable design and construction**

#### **Q14.3: Is Policy NZC1 justified, consistent with national policy and effective? In particular:**

- a) **Is the requirement for all development proposals to submit Sustainability Statements justified?**

- b) Is the requirement for all residential or mixed-use developments of 200 dwellings or more to meet BREEAM Communities Excellent ratings justified and consistent with national policy?**
- c) Is the reference to other sustainable design standards clear and unambiguous?**
- d) Is requiring the optional technical standards for water efficiency standards justified by a clear local need, as set out in the PPG18?**

HBF's concerns about this policy are set out in our Reg 19 response see para 141 We concur with comments made by other parties questioning the justification for this policy in light of the WMS, and lack of local evidence and justification.

#### **Policy NZC2: Net zero carbon development – operational carbon**

**Q14.4: Is Policy NZC2 justified, consistent with national policy and effective? In particular**

- a) Is the policy clearly written and unambiguous, such that it would be evident to an applicant what would be required and a decision maker how they should react to development proposals?**

No

- b) Is it justified, or effective, to expect proposals for all development to submit an energy strategy, including any 'modelling' referred to in paragraph 12.1.20?**

No

- c) Are the suggested main modifications set out in EXA002.1 to Policy NCZ2 necessary to make the policy sound? Would any additional modifications be necessary to ensure consistency with the WMS?**

No

- d) Is the approach to Energy or Carbon offsetting justified and effective? Is it necessary, or effective, for the policy to include 'current' charges?**

No. The suggested change to the policy to require that "homes, achieve a 100% reduction in regulated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the Target Emission Rate calculated using the in-force version of SAP, Home Energy Model or future replacement."

The proposed changed continues

"Where it is clearly demonstrated that onsite emissions reduction has been maximised and it is not technically feasible for the development to achieve a 100% reduction on the Target

Emissions rate onsite, the remaining regulated CO<sub>2</sub> emissions should be offset as set out below.” And the policy then says

“Carbon offsetting

Where the above requirements for energy use CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction cannot be met by on-site measures alone, any remaining CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will be met by either:

A financial contribution towards the council’s energy offset fund; or

Securing the provision of acceptable directly linked or near-site new additional renewable electricity generation provision.”

The financial contribution required will be a one-off payment equivalent to the cost of mitigating the remaining CO<sub>2</sub> emissions off-site over a 30 year period. The value of a tonne of CO<sub>2e</sub> is tied to the high scenario in the valuation of Energy Use and Greenhouse Gas supplementary guidance to the treasury’s Green Book (currently £403).

Where development does not meet the minimum onsite renewable energy requirement, a one off-payment equivalent to the cost of providing equivalent additional small scale solar PV energy generation elsewhere in the city over a 30 year period, index linked. This cost is tied to the most recent DESNZ solar PV cost data for small scale solar PV, and includes a 15% administrative charge (currently £99 per MWh).

HBF fundamental concerns about policies seeking to go further and faster than building regulations remain, but if there is to be policy it must be possible to comply with it, this is not the case for the suggested wording here.

**e) Is it justified and consistent with national policy to allow compliance with PassivHaus Classic or higher standards?**

No. There is no need or justification for planning policy to get involved in this issue. The Building Regulation process is enough.

**f) Under the ‘delivering modelled performance’ section, is it clear what would be expected with any development, or how it would be controlled?**

HBF response is set out in para 142 to 148 of our Regulation 19 statement HBF note the changes proposed by the Council in relation to the WMS which they say will enable them to comply with the restrictions on setting local policies on this issue. HBF do not believe the Council has provided sufficient evidence to justify the need for any policy in this area above and beyond building regulation and particularly not one as complex and unclear as this. The viability implications of this need to

have been fully assessed as part of the whole plan viability assessment and have been. Our member experience suggests Biodiversity Net Gain, a mandatory and complex area of new policy is already creating delays and increasing pressure on under resourced planning department, so to introduce new policies such as this will only add to that administrative burden. This is policy is unnecessary as there is already a system to ensure homes are built to high environmental standards that of Building Regulations. HBF do not agree that Local Plans, and the Bristol Local Plan is particular, need to be adding additional policies and complexity to this issue.

**Policy NZC3: Embodied carbon, materials and the circular economy**

**Q14.5: Is Policy NZC3 justified, consistent with national policy and effective?**

**In particular:**

**Is the policy clearly written and unambiguous, such that it would be evident to an applicant what would be required and a decision maker how they should react to development proposals, particularly in relation to refrigerants, materials and the circular economy?**

**Are the standards and thresholds set out for major applications justified, achievable and consistent with national policy? Where proposed targets cannot be met, would it be justified to require financial contributions to the Council's carbon offset fund? Is it necessary, of effective, for the policy to include the 'current' scale of any financial contribution?**

HBF response is set out in para 149 and 150 of our Regulation 19 statement

**Policy NZC4: Adaptation to a changing climate**

**Q14.6: Is Policy NCZ4 justified, consistent with national policy and effective?**

**In particular:**

**Is the policy clearly written and unambiguous, such that it would be evident to an applicant what would be required and a decision maker how they should react to development proposals, particularly in terms of what would constitute acceptable or unacceptable forms of development?**

**Further to the above, does the policy unnecessarily repeat other policies relating to energy efficiency, design, living conditions and such things as provision of blue and green infrastructure?**

**Is it justified to expect an 'adaptation strategy' for all proposals? In addition, is it justified or effective to expect all adaptation strategies to include technical change scenarios?**

HBF response is set out in para 151 of our Regulation 19 statement

**Policy NZC5: Renewable energy and energy efficiency**

**Q14.7: Is Policy NCZ5 justified, consistent with national policy and effective?**

**In particular:**

**Is the identification of Avonmouth Industrial and Bristol Port area for renewable energy capacity and storage justified? Have all potential impacts of potential renewable energy development in this area been fully and robustly assessed? (see also questions relating to policy E4).**

**Are the matters listed in the second paragraph of the policy meant to be exhaustive? Is there any specific reason for setting out the normal 'planning balance' exercise in this policy when not identified in all others? Further to**

**this, would the benefits of measures set out in the fourth paragraph of the policy be balanced against any other factors?**

HBF response is set out in para 152 to 156 of our Regulation 19 statement

***Word Count 1557 (including wording of the questions)***