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**SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STATEMENTS – GUIDANCE NOTE ON CONTENT**

What is a sustainable design and construction statement?

A document that explains how a proposal’s design and construction will contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development and, in particular, to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, in line with relevant policies of the Craven Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Aim of this guidance note:

The aim of this note is to provide practical guidance on what the Council expects to see in a good SDCS. It should help applicants and developers to produce a clear and concise statement, which explains how their proposals accord with policy requirements and achieve the highest possible standards of sustainable design and construction. The overarching aim is to create high quality developments that not only minimise their own environmental impact, but are also cheaper to run, more secure, contribute to the local economy and community, provide healthy living and working conditions, and respect the area’s rich heritage and distinctiveness.

The suggested SDCS content, below, is based on a set of principles relating to development processes, building designs and construction practices which will deliver economic, social and environmental benefits now in the future. Considering such sustainability mechanisms from the outset will help to avoid unnecessary development costs and delays in planning decisions.

When is a sustainable design and construction statement required?

The Council’s local validation list sets out supporting information the local planning authority may request with a planning application. It stipulates that all planning applications should be supported by a SDCS and that all SDCS should meet the following minimum requirements:

* A non-technical summary that sets out what climate change mitigation measures have been integrated within the scheme’s design;
* Details of how the proposed climate change mitigation measures compare to the minimum required under current Building Regulations;
* Where climate change mitigation measures have been discounted, the applicants demonstrate why it is not viable to do so.

Information on the requirement for a SDCS can be found on the Council’s website at:

[*https://www.cravendc.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications-and-notifications/national-and-local-planning-validation-requirements/local-information-requirements/sustainable-design-and-construction-statement/*](https://www.cravendc.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications-and-notifications/national-and-local-planning-validation-requirements/local-information-requirements/sustainable-design-and-construction-statement/)

The Council’s local validation list stipulates that all planning applications should be supported by a SDCS, however in terms of the minimum requirements set out above, some developments are exempt from Building Regulations. Where this is the case, applicants are strongly encouraged to state in the SDCS that as there are no building regulation requirements, all proposed sustainability measures are additional. An example of this would be a proposed porch extension, which can be designed with high levels of thermal insulation (principle 2 in table below) and locally supplied, sustainability-sourced, and low-impact materials (principle 4 in table below).

In the case of reserved matters applications, the SDCS is expected to provide details of progress against the outline SDCS and should deal with any outstanding items not covered at the outline stage.

Suggested SDCS Content

Based on the relevant policy drivers and minimum requirements for a SDCS, as set out above and via the web link, the following six key sustainability principles have been identified, which applicants are strongly encouraged to address in a SDCS:

* (1.) Complying with BREEAM Standards (non-residential)
* (2.) Reducing Energy Use and Generating Renewable Energy
* (3.) Reducing Water Use, Recycling Water and Implementing SuDS
* (4.) Minimising Waste during construction and operation
* (5.) Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure
* (6.) Travel & Transport

Principles 1 to 4 relate to the requirements of Craven Local Plan policy: ENV3: Good Design, and specifically criteria (s) and (t). In addition, principle 3 relates to the requirements of policy ENV6: Flood Risk, in terms of the inclusion of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Principle 5 relates to the requirements of policies ENV4: Biodiversity and ENV5: Green Infrastructure and principle 6 relates to the requirements of policies SP4: Spatial Strategy & Housing Growth and INF7: Sustainable Transport & Highways. Other relevant policies are highlighted in the table below.

By considering each of the six sustainability principles set out above, it should be possible to produce a good SDCS. However, some flexibility may be called for and it may be appropriate for applicants and developers to consider:

(a) How they can put forward different climate change mitigation measures/initiatives relating to each sustainability principle, suitable to the size and the context of the development;

(b) Why they may need to put emphasis on some climate change mitigation measures/initiatives relating to some sustainability principles over others;

(c) Why they may not be able to consider some sustainability principles (e.g. the development may be too small, or the site is maybe too constrained). Where this is the case, a clear and reasoned justification should be provided within the SDCS.

There can be other submission documents with an application where one or more of these sustainability principles are addressed in more detail (e.g. Environmental Impact Assessments). Where this is the case, the SDCS should refer to them by setting out that more detail can be found within those documents.

The table below suggest sections to be included in a typical SDCS, in order to meet the Council’s minimum requirements for this specific local validation requirement. It is suggested that details of how climate change mitigation measures have been considered and incorporated are focused on the six sustainability principles identified above.

The length and detail provided in a SDCS will be dependent on the type of development proposal in a planning application. Hence, the SDCS content should be proportionate to its size and type. Whilst SDCSs should contain the necessary information, they need not be long, wordy documents, and where appropriate they can use drawings and figures to illustrate the initiatives put forward.

**Table 1: SDSC Suggested Content**

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| **Introduction and Context**  A brief introduction can be used to set the context for a statement, by explaining relevant aspects of the site, location and proposal, and relevant local and national planning policies, including:   * Craven Local Plan policies (see below) and any Neighbourhood Plan policies, which together are the starting point for planning decisions; and * The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, which are material considerations in planning decisions, and any other relevant national documents on good design. |
| **Non-Technical Summary**  This is the first of three minimum validation requirements and should set out what climate change mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design. This may need to be little more than a list of relevant design features. |
| **Comparison with Building Regulations**  This is the second of three minimum validation requirements and should set out details of how the proposed climate change mitigation measures compare to the minimum required under current Building Regulations. All reasonable opportunities should be taken to do better than the minimum. Where there are no building regulation requirements, because a development is exempt from Building Regulations, applicants are strongly encouraged to state in the SDCS that all proposed climate change mitigation measures are effectively above the minimum. |
| **Discounted Measures**  This is the final minimum validation requirement and should explain why some climate change mitigation measures may not have been incorporated into the design and why it is considered that all reasonable opportunities have been taken. If measures have been discounted on grounds of economic viability, this should be demonstrated by a reasoned viability argument supported by proportionate evidence, as part of the SDCS. |
| **Six Key Sustainability Principles**  In producing a statement, it will be very helpful to consider each of the following sustainability principles and the guidance beneath. These set out some specific climate change mitigation measures that can be incorporated into designs, in order to satisfy the requirements of relevant Craven Local Plan policies (referenced in bold and square brackets below).   * (1.) Complying with BREEAM Standards (non-residential) * A proposed non-residential development of 1,000 or more square metres is required to meet at least the BREEAM standard ‘Very Good’ where feasible. It should seek to achieve the BREEAM standard ‘Very Good’ or better unless it has been demonstrated through an economic viability assessment that it is not viable to do so; * Producing a separate BREEAM Pre-Assessment document - this can be cross-referenced in the SDCS. **[Policy ENV3(s)]** * (2.) Reducing Energy Use and Generating Renewable Energy through: * Attaining high levels of thermal insulation, careful material specification and efficient systems; * Minimising on-site carbon dioxide emissions through maximising energy efficiency, supplying energy efficiently using low carbon heating and cooling systems, and using on-site renewable energy generation, such as solar power; * Incorporating passive and active energy efficient design measures such as fabric performance, air tightness and mechanical ventilation to prevent overheating and reduce carbon emissions; * Incorporating a combination of high fabric performance and good natural daylighting to reduce use of electric lighting and reduced space heating consumption, as a result of maximising solar gains during winter months; * Designing lighting and heating controls to allow for localised control.   **[Policy ENV3 (a), (s) & (t), ENV9(e)]**   * (3.) Reducing Water Use, Recycling Water and Implementing SuDS: * Maximising opportunities for the incorporation of water conservation into a proposed design, including the collection and re-use of water on site; * Specifying water features and fittings in order to ensure sustainable water consumption for the proposed development, where appropriate (examples include the specification of low flow taps and dual flush toilets); * Describing the passage of water run-off from a roof area, and explaining how this run-off does not require complex treatment prior to discharge into a watercourse or sewer; * Analysing if the discharge of excess post development run-off has potential cumulative development impacts.   **[Policies ENV3(t), ENV6(b) and ENV8(b)]**   * (4.) Minimising Waste during construction and operation through: * Specifying locally supplied, sustainably-sourced, low-impact and recycled materials to reduce the environmental impact of materials used on site; * Specifying materials that will achieve a rating of A+ to D in the BRE’s Green Guide to Specification (available under [*www.bregroup.com*](http://www.bregroup.com)), as these have a low embodied impact on the environment; * Taking all reasonable opportunities to minimise construction and demolition waste on site by utilising the principles of the ‘waste hierarchy’.   **[Policy ENV3(s) & (t)]**   * (5.) Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure (GI) through: * Demonstrating how the green infrastructure (GI) network can be improved, where possible either on site or via off site enhancement; * Avoiding loss or harm to the existing GI network where possible; * Incorporating green roofs into the scheme, where feasible; * Incorporating ecological features into the development demonstrating how the proposal will make a positive contribution towards achieving a net gain in biodiversity, wherever possible.   **[Policies ENV1(b), ENV3(a), ENV4, and ENV5]**   * (6.) Travel & Transport: * Specifying how the site design and layout facilitates easy walking access to public transport facilities where available (e.g. nearby bus stands); * Specifying how and where electric vehicle charging points are to be provided.   **[Policies SP4, ENV7(d), (e) and INF4(e)]** |

This guidance is based on adopted local plan policy requirements and existing local validation requirements, which were published by the Council on 1st September 2020. These local validation requirements stipulate that all planning applications should be supported by a SDCS.  The Council has a requirement to review local validation lists at least every two years and will be reviewed later in 2021. Once complete, it may be necessary to update this guidance. If this is required, the updated guidance will be published on the Council’s website at: <https://www.cravendc.gov.uk/planning/planning-applications-and-notifications/national-and-local-planning-validation-requirements/local-information-requirements/> .