

Public
Key Decision – No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction Technical Advice Note (TAN)

Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 18th November 2025

Executive Portfolio: Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning

Report by: Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction Technical Advice Note (TAN), attached as Appendix 1, provides updated guidance to support the implementation of current and emerging Local Plan policies on climate resilience, sustainable construction, and design quality. It builds upon the Council's adopted Design Guide SPD (2017) and responds to new requirements in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Building Regulations and the Council's Climate Strategy (2023).

The TAN consolidates expectations on a range of matters including energy efficiency, low-carbon heat, water management, air quality, biodiversity net gain, sustainable materials, and active travel. Adoption of the TAN will:

1. Support delivery of corporate priorities on climate action, net zero, health, and nature recovery
2. Provide clarity for applicants, agents and decision-makers, improving scheme quality and consistency.
3. Reduce delays by setting clear expectations at pre-application and validation stages.

Cabinet is asked to approve the TAN as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications across the district.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED**:

1. To adopt the Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction TAN (Appendix 1) as non-statutory guidance.
2. To delegate authority to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning, to make any necessary typographical, visual or other minor changes to the Document prior to its publication.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to adopt the Environmentally Sustainable Design & Construction TAN, providing practical guidance to support the implementation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (and emerging Local Plan) and the delivery of the Council's Climate Strategy.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency and adopted a Climate Strategy (2023) committing to net zero for its own operations by 2040. The Huntingdonshire Place Strategy 2050 also establishes "Journey 4: Environmental Innovation" as a key priority, seeking zero-carbon development, local energy generation, and accelerated climate action. While the TAN does not form part of the statutory Development Plan and is not an adopted supplementary planning document, it does provide additional helpful guidance on how to incorporate an environmentally sustainable approach to delivering high quality new developments across the district. It aligns the government's ambition, with the Council's aspirations for more efficient, low carbon development.

- 2.2 The TAN:

- Interprets Local Plan policies (including LP10 The Countryside, LP11 Design Context, LP12 Design Implementation, LP14 Amenity, LP17 Parking Provision and Vehicular Movement and LP25 Housing Mix) in light of updated national guidance (NPPF 2024, Building Regulations Part F (Ventilation), L (Conservation of fuel and power), O (Overheating) and S (Infrastructure for charging electric vehicles), and the forthcoming Future Homes Standard 2025).
- Supports Draft Policies LP24 – Minimising Operational Energy Consumption and LP25 – Making Existing Buildings More Energy Efficient of the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046.
- Provides detailed design and construction guidance on:
 - The Energy Hierarchy
 - Passive Design
 - Building Insulation and Airtightness
 - Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recover
 - Decentralised energy systems
 - PV and solar Thermal Panels
 - Heat Pumps
 - Construction materials
 - Modern Methods of Construction
 - Waste
 - Water & Air Quality,
 - Nature conservation and biodiversity
 - EV Charging
 - Retrofitting
 - Traditional Buildings
 - Home Efficiency Grants

- Complements the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017) and site-specific Design Codes.
- 2.3 The TAN has been prepared by the HDC Urban Design Team in collaboration with HDC Conservation, Trees, Ecology, Landscape and Policy colleagues as well as the Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- Option A – Adopt the TAN (Recommended): Provides clarity, advice and guidance to applicants and developers, supporting corporate priorities.
- Option B – Publish TAN for further consultation prior to adoption: Allows wider stakeholder input but may delay adoption.
- Option C – Do nothing: Risks missed opportunities for sustainable development.

4. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 4.1 Without adoption, there is a risk that applicants will lack clarity, resulting in missed opportunities for sustainable development within the District.
- 4.2 With adoption, the TAN provides clarity, strengthens the Council's ability to promote environmentally sustainable design and will help to deliver the draft vision to net zero set out in the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046.

5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 Cabinet adoption: 18th November 2025.
- 5.2 Publication of TAN and adoption statement on HDC website: within 2 weeks of Cabinet decision.
- 5.3 Briefing sessions for Development Management officers and Agents' Forum: within 8 weeks of adoption.

6. LINK TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES, THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The TAN supports the Corporate Plan (2023–2028):
- Priority 2 – Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations (climate action, health, housing).
 - Priority 3 – Doing our core work well (efficient, effective service delivery).
- 6.2 It also supports Huntingdonshire Futures Place Strategy 2050, aligning with Local Plan policies and national legislation.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The draft TAN was circulated internally in June 2025, with feedback incorporated from service areas across the Council. Early engagement has also taken place with Executive Councillor for Climate, Transformation and Workforce.
- 7.2 Key changes included:
- Stronger alignment with the Corporate Plan priorities (2023–2028).
 - Expanded sections on biodiversity net gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), and tree canopy cover.
 - Updated references to Building Regulations and Future Homes Standard.
 - Clarifications on energy hierarchy, passive design, water management, waste hierarchy and retrofit measures.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Adoption of the TAN as non-statutory guidance is within the Council's powers. Once adopted, it will be used as guidance for applicants and developers.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment of the TAN, which is attached as Appendix 2 has been completed. The assessment shows that the guidance document will have a neutral and / or positive impact on equality and diversity.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The TAN has been prepared in-house using existing resources. No additional staff or budget is required. Publication and training costs are minimal and covered within existing budgets.

11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The TAN is expected to have positive impacts on health and wellbeing through improved thermal comfort, air quality, and opportunities for active travel and access to nature.

12. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The TAN will have strong positive environmental and climate impacts, promoting carbon reduction, climate resilience, water efficiency, biodiversity net gain and sustainable construction.

13. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

13.1 Adopting the TAN will:

- Deliver updated guidance in line with the Corporate Plan and Climate Strategy.
- Support the Council's statutory planning role and climate emergency commitments.
- Improve efficiency at pre-application and validation stages.

14. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Environmentally Sustainable Design and Construction Technical Advice Note

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- [Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 \(2019\)](#)
- [Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD \(2017\)](#)
- [Climate Strategy and Action Plan \(2023\)](#)
- [National Planning Policy Framework \(2024\)](#)
- [Building Regulations \(Parts F, L, O, S\)](#)
- [Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046](#)

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