Sustainable and Energy Efficient Development

6.4 This policy sets out the principles that should be followed to achieve low carbon and energy efficient development, to support the requirements of PfE policy JP-S2 for new development to work towards net zero. This supports the target for a carbon neutral borough by 2038.

Policy S1 – Sustainable and Energy Efficient Development

1. New development should be designed to:

a. Minimise energy demand, considering factors such as building form, massing, orientation and window design.
b. Maximise energy efficiency, through low carbon heating systems and reduced dependence on the use of fossil fuels
c. Maximise renewable energy generation through the installation of Solar PV, or other sources where appropriate.

In applications which are for existing buildings:

d. Retrofitting for carbon and energy efficiency will be supported providing it is sympathetic to the design and character of the existing building. In historic buildings, retrofitting measures should comply with the requirements of Policy PE5.
e. Where planning permission is required for the change of use of an existing building, including for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs), proposals should include improvements to the building fabric to increase energy efficiency if the existing building is substandard (below Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating 'C').

Applications are expected to consider all carbon emissions used in construction, through the following:

f. All development will be expected to minimise its embodied carbon content, by ensuring that buildings are efficient in material use, form and design from the outset.
g. The selection of materials in construction should be informed by their carbon footprint, prioritising reused and recovered existing materials, natural materials from sustainable sources, and local materials.
h. Where there are existing buildings on site, their re-use should be explored and demonstrated to be unfeasible before resorting to demolition.
i. Applicants are encouraged to use embodied carbon standards (as measured by CO2 e/m^2) to demonstrate how embodied carbon has been reduced.

Places for Everyone Links:
Policy JP-S2 Carbon and Energy

Reasoned Justification

6.5 This policy provides additional guidance to PfE policy JP-S2 in order to meet the carbon reduction and energy efficiency targets outlined the policy. This will support national targets and ambitious local targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

6.6 Ensuring that new developments are sustainable and energy efficient is not just about meeting wider emission targets, but delivering multiple benefits for Rochdale's residents, such as lower energy bills and well-insulated homes. This is particularly important for the health of the borough's more vulnerable residents so should be provided across all types of housing.

6.7 While improved construction specifications can help to meet carbon reductions targets, this can come at a cost premium if not carried out alongside sustainable design. Applicants should have regard to the Net Zero design guidance on the GMCA[2] website and detail how the proposed development meets the energy and carbon policies contained in PfE Policy JP-S2. This should be demonstrated through the submission of an Energy and Carbon Proforma and Energy and Carbon Statement, appropriate to the type and size of development. Guidance for completing these is also available on the GMCA website.

6.8 A major source of carbon emissions is from existing buildings, and so it is important that planning policies are supportive of the retrofitting agenda to deliver on the 2038 net zero ambition. As with new buildings, retrofitting for energy efficiency can deliver benefits for the borough's residents in terms of lower energy bills and health and wellbeing. Where proposals are for changes of use, applicants are encouraged to use the appropriate Energy and Carbon proforma to demonstrate improvements to the building fabric for reducing energy demand and energy efficiency.

6.9 PfE Policy JP-S2 also refers to emissions 'in construction' from 2028, also referred to as embodied carbon (i.e. materials and construction processes throughout the whole lifecycle of a building). This currently makes up 20% of UK built environment emissions and so is essential to meet local and national targets. The simplest way to reduce embodied carbon is avoiding demolition and reusing buildings where possible. However, it is acknowledged that in some instances, it is not practicable or viable to consider refurbishment, or that some refurbished buildings may not be able to achieve a sufficient level of energy efficiency and demolition is a more sustainable option.

6.10 The GMCA website includes further guidance on reducing embodied carbon, as well as recommended targets for new types of development (kg CO2/m2). A summary of efforts to reduce upfront embodied carbon is part of the Energy and Carbon proforma.

[2] GMCA Net Zero Design Guidance - Greater Manchester Combined Authority