

ADEPT President's Awards 2023

Entry form

Main contact name	Richard Daone
Email	richard_daone@bathnes.gov.uk
Award category	Delivering Clean Growth
Project Title	Innovative Net Zero Energy Based New Development Local Plan Policy
Local authority entrant	Bath and North East Somerset Council

Headline summary (150 characters max.)

We are the first council in the UK to have successfully adopted and implemented a net zero new housing policy limiting total energy use/space heating.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project delivering clean growth, not just now but into the future – demonstrating ambition and vision, anticipating future challenges and future proofing growth including developing the workforce for the future? (150 words max)

Local Plan Policy SCR6 has been adopted in advance of the Future Homes Standards to be introduced in 2025 through Building Regulations. It is the first of its kind in the country. We worked with Cornwall Council who have now adopted a similar policy.

Key outcomes are:

- Halts additional contributions of greenhouse gas emissions from new housing, as the policy targets are virtually impossible to achieve with a gas boiler.
- Comfortable, well-insulated, net-zero homes for residents.
- Significantly reduces household bills
- Increases energy security of the residents and B&NES in general, and the proportion of renewable energy in the district.
- All new homes will be required to be built to the sustainable construction standards.

Policies are supported by detailed guidance. We are also working with the construction/energy assessors industry on policy implementation, thereby helping to develop their skills and working practices.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project working across boundaries and with different partners to achieve long lasting clean growth? (150 words max)

We worked with various organisations in developing robust evidence to support the policies, as well as their scrutiny through examination and their implementation moving forward. This included significant working across spatial and sectoral boundaries e.g. with the three other West of England Councils and Cornwall Council on supporting evidence, private sector consultancies, local voluntary organisations and Client Earth (law firm on climate change).

Our work with these other councils and adoption of our policy sets a precedent for other local planning authorities to use the published evidence base and secure adoption of similar policy standards.

An initial 6-month funded partnership that the Council has secured with University of Bath academics will support policy implementation. The academics are providing technical expertise to scrutinise complex applications and understand any issues with implementation.

The Council has also been discussing the policy requirements/implementation with the construction and energy assessment industry.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project proactively engaging with business to tackle problems and find solutions, stimulating the clean growth sector at the same time? (150 words max.)

In circumstances where the policy requirements cannot be met on site then a carbon offsetting payment will be allowed through a section 106 agreement. Offsetting projects will be delivered through partnerships with Bath & West Community Energy (BWCE) including retrofitting PVs supporting lower income households.

The Council's partnership with the University of Bath includes local architectural practice within the working group. The research will consider and develop the industry response to the sustainable construction policies.

The council holds regular planning agents forum which allows developers and agents to continue to remain up to date with and implement policy changes and requirements.

It is envisaged that the new sustainable construction policies will drive practice towards cleaner growth within the district.

The Council also held a joint public webinar with BWCE focusing on the role of community-owned wind energy in helping to meet climate change commitments within the context of the LPPU.

Delivering clean growth: How is this project going beyond the 3-5 year budget cycle to prepare for future challenges including the use or consideration of innovative funding solutions? (150 words max.)

The adopted policies form part of the Council's local plan until 2029. The council has recently launched work on the New Local Plan which covers a period of 2022 to 2042 and provides an opportunity to review and embed this approach into the longer term. The adopted policies will be reviewed using the research by the University of Bath to build upon/potentially set even stricter energy efficiency standards for construction.

The council will continue to work with our neighbouring authorities within the West of England and other councils to share evidence bases, resources and learn from each others adopted policies.

The adopted policies ensure that any homes permitted within the district will be zero carbon reducing emissions from all future housing stock. This has resulted in a long term response to the climate emergency. The requirement for embodied carbon assessments ensures that low carbon materials are used in construction.

All categories: please add anything else that supports your award entry

Our work leading the way with a net zero local energy based planning policy and getting this through Examination will pave the way for other local authorities to progress similar policies. Other authorities policies may have even more ambitious energy use/heating demand targets. This should create a sea-change for residential and non-residential development to be net zero carbon (or even carbon positive) in B&NES and eventually nationally. Planning policy will then push the construction and energy assessment industry to develop its practice on wider/more comprehensive basis. This will help develop skills in the workforce in a key sector within the green economy.