Topic Paper 1: Climate Change Summary

Introduction

Planning policies should aim to support resilience to the climate emergency which Knowsley Council declared in 2020.

Context

Knowsley faces many climate change challenges; carbon dioxide indicators show that Knowsley's total emissions are around 6000k CO^2e lower than the wider Liverpool City Region. Transport is Knowsley's biggest contributor to its carbon emissions accounting for 42% (313kt/$c0^2e$) of all carbon emissions in Knowsley. For this reason, the focus on improving active travel through walking and cycling, public transport usage and sustainable public transport (EV buses), and increasing green infrastructure will be pivotal in the Local Plan for climate change mitigation.

Addressing climate change is essential for creating a cleaner and more comfortable environment for Knowsley residents, that also provides opportunities. For example, increasing the number of residents who pursue active travel improve health outcomes, whilst increasing public transport provision will provide more opportunities for employment and help residents unlock access to parts of the borough and wider City Region that they do not usually visit.

Key policies, plans and strategies

The National Planning Policy Framework supports the transition to net zero by 2050 and supports shaping places to be more resilient to climate change and its effects. It sets out policies to ensure places contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the full range of present and future impacts of climate change, by minimising vulnerability and improving resilience.

The National Planning Practice Guidance on Climate Change provides guidance on how to identify mitigation and adaptation measures in the planning process to address the impacts of climate change and how these measures can be integrated into local plans. It also covers which parts of a local plan's evidence base can be used to identify and assess climate risks to an area, like sustainability appraisals, strategic flood risk assessments, and water cycle studies.

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Spatial Development Strategy is being prepared and it is likely to provide guidance on issues such as tackling climate change, optimising the use of brownfield land, securing long-term biodiversity improvements, improving blue and green infrastructure, increasing efficiencies in

mineral and waste management, and increasing energy conservation and renewable energy provisions.

The Knowsley Council Plan 2025-2030 supports climate resilience through sustainable development and progress towards the Council's commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions from its estate and services by 2040. This includes delivering town centre regeneration, responding to NPPF reforms, supporting growth through infrastructure provision, implementing climate and air quality initiatives, enhancing green spaces, upgrading street lighting, and installing over 300 electric vehicle charge points across the borough.

Knowsley's Climate Delivery Plan 2025-2030 draws on the key pillars established in the LCR's 5-year climate action plan 2023-2028, identifying the climate actions that key partners and stakeholders should undertake, outlining how these actions will reduce boroughwide emissions and how Knowsley will lead and enable change.

Knowsley's Air Quality Strategy 2024-2027 sets out the clear priorities for air quality followed by a clear strategic framework to help deliver local air quality improvements and objectives within Knowsley whilst also supporting the achievement of national air quality objectives.

Knowsley's Net Zero Delivery Plan 2026-2030 focuses on the decarbonisation of the Council's buildings and assets. The plan outlines specific, actionable steps to drive down carbon emissions and enhance the borough's resilience to climate impacts through the four pillars of buildings, transport, the natural environment and clean energy.

Knowsley's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan imparts Knowsley's ambition to enable more residents to be able to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday journeys, capitalising on the 44.4% of Knowsley's residents who have a commute of less than 10km. Notwithstanding this cycling only currently accounts for 1.7% of all journeys to work in the borough whilst walking accounts for 7%.

Key issues to be addressed by the Local Plan

- Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation – Development will need to contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and be designed to adapt to the impacts of climate change, including higher temperatures, increased rainfall intensity and more frequent extreme weather events.
- Low-Carbon Infrastructure Requirements – The transition to a low-carbon economy will require development to support renewable and low-carbon energy generation, sustainable transport infrastructure, electric vehicle charging provision and energy-efficient design, whilst recognising infrastructure delivery and network capacity constraints.
- Energy Network Capacity – Constraints within the electricity network, including the availability of grid capacity, may affect the location, form and

timing of development and the delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy projects.

- Climate Resilience – Climate change projections indicate that Knowsley is likely to experience more extreme weather conditions, particularly in relation to temperature and precipitation. Future development will need to be located and designed to minimise risks associated with overheating, surface water flooding and other climate-related impacts.
- Supporting Sustainable Patterns of Development – There is a need to ensure that future growth is directed to sustainable locations that reduce the need to travel, support active and public transport, and facilitate the transition to a net-zero carbon future.