

Carbon Reduction Strategy

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Approved: 16 April 2018

First Revision: 07 October 2019

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Carbon Reduction Strategy: Plan on a Page

By 2038 we will have a net zero-carbon economy. The council's own operations will be clean and efficient, and we will play a positive role enabling the wider district to achieve net-zero emissions

To deliver this vision we will focus on the eight priority areas listed below. We will produce and regularly review an action plan to tackle these priorities, and we will publicly report our own emissions every year.

Under priority area 1, **operational council buildings**, we will:

- Incorporate energy efficient design in the council's public building construction projects by aiming for a BREEAM score of Outstanding, where practical to do so.
- Continually improve energy efficiency and sustainable energy in the council's existing building estate.
- Seek opportunities for decarbonising heating in existing and new buildings.

On priority area 2, **Harrogate Convention Centre**, we will:

- Continually review the HCC estate to ensure buildings and events are as energy efficient as possible.
- Ensure that sustainable energy and low carbon technology is embedded in development plans.
- Work towards achieving the ISO 2012:1 sustainable events standard.

Under priority area 3, **operational and staff transport**, we will:

- Continually improve fleet efficiency.
- Regularly review options for using electric vehicles within the council fleet, including pool cars.
- Encourage staff to adopt sustainable transport options.

For priority area 4, **working practices**, we will:

- Ensure all new starters receive induction training on the council's environmental aims and policies.
- Engage staff and encourage action via internal communications and other initiatives.
- Eliminate the use of single-use plastics from our premises where possible.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle as much waste as possible from our own operations.

For Priority area 5, **domestic energy efficiency**, we will:

- Promote domestic energy efficiency via our separate Home Energy Conservation Act action plan.
- Make the most of available funding to help retrofit housing within the district.
- Ensure that council housing is as energy efficient as possible.

On priority area 6: **sustainable transport**, we will:

- Facilitate the take up of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) via a separate ULEV strategy.
- Develop and implement new sustainable transport measures.

To deliver priority area 7: **working with business and public sector partners**, we will

- Run an active Climate Change Coalition with local stakeholders to coordinate ideas, expertise and action.
- Work with the Public Services Leadership Board to coordinate joint carbon reduction activities.
- Ensure the Harrogate District's voice is represented in Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- Raise awareness of the need for decarbonisation, communicate our carbon reduction activities and transparently report our carbon emissions.

For priority area 8: **influencing new development** we will:

- Publish planning guidance to go alongside the Local Plan, outlining sustainable design requirements.
- Use our influence to ensure sustainability is built into landmark developments such as the Station Gateway.

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

Our vision.

By 2038 we will have a net zero-carbon economy. Our own operations will be clean and efficient, and we will play a positive role enabling the wider district to achieve net-zero emissions.

This complements our corporate ambition for the district is to build on our heritage and be a progressive and vibrant place to live, work and visit; and for the council to act as one council that is customer focussed, commercially driven and fit for the future.

Key Points:

- The effects of climate change are being felt in the UK and abroad. The international consensus on tackling climate change is reflected in UK policy which has imposed legally-binding national carbon reduction budgets.
- The council has a corporate responsibility both as a large employer and a community leader to take action to reduce emissions.
- The council supports measures to address the climate emergency as outlined by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and we intend to meet IPCC targets and a final goal of carbon neutrality.
- The scope of the carbon reduction strategy is mainly focused on our internal operations where we can have the greatest influence.
- We will also support efforts in the district as a whole to reduce carbon emissions and generate and use energy more cleanly.
- As well as contributing to legal targets to combat climate change, reducing carbon emissions often also results more immediate local benefits such as lower energy bills, cleaner air, better quality housing and economic benefits.
- We will regularly review this strategy and action plan to ensure that it is up to date and continues to meet our needs.

Climate change is a long-term threat, which needs to be addressed now because our economy and infrastructure are built around existing or historic climatic conditions. To tackle this, we are committed to achieving zero carbon emissions by 2038. That is the key aim of this strategy.

Climate change is having an effect on our environment and human populations. According to the World Meteorological Organisation, 2018 was the fourth warmest year on record, and 2015–2018 were the four warmest years on record as the long-term warming trend continues. Ocean heat content is at a record high and global mean sea level continues to rise. Arctic and Antarctic sea-ice extent is well below average. Extreme weather had an impact on lives and sustainable development on every continent. In 2018 average global temperature reached approximately 1 °C above pre-industrial levels.

The aim of international agreement on reducing emissions is to try to prevent a dangerous level of temperature increase. These agreements are reflected in the UK's own Climate Change Act, which in 2019 was amended to set a net-zero target for emissions by 2050.

Here in the Harrogate District we can expect the most visible impacts of climate change to be an increase in unstable weather conditions. We are seeing an increase in flooding and intense storms because warmer air can hold more water vapour, making rainfall more intense. The other side of the coin is that heatwaves will become more common, putting a strain on vulnerable residents.

These impacts can damage property and crops, disrupt infrastructure and overwhelm existing drainage systems and have a negative impact on health and other local services. Over the long term, this area will not be immune to wider changes such as population movements and changing economic conditions.

The council is directly responsible for around 10,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions each year and pays around £1.5 million in energy and fuel bills. The district as a whole produces around 1.3 million tonnes of CO₂ per year and has a combined energy bill of over £400 million a year.

We have a corporate responsibility both as a large employer and a community leader to take action to reduce our own emissions. In addition to helping to reduce our energy bills, we recognise that activity carried out to cut carbon emissions has a number of positive impacts, such as improved air quality, providing better working and home environments, encouraging innovation and opening up opportunities for commercialisation.

The scope of this strategy is mainly focused on efforts to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions within our own operations, but alongside this we will continue to use our influence to promote carbon reduction in the wider district.

Cutting carbon has many benefits, in addition to helping the global picture and meeting national targets. Reducing energy consumption in public buildings and vehicles, cuts bills thus saving taxpayers' money. Many carbon reduction activities - especially those associated with sustainable transport - result in cleaner air, and reduced traffic congestion. Energy efficient homes are warmer, healthier and more affordable to run. Carbon reduction goes hand in hand with good resource efficiency; it makes us use finite natural resources wisely, and look to future technological developments.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

Key points:

- This strategy sits within a framework on national regional and local policies relating to energy, emissions and climate change.
- The UK target is now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050.
- Emissions in the district as a whole have decreased in line with the national trend in recent years, although we have higher emissions per capita than average.
- The council's corporate plan states that we will work to reduce our impact on the natural environment by reducing carbon emissions and adapting to climate change.
- The West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise partnerships are both implementing energy strategies, setting the region on a course of decarbonisation.
- At the wider scale, a number of external strategies and other activities are in place in order to lead the region towards becoming a zero carbon economy.

Nationally, successive governments have continued to implement the UK Climate Change Act 2008 which sets the legally binding UK-wide carbon budget. It should be noted that this is the settled national policy, a UK Act of Parliament, not a European Union Directive so it will not be affected by the withdrawal of the UK from the EU.

The UK has signed and ratified the United Nations Paris Agreement an international treaty that commits signatories to reduce carbon emissions sufficiently to limit global temperature increases to no more 2°C by the end of the century (considered a “safe level” of temperature increase), and ideally to limit the rise to 1.5°C.

Following the 2018 publication of the UN's special report into the impact of a 1.5°C temperature rise, and with fresh advice from the UK's Committee of Climate Change in 2019, Parliament has strengthened the Climate Change Act – the ultimate target is to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

The government published the UK Industrial Strategy in November 2017. One of the “Grand Challenges” in this national strategy is to maximise the advantages for UK industry of the global shift to clean growth.

Directly linked to the Industrial Strategy, and as a requirement of the Climate Change Act, the government published the Clean Growth Strategy in October 2017. This strategy has two key aims: To meet domestic emissions reduction commitments at the lowest possible net cost to UK taxpayers, consumers and businesses; and to maximise the social and economic benefits for the UK of doing so. The Clean Growth Strategy includes a voluntary target for all the public sector to achieve a 30% greenhouse gas reduction by 2020 from 2009 levels. We have already met this target.

Other relevant legislation includes the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, which requires the council to submit biennial reports setting out the practical, cost-effective measures, which are likely to significantly improve the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in our area.

Within this picture, the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan contains the aim to become a resilient zero carbon energy economy underpinned by high quality green infrastructure.

Leeds City Region (LCR) council Leaders have agreed a pledge to achieve net zero emissions by 2038. Both the LCR and York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise partnerships, are adopting Energy Strategies to tackle carbon reductions.

In April 2019, Harrogate Borough Council agreed a notice of motion, stating that the council supports measures to address the climate emergency as outlined by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This strategy is therefore designed to meet IPCC targets and a final goal of carbon neutrality. Our Economic Growth Strategy stresses the importance of 'good growth' within the district, which seeks to achieve a sustainable and resilient economy by 2035.

Priority 6 of the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Strategy states that we will ensure all homes have a positive impact on health and wellbeing and are affordable to run, with a specific action to continue to deliver investment in Energy Efficiency works.

The council's emerging Local Plan encourages all developments to reduce climate impacts and meet high standards of energy efficiency, by addressing the energy consumption and generation in new developments. Within the Local Plan, Chapter 7: Climate Change is the key section addressing this issue.

3. STRATEGY AIMS, TARGETS AND PRIORITIES

Key points:

Our aims are to:

Become a carbon neutral council by 2038.

And:

Promote and support activity within to help Harrogate District as a whole to be carbon neutral by 2038.

- Our aims are linked to the national legally-binding carbon reduction targets, alongside regional aspirations.
- We will monitor carbon emissions from our own operations and publish these figures annually, and report on actions that contribute towards our aim to support carbon-reduction activity within the district as a whole.

3.1 EMISSIONS FROM OUR OWN OPERATIONS

For our own operations, our aim is to become carbon neutral by 2038

We have already met the voluntary public sector 30% reduction target, set out in the UK Clean Growth Strategy.

To tackle internal emissions we have four priority areas:

- 1) Operational council buildings
- 2) Harrogate Convention Centre
- 3) Transport
- 4) Working practices

Priority area 1: Operational council buildings

Gas and electricity consumption in our operational buildings (excluding Harrogate Convention Centre) account for 50% the council's internal carbon footprint.

Operational buildings include our offices, leisure centres, swimming pools, depots, museums, community centres, and many other small sites.

In future years we expect significant decarbonisation of electricity. The great challenge in meeting our 2038 target will be to decarbonise our heating supplies.

Our strategy is to:

- Incorporate energy efficient design in the council's public building construction projects by aiming for Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) score of Outstanding in new public building construction projects, where practical to do so. We will also:
 - Reduce unnecessary energy consuming equipment in new builds
 - When necessary, purchase only energy efficient equipment
 - Enhance buildings with the use of green energy technology
 - Comply with Building Regulations Part L. Increasing standards where practicable to do so.

- Continually improve energy efficiency and sustainable energy in the council's existing public building estate by:
 - Actively reviewing assets to identify where energy efficiency improvements can be made.
 - Identifying existing sites which could be suitable for green technologies
 - Considering energy efficiency as part of any reactive repair or refurbishment work by reducing energy-using equipment and using energy efficient equipment.
 - Complying with Building Regulations Part L. Increasing standards where practicable to do so.
 - Obtaining Energy Performance Certificates and Display Energy Certificates are required, and considering the recommendations from this process

- Seek opportunities for decarbonising heating in existing and new buildings.

Priority area 2: Harrogate Convention Centre

Gas and electricity consumption at Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC) accounts for 30% of the council's internal carbon footprint.

The whole HCC site consists of the auditorium, car park, the Royal Hall, several exhibition halls and other conference spaces. The success of HCC depends on the number of events held there, each of which increases the energy demand and carbon emissions. There is therefore a complex balance between maximising the number of events and limiting carbon emissions.

Our strategy is to:

- Continually review the HCC estate to ensure the HCC buildings and exhibitions are as energy efficient as possible.

- Ensure that sustainable energy and low carbon technology is embedded in future development plans.

- Work towards achieving the ISO:20121 sustainable events standard

Priority area 3: Transport

Transport accounts for 20% of the council's internal carbon footprint.

The council runs a fleet of vehicles including heavy good vehicles, van and cars, to cover a wide range of operations. Authorised staff also use their own cars and public transport for business travel.

Our strategy is to:

- Continually improve fleet efficiency by
 - Ensuring our vehicle fleet purchases meet the highest EURO engine emission standards and are maintained to a high standard.
 - Optimising refuse fleet routes.
 - Ensuring all vocational Light Goods Vehicle drivers are trained as part of their Certificate of Professional Competence qualification in the ability to optimise fuel consumption.
- Regularly review options for using electric vehicles (EVs) within the council fleet, including pool cars.
- Encourage staff to adopt sustainable transport options such as cycling and walking, car sharing, public transport and ultra-low emission vehicles.

Priority area 4: Working Practices

Although not measurable in terms of CO₂ emitted, it is essential to ensure that the council's working practices help achieve our environmental aims. This can include how we select our suppliers how staff and councillors use our buildings and deal with waste.

Our strategy is to:

- Ensure all new starters understand the council's environmental aims and policies, as part of induction training
- Engage staff and encourage action via internal communications and other initiatives
- Eliminate the use of single-use plastics from our premises where possible.
- Reduce, reuse and recycle as much waste as possible from our own operations

3.2 EMISSIONS IN THE WIDER DISTRICT

For district-wide emissions, the aim of this strategy is to:

Promote and support activity within the district as a whole to help achieve net-zero emissions by 2038.

In the Harrogate District we know our per capita carbon emissions are higher than average. Over many years the domestic gas and electricity consumption in the district has also been above regional and national averages.

This is the result of a number of factors, such as the rural nature of much of the district (requiring greater transport fuel consumption and more domestic heating oil consumption), alongside the relatively high income in many parts of the district, leading to increased consumption overall.

Emissions from the domestic and commercial and industrial sectors in the district have decreased in recent years, broadly in line with the national trend. However, the Committee on Climate Change has warned that the national rate of reduction is slowing down, and the UK as a whole will miss the national carbon budgets without positive intervention.

There are many variables that can affect year-on-year emissions trends and much of them are beyond the control of the local authority. However, we have an important community leadership role and can influence developments within the district. Although the district's emissions are decreasing, the fact that they are still higher than average highlights the importance of using the council's influence to encourage emissions reductions.

Externally, we are committed to promoting sustainable transport measures, including electric vehicles (EVs) and supporting clean bus technology. We have developed a separate EV implementation strategy, and we will seek to use the planning process to improve EV infrastructure, and mitigate the impact of new developments.

These activities have the double benefit of helping to improve local air quality, especially in the local Air Quality Management Areas.

In other sectors, we will use our influence via the Local Plan to encourage the implementation of low carbon measures, in particular by seeking high energy efficiency standards in new development. We will continue to implement and monitor other schemes and activities to reduce emissions as described in the action plan.

To tackle emissions in the wider district, we have four priority areas:

- Domestic energy efficiency
- Sustainable transport
- Working with businesses and public sector partners
- Influencing new development

Priority area 5: Domestic energy efficiency

Domestic energy consumption accounts for 34% of the district's carbon footprint.

Our strategy is to:

- Promote domestic energy efficiency via our separate Home Energy Conservation Act action plan
- Make the most of available funding to help retrofit housing within the district
- Ensure that council housing is as energy efficient as possible.

Priority area 6: Sustainable transport

Transport emissions account for 31% of the district's carbon footprint.

Our strategy is to:

- Facilitate the take up of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) via a separate ULEV strategy.

Priority area 7: Working with business and public sector partners

Commercial and industrial emissions account for 35% of the district's carbon footprint.

Our strategy is to:

- Run an active Climate Change Coalition with local stakeholders to bring together ideas and expertise, and stimulate action.
- Work with the Public Services Leadership Board to coordinate carbon reduction activities.
- Ensure the Harrogate District's voice is represented in Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- Raise awareness of the need for decarbonisation, communicate our carbon reduction activities and transparently report our carbon emissions.

Priority area 8: Influencing new development

The district's population is expected to grow by 1% by 2020, and 669 new houses are anticipated to be built each year of the Local plan period. To mitigate additional energy use and carbon emissions we will work with developers to ensure new homes are energy efficient.

Our strategy is to:

- Publish planning guidance to go alongside the new Local Plan, outlining sustainable c
- Use our influence to ensure sustainability is built into landmark developments such as the Station Gateway.

3.3 MONITORING AND REPORTING

We will prepare and publish an annual progress report via the council's Management Board and the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder.

Internal emissions:

For internal emissions we will continue to measure and publish our annual carbon footprint, the scope of which is defined as:

- Energy and fuel consumption in our public buildings and offices (where the council is the bill-payer) i.e. electricity, natural gas and other heating fuels. Monitored via automatic meter data and utility bills.
- Fuel consumption by the council's own vehicle fleet and machinery. Monitored via internal fuel records.
- Emissions from business travel carried out in employees' and councillor's own vehicles (the "grey fleet"). Monitored via payroll mileage claims.
- Fuel used in the council's pool cars. Monitored using fuel card data, and electric vehicle data.

District-wide emissions:

We will continue to use government statistics to monitor district-wide emissions trends and we will report on emissions when data is released

The government data used for CO2 monitoring is published at least 18 months after the year in question, so reporting on district-wide emissions always has at least this time-lag.

Targets in the action plan will generally be performance based, on a project-by-project basis.

3.4 REVIEW

The national policy context for addressing climate change is continually evolving, so we will review this strategy regularly to ensure that it continues to meet wider aims and our local priorities.

4. CARBON REDUCTION ACTION PLAN 2019-20

Internal emissions		
Priority area 1: Operational Buildings		
Action	Planned Outcome/Impact	Service Area
Investigate opportunities for solar PV in council buildings	Understanding of feasibility, development of potential pilot schemes	Place-shaping and Economic Growth (PSEG)
Upgrade cremators at Stonefall Crematorium	Energy savings achieved through equipment upgrade	PSEG
Identify and carry out other works via the Capital Investment Strategy	Ongoing identification of new schemes	PSEG
Priority area 2: Harrogate Convention Centre		
Action	Planned Outcome/Impact	Service Area
Upgrade lighting at Harrogate Convention Centre car park	Cost and carbon savings. Demonstrator for potential future schemes at other sites	Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC) PSEG
Investigate options for achieving ISO 2012:1 environmental standard	System in place for managing environmental impacts.	HCC
Identify and carry out other works via the Capital Investment Strategy	Ongoing identification of new schemes	HCC PSEG
Priority area 3: Operational and staff transport		
Action	Planned Outcome	Service Area
Hold awareness raising sessions and/or campaigns for staff on sustainable transport (alongside regular awareness via internal communications).	Increased take up of sustainable transport modes	Organisational Development and Improvement (OD&I) PSEG
Recruit new members to the staff car share scheme and increase the journey "match-rate"	Facilities are and fit for purpose, to make cycling an attractive option for staff.	PSEG
Establish salary sacrifice scheme for electric vehicle purchasing	Incentive for increased take up of EVs	OD&I
Replace three pool cars with hybrid vehicles	Reduced fleet emissions	Parks & Environmental Services (PES)
Continue to look for opportunities for increasing the number of EV fleet vehicles.	Reduced fleet emissions, supporting ULEV strategy	PES
Priority area 4: Working practices		
Action	Planned Outcome	Service Area
Review and update induction training for staff, and increase participation	Increase awareness of environmental impacts and behaviour change	OD&I PSEG
Establishing an informal staff environmental group	Increased awareness and engagement	PSEG

Reviewing and updating the corporate environmental policy.	Meeting customer demands, with a more rigorous and relevant policy	PSEG
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District wide		
Priority area 5: Domestic energy efficiency		
Action	Planned Outcome	Service Area
Deliver Warm Homes grant	Improved homes, focusing on households at risk of fuel poverty	Housing & Property (H&P) PSEG
Provide grants or other support to improve home energy efficiency and reduce the risk of fuel poverty	Delivery of energy efficiency grant in target areas and potentially vulnerable residents.	H&P
Investigate opportunities for further energy efficiency measures within the council's existing and new housing stock.	Reduced energy bills and emissions	H&P
Priority area 6: Sustainable transport		
Action	Planned Outcome	Service Area
Increase membership of Harrogate Car Share scheme and develop new private groups within Harrogate Car Share	Greater take up and successful journey matches to reduce single occupied vehicle trips.	PSEG
Support the take-up of electric vehicles via a separate Electric Vehicle Strategy	Understanding of needs and opportunities.	PSEG
Continue to work with NYCC on delivery of Otley Road cycle way	Completion of segregated cycle way	PSEG (and North Yorkshire County Council)
Explore opportunities for additional external grants for sustainable transport.	Delivery of innovative projects	PSEG
Priority area 7: Working with businesses and public sector partners		
Action	Planned Outcome	Service Area
Encouraging the creation of private employer car share schemes	Increased take of car sharing, reduction in single occupancy vehicles	PSEG
Promoting Resource Efficiency within business	Businesses engaged in LCR Resources Efficiency Fund project	PSEG (and West Yorkshire Combined Authority)
Working with the Public Services Leadership Board	Opportunities for efficiency within the sector are identified and exploited	PSEG (and Harrogate District Public Services Leadership Board)
Communicate our internal carbon reduction activity to partners and the wider public	Improved awareness and engagement	PSEG
Priority area 8: Influencing new developments		
Action	Planned Outcome	Service Area
Encourage the best possible standards of	Responding to residents' needs,	PSEG

energy efficiency in new developments via the Local Plan.	Maximising opportunities for energy efficiency measures	
Use the Local Plan to ensure new developments have good access to public transport infrastructure.	Responding to residents' needs, Maximising opportunities for energy efficiency measures	PSEG
Use the council's influence to encourage renewable energy and/or other sustainable technology at landmark developments.	Maximising opportunities for energy efficiency	PSEG