

# **Carbon Reduction Strategy: 2021 Revision**

## **Consultation Draft**

Produced by: Economy, Environment and Housing directorate

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Third version: This version, under consultation

### **Introduction to the consultation draft**

This is the consultation draft of Harrogate Borough Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy, which is now open for public comments.

Once finalised, the updated strategy will replace the current version, which was adopted by the council in October 2019.

This new draft version is intended to reflect recent changes in national and regional policies and show how the council will use its place-shaping influence to encourage the district as a whole to decarbonise.

The council alone will not achieve the decarbonisation we need to see in the coming years. National government, local and regional organisations, business and industry, the transport sector and individual consumers will all need to be equally involved in the low carbon transition.

We welcome public comments on this draft, which can be submitted via the Have Your Say page on [www.harrogate.gov.uk](http://www.harrogate.gov.uk) We are grateful for input received already from the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition, Zero Carbon Harrogate and the respondees to our business and residents surveys in 2021.

The comments received during this consultation period will help us to draw up the final version.

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## Draft Carbon Reduction Strategy Summary: “Plan on a Page”

We are now consulting the public on this draft version of our updated Carbon Reduction Strategy, which is intended to reflect recent changes since the previous version was adopted in 2019.

Our vision is that by 2038 the Harrogate District will have a net zero-carbon economy. The council will lead the district, by using our place-shaping powers, and by continually improving our own operations.

The district as a whole has a carbon budget of between 6.3 million to 9 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>. This is the maximum amount of carbon emissions we can emit between now and 2050 to take our fair share of the decarbonisation needed under the Climate Change Act 2008. However, the district is currently emitting around 1 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> each year, so big and rapid changes are required.

Achieving net-zero and meeting our local carbon budget must involve the joint efforts of local authorities, businesses and industry, individual consumers and the rest of the public sector and national government. By pulling together partners and strategies, we can deliver a bigger impact than if we act alone. Our key local partner is Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition who we will work with on joint projects.

To deliver our part of the net-zero vision we are prioritising the strategic themes listed below. We will encourage partners across the district to tackle these priorities, and we will produce and regularly review an action plan to focus our activities. We will publicly report our corporate carbon footprint every year.

Local government reorganisation is underway in North Yorkshire. We will continue to implement this strategy now because urgent action is required, but we recognise that the new council in time may update this and the other carbon reduction strategies that currently cover the North Yorkshire area.

We are proposing to focus in the following Strategic Themes:

For Strategic Theme 1, **domestic energy efficiency**, we will seek and make the most of available funding to retrofit housing within the district, and ensure that council housing is as energy efficient as possible.

On Strategic Theme 2: **sustainable transport**, we will facilitate the take up of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) via a separate ULEV strategy and develop and implement new sustainable transport measures with our partners.

Strategic Theme 3 is **land use and agriculture**. We will promote tree-planting initiatives across the district, and identify council land for woodland creation, and we will assess the council’s land holdings for further decarbonisation opportunities.

To deliver Strategic Theme 4: **engaging businesses and public sector partners**, we will work closely with the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition to champion the local carbon budget, and

raise awareness of decarbonisation, and transparently report our carbon reduction activities and emissions.

For Strategic Theme 5: **influencing new development** we will publish planning guidance to go alongside the Local Plan, outlining sustainable design requirements and use our influence to ensure sustainability is built into key developments in the district.

Under Strategic Theme 6, **council buildings and Harrogate Convention Centre**, we will incorporate energy efficient design into our public building construction projects and continually improve energy efficiency and sustainable energy in the council's building estate, and meet external industry decarbonisation and sustainability standards.

Under Strategic Theme 7, **operational and staff transport**, we will continually improve fleet efficiency and regularly review options for using cleaner technology for vehicles within the council fleet and pool cars, and continue to implement measures to increase take-up of sustainable transport options amongst staff.

For Strategic Theme 8, **working practices**, we will ensure councillors and council staff receive training on the council's environmental aims and policies, engage staff and encourage positive action on decarbonisation and implement other positive environmental policies such as eliminating the use of single-use plastics from our premises where possible, and reducing, reusing and recycling waste from our own operations

We will implement and regularly update a detailed action plan covering these themes, and we will publicly report our corporate carbon footprint.

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

### **Our vision.**

By 2038 the Harrogate District will be a net zero-carbon economy. The council will play a positive role enabling the wider district to achieve net-zero emissions by making the most of our vital place-shaping role. Our own operations will be clean and efficient and produce net-zero carbon emissions.

### **Chapter 1 Key Points:**

- The effects of climate change are being felt in the UK and abroad. The UK policy has legally-binding national carbon reduction budgets.
- The council has a corporate responsibility as both 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 focused both on the wider district, where we have a vital place-shaping role, and our internal operations where we have direct control.
- Reducing carbon emissions often also results in 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.

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Climate change is a long-term threat which is directly influenced by human activity taking place today. It is a critically important issue because our economy and infrastructure and natural environment are built around existing or historic climatic conditions.

There is an urgent need worldwide to decrease the release of greenhouse gases. Here in the Harrogate District we are committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2038. That is the key aim of this strategy.

### The target year: net-zero by 2038

In 2019 the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research was commissioned to quantify the implications of achieving the Paris Agreement temperature targets for the Leeds City Region (of which Harrogate District is a part).

The Tyndall Centre apportioned the UK Carbon budget to the Leeds City Region (LCR). In 2015, Leeds City Region GVA was £62 Billion and the UK GVA was £1,650 Billion meaning LCR has a 3.8% apportionment of the UK Carbon Budget equating to 118 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>.

The Tyndall Centre concluded that for the Leeds City Region to make its fair contribution towards the Paris Agreement, it needs to:

- a) Stay within a cumulative carbon dioxide emissions budget of 118 million tonnes (MtCO<sub>2</sub>), for the period of 2018 to 2100. At 2017 CO<sub>2</sub> emission levels, the Leeds City Region would use this entire budget within 6 years from 2020.
- b) Initiate an immediate programme of CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation to deliver annual cuts in emissions averaging 14.5% to deliver a Paris Agreement aligned carbon budget.
- c) Reach zero or near zero carbon no later than 2038.

In 2019 the council signed a Leaders' pledge made jointly with our neighbouring councils to achieve this 2038 target.

2038 is sooner than the national target set by the Climate Change Act and the recommendation of the IPCC (both 2050). We believe our challenging target date reflects the urgency of the issue and is achievable with all partners acting together.

Climate change is having an effect on our environment and human populations. Climate scientists, observing real life data, are clear that the UK is already experiencing disruptive climate change. 2020 was third warmest, fifth wettest and eighth sunniest on record for the UK. No other year has fallen in the top-10 for all three variables in this country.<sup>i</sup>

Globally, the World Meteorological Organisation reports that 2020 was a record-breaking year in several fields<sup>ii</sup>. Concentrations of the major greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide - continued to increase despite the temporary reduction in emissions in 2020 related to the impact of COVID-19. 2020 was one of the three warmest years on record. The past six years, including 2020, have been the six warmest years on record. The highest recorded temperature anywhere north of the Arctic Circle occurred in 2020. The trend in sea-level rise is accelerating and ocean heat storage and acidification are increasing, diminishing the oceans' capacity to moderate climate change. The Arctic minimum sea-ice extent in September 2020 was the second lowest on record.

These observations are borne out locally by residents and businesses. In our climate change surveys, carried out jointly with the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition in March 2021, 38% of business respondents said they are already seeing climate impacts on their business, and 60% are concerned about future impacts. 85% of residents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that climate change will have a direct impact on their lives<sup>iii</sup>.

91% of residents who completed the survey are concerned about climate change – over half of respondents are more concerned than 12 months ago. 84% wish to see immediate action to address emissions.

Perhaps the most visible impact of climate change in the Harrogate District is an increase in unstable weather conditions. We are seeing an increase in storms and flooding 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 everyone, but particularly vulnerable residents through heat stress.

These impacts can harm biodiversity, 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, the Harrogate District will not be immune to wider changes such as population movements and changing economic conditions resulting from climate change.

The district as a whole produces over one million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year<sup>iv</sup> and has a combined energy bill of over £400 million a year. The council is directly responsible for around 9,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions each year through delivering our day-to-day services<sup>v</sup>. The council pays around £1.5 million each year in energy and fuel bills.

The council has a corporate responsibility as both a large employer and a community leader to take action to reduce our own corporate carbon footprint. Activity carried out to cut carbon emissions has a number of positive impacts aside from reducing our energy bills, such as improved air quality, providing better working and home environments, encouraging innovation and opening up opportunities for commercialisation. 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.

## **1.2 SCOPE OF THIS STRATEGY**

The scope of this strategy covers both our influence on carbon reduction in the wider district, and our efforts to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions from our own operations.

The Committee on Climate Change's (CCC) 2020 report *Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget*<sup>vi</sup> highlights the vital role the council has locally in reducing emissions. The CCC's model of influence is shown in the diagram below (Fig. 1). Our strategy aims to include actions in all of the layers A to F.





Fig. 1: How Local Authorities Control and influence emissions (Source: The Committee on Climate Change, *Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget*)

## 2. POLICY CONTEXT

### Chapter 2 Key points:

- This strategy sits within a framework of national, regional and local policies relating to energy, emissions and climate change.
- The UK target is 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, but we have higher emissions per capita than average.
- The Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition is actively working towards a net-zero district.
- The York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise partnership and Yorkshire and Humber Climate Change Commission are implementing strategies setting the region on a course of decarbonisation.

### 2.1 UK POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The range of national legislation and policies covering carbon reduction is constantly evolving. This section provides a snapshot of some of the most significant (at the time of writing this document, October 2021).

Foremost, the Climate Change Act 2008 sets the legally binding UK-wide target to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, and sets the associated carbon budgets.

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. In 2018 at the request of Paris Agreement signatories, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a special report into the impacts of a 1.5°C temperature rise, which showed the dangers of allowing temperatures to rise more than that amount<sup>vii</sup>. Following this report, Parliament strengthened the Climate Change Act to implement the net-zero target.

The government has published the UK-wide strategy *Build Back Better: our plan for growth*<sup>viii</sup> which outlines some key areas for decarbonisation including the commitment to invest and create new opportunities for net-zero carbon economic growth and jobs across the country, and to grow the country’s current net zero industries and encourage new ones to emerge. This includes working with industry, aiming to generate 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity and capture 10Mt CO<sub>2</sub>/year using CCUS by 2030, and ending the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans in 2030.

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 included a voluntary target for all the public sector to achieve a 30% greenhouse gas reduction by 2020 from 2009 levels, which we have exceeded.

## **2.2 RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) PANDEMIC**

Some low carbon behaviour occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic which is desirable to maintain or improve, such as new transport choices resulting in cleaner air; increased home working (which in most but not all cases sees a net decrease in emissions); reduced food waste and greater levels of recycling. It is also important to invest in the green spaces and woodlands that people valued so much under lockdown.

We wish to create a resilient, green recovery from COVID-19 and ensure measures to support the economy align with Net Zero.

More home working seems likely to become more commonplace - A CBI study suggests 93% of firms where home working is possible plan to adopt hybrid working models after the pandemic<sup>ix</sup>. This makes it all the more important that homes across the district are as efficient as possible. Within the council's own operations, we are keen to maintain environmentally friendly practices, particularly in commuting and other travel.

## **2.3 CURRENT HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL POLICIES AND OTHER LOCAL INITIATIVES**

In April 2019, Harrogate Borough Council agreed a notice of motion, declaring the council's support for 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. The strategy is currently being refreshed and will add more emphasis on green growth.

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.

As required by the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, we prepare and 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.

The council's 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.

## **2.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

In April 2023, a new unitary authority will be created covering the current North Yorkshire boundary. At that point, the existing district councils and county council will cease to exist.

All the councils in North Yorkshire are committed to achieving net zero emissions and have or are creating carbon reduction and climate change strategies like this one. We already have strong relationships with our neighbouring local authorities on decarbonisation, and work collaboratively on a number of projects. We are confident that the priorities and actions listed in this strategy will remain relevant to this area after the new council is created.

We will continue to implement and review this strategy and work proactively with our neighbours on carbon reduction throughout the local government reorganisation process. We recognise that the new council in time may update this and the other carbon reduction strategies that currently cover the North Yorkshire area. In the meantime we will continue to pursue this strategy because of the urgent need for action.

## **2.5 REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL POLICIES**

Within this picture, the York and North Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) states its vision that York and North Yorkshire will develop a greener, fairer, stronger economy, including the aim to become carbon negative, making a nationally significant contribution to the national target to reach Net Zero by 2050.

The LEP has developed a series of Carbon Abatement Pathways<sup>x</sup>, covering the priority areas of transport, buildings and industry, land use and agriculture and the power sector.

The maximum ambition scenario within the Carbon Abatement Pathways will necessarily involve significant electrification of heat, transport and industry, supported by enabling technologies such as energy storage. Significant increases in low carbon power generation, with accelerated negative emissions technologies (e.g. BECCS) and ambitious forest planting rates will be required. The council alone cannot implement all these things but we can help to enable them and use our powers to promote them.

At a regional level, the newly formed Yorkshire and Humberside Climate Change Commission is an independent advisory body that has brought together a wide range of public, private and third sector actors to support, guide and track the delivery of an ambitious climate action plan across the region.

Their aims are to foster climate resilience and adaptation to climate risks and impacts; support rapid progress towards net zero carbon emissions; encourage a just and inclusive transition and climate actions that leave no-one and nowhere behind; and promote sustainability and climate actions that also protect nature and biodiversity.

The commission is drawing up a regional Action Plan, and we will ensure our own strategy and the regional action plan are closely aligned.

## **3. CARBON BUDGET FOR THE HARROGATE DISTRICT**

### **3.1 CARBON BUDGET**

Following an invitation from the council and the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition, the Place-based Climate Action Network produced a report in 2020 outlining a district-wide carbon budget scenario to meet net zero emissions.<sup>xi</sup> In addition, the Tyndall Centre at Manchester University provides a carbon budgeting tool for local authority areas.

Using both methods, we can see that the carbon budget for the district lies within a range of 6.3 million to 9 million tonnes that can be emitted from 2020 to 2050. Government figures of emissions within the district boundary show that we currently emit around one million tonnes of carbon a year, meaning that the district would use up its carbon budget in just under 9 years.

Carbon emissions from Harrogate have fallen by 32% since 2005. With on-going decarbonisation of electricity, and taking into account population and economic growth, we project that Harrogate's 2005 level of emissions will have fallen by 48% by 2050, based on existing policies.

If it is to stay within its carbon budget, Harrogate needs to add to the 48% reductions already achieved to secure:

- 72% reductions on its 2005 level of emissions by 2025
- 86% reduction by 2030
- 93% reduction by 2035,
- 99% reduction by 2050.

This means that the majority of all carbon cuts need to be delivered in the next ten years.

### **3.2 CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS IN THE WIDER DISTRICT**

The latest position on the district's total carbon footprint shows that total carbon emissions continue to fall: in 2019, there was a reduction of 3.8% from the 2018 level, a 9.7% reduction from the previous five-year average. Per capita emissions were 5.7% lower than 2018, also 10.7% lower than the previous five-year average.

However, in the Harrogate District we know our per capita carbon emissions are higher than the national average. Over many years the domestic gas and electricity consumption in the district, although decreasing, have 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.

The overall decrease is driven primarily by the decarbonisation of electricity. This big reduction hides slight increases or a slow-down in the decline in other sectors, which will need to be addressed by national government, local government, businesses and individuals acting together. 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.

Although the Harrogate 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.

The most favoured action for the council to take that residents identified in the district panel survey (2021) is to promote home energy efficiency grants. As a result, this is highlighted as an action under Strategic Theme 1.

An area of concern in the district is road transport emissions, which are not declining like other sectors, mirroring the national trend. A significant cause of this is likely to be the swing away from the use of diesel vehicles towards higher-CO<sub>2</sub> petrol, with the increasing take-up of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) not yet counteracting this move away from diesel. Promoting EV use and expanding the charging infrastructure were high priorities in both the residents and business surveys conducted in 2021. Sustainable Transport is therefore listed as Strategic Theme 2 in this strategy, encouraging modal shift away from car use and facilitating the take up of ULEVs.

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.

There are many other variables that can affect year-on-year emissions trends and much of them are beyond the control of the local authority. However, we have a vital place-shaping and community leadership role and can influence developments within the district.

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.

It's essential the local people and businesses know the direction we are taking. We will work closely with the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition to champion carbon reduction measure and raise awareness and simulate action.

### **3.3 THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE CARBON FOOTPRINT**

The council has already met the voluntary public sector 30% reduction target for our internal carbon footprint, set out in the UK Clean Growth Strategy. Our aim is continue making improvements to meet the 2038 target.

#### **Decarbonisation progress to date**

In implementing this strategy, we are building on decarbonisation activities that have been ongoing for many years. Both the council's own carbon footprint and the district's as a whole have been decreasing year-on-year. We know the rate of reduction is no longer fast enough, hence the need for further action, but we have positive experiences to build upon.

The council convened the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition, bringing together residents groups, businesses, environmental groups and politicians to promote carbon neutrality. The district's first ever Climate Action Festival, organised by the coalition, took place in October 2021 to showcase decarbonisation to the public and business via a series of events.

We hosted an electric vehicles conference and exhibition for businesses in September 2019. And despite COVID-19 restrictions on face to face events, we actively participated in online events like North Yorkshire LEP's Circular Yorkshire campaign in 2020.

The council's civic centre features an array of green and energy saving measures – solar PV panels, green roofs, super-efficient glazing, passive heating and cooling technology and electric vehicle rapid charging.

We are always looking for ways to improve the energy efficiency of our buildings. Recent measures, such as installing new LED lighting and other behind-the-scenes equipment upgrades at various sites are already saving hundreds of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Within our council housing stock, we ensured that double-glazed windows, energy efficient doors, cavity wall insulation and loft insulation were addressed in the stock during the 1980s and 1990s, with loft insulation top-ups carried out in the 2000s.

More recent carbon reduction measures in council housing have included the installation of external wall insulation to 530 solid-walled properties, 100 Ground Source Heat Pumps and 230 Air Source Heat Pumps installed in properties off the mains gas network, Solar PV panels fitted to 353 properties between 2015 and 2016.

For privately owned housing we promote government grant schemes whenever they are available and work very closely with other local councils and the energy efficiency industry to offer home improvements. Over recent years, hundreds of energy saving improvements have been made to local homes via council schemes alone. We also promote the installation on new EV charge points in new housing via the planning process.

The council has provided EV charging within its own estate at the Civic Centre in Harrogate, Conyngham Hall, Knaresborough and Phoenix Business Park, Ripon. Charge points are included in plans for other new developments and council car parks and depots as part of phase 1 in the council's ULEV implementation strategy.

In council housing, EV home charging points are now included in the void specification where properties are being rewired. This will also form part of the 30 year asset management plan under development.

Within the council's own fleet an electric pool car and hybrid pool cars (replacing diesel) are now used. Work is ongoing on the potential to electrify the operational fleet even more. The market is still immature for some vehicle classes such as HGVs so we will carefully consider the impact of the likely significant additional costs.

Work is underway to improve the town's wider cycle infrastructure such as the Station Gateway Transforming Cities Fund project, Beech Grove Low Traffic Neighbourhood, the recent Active Travel Fund bids and Otley Road and Follifoot cycleways.

In 2020 we launched the Harrogate Car Club which encourages people to reduce the number of cars in their household as well as the dependency of owning their own car – the scheme has already saved over 40,000 car miles, and three tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, local residents were saving 800,000 miles and 180 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year in our lift sharing scheme [harrogatecarshare.com](http://harrogatecarshare.com).

In recent years, 13,000 trees and hedgerow plantings have been planted via eight schemes covering about 12 hectares of land. We have recently identified three new council owned sites covering 17 hectares for new tree planting schemes.

## 4. STRATEGIC THEMES

### Chapter 4 Key points:

- Our aim is to use our powers and influence to help both Harrogate District as a whole and the council's operations to be carbon neutral by 2038
- We have identified which sectors produce the most emissions, and where we can have the greatest impact. Alongside this we have surveyed the public and local businesses, and aligned our strategy with the priorities in the York and North Yorkshire Carbon Abatement Pathway and Yorkshire & Humber Climate Change Commission.
- The council cannot achieve decarbonisation on its own. An essential partner locally will be the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition. We are committed to supporting the coalition and participating in its activities.
- Within our own operations, we have already met the voluntary public sector 30% reduction target, set out in the UK Clean Growth Strategy. Our aim is continue making improvements to meet our 2038 target. As we have for district-wide emissions, we have identified priority themes where we can have the greatest impact.
- 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.

### Strategic Theme 1: Domestic energy efficiency

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

#### Our strategy is to:

- Make the most of available funding to retrofit housing with energy efficiency measures
- Ensure that council housing is as energy efficient as possible



- Use our powers within the planning system to enforce high energy efficiency standards in new builds
- Continue enforcing the Domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations in private rented accommodation
- Promoting sustainable home energy measures to a wide audience via our communications channels and in partnership with the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition.

### **Strategic Theme 2: 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.
- Develop and implement other sustainable transport initiatives with North Yorkshire County Council, including lobbying and influencing decisions.
- Work with partners including the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition to promote alternatives to single car occupancy

### **Strategic Theme 3: Land Use and Agriculture**

Agriculture accounts for 37 kt CO<sub>2</sub> emissions each year. However, the net effect of other land uses such as forestry is to remove 26 kt CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere.

#### **Our strategy is to:**

- Promote tree-planting initiatives across the district, and identify council land for woodland creation
- Assess the council's land holdings for further decarbonisation opportunities
- Support the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition in other initiatives to engage landowners and promote sustainable land use

#### **Strategic Theme 4: Working with partners**

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

##### **Our strategy is to:**

- Participate in and support the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition on engaging businesses in decarbonisation
- Work with the Harrogate District Public Services Leadership Board to coordinate carbon reduction activities within the public sector
- Work together on relevant projects with our neighbouring local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership
- Promote circular economy principles with partners in the Harrogate District Climate Change Coalition and Local Enterprise Partnership
- Raise awareness of the need for decarbonisation, communicate our carbon reduction activities and transparently report our carbon emissions

#### **Strategic Theme 5: Influencing new development**

The district's population is expected to grow in coming years 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 outlining low carbon requirements for new developments and incorporate decarbonisation within the future Local Plan review
- Ensure that the Development Plan Document for the proposed new settlement includes decarbonisation as a priority
- Work with partners to ensure decarbonisation is embedded within the Ripon Barracks development
- Use our influence to ensure sustainability is built into other landmark developments such as the Station Gateway project and lobby for wider national policy improvements

#### **Strategic Theme 6: Operational council buildings and Harrogate Convention Centre**

Gas and electricity consumption in our operational buildings including Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC) account for the vast majority of the council's internal carbon footprint.

Operational buildings include our offices, leisure centres, swimming pools, depots, museums, community centres, and many other small sites. The HCC estate incorporates a large auditorium, Grade II\* Listed theatre, exhibition halls, conference spaces and car parks.

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 minimising carbon emissions.

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 and low carbon design in all the council's public building construction projects. 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 the required standards where we can
- 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.
- 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

### **Strategic Theme 7: Operational 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 and incentivise staff to adopt sustainable transport options such as cycling and walking, car sharing, public transport and ultra-low emission vehicles.

### **Strategic Theme 8: Working Practices**

Although not currently measurable in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> 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 staff understand and work together on the council's environmental aims and policies via induction and development training, a staff green group, internal communications and other initiatives
- Provide training for councillors on decarbonisation
- Make sure major decisions take account of environmental and carbon impacts
- Develop and implement sustainable procurement practices to promote decarbonisation
- 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

## **5. MONITORING AND REPORTING**

### **5.1. PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW DATE**

The council's cabinet member for carbon reduction and sustainability is the responsible portfolio holder for this strategy.

We will update our existing action plan and regularly review it, to make sure that we deliver SMART actions (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) covering all the strategic themes in this strategy.

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. The next review date is likely to be at the time of the creation of the new local authority for North Yorkshire.

### **5.2 MONITORING 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.
- Consumption emissions (Scope 3 in the Greenhouse Gas Protocol) will be included where the data is available. We will look to increase Scope 3 reporting over time.

### **5.3 MONITORING 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 CO<sub>2</sub> 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.

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