



Harrogate Borough Council Draft Carbon Reduction Strategy

Feedback and comments

Submitted by Jemima Parker on behalf of Zero Carbon Harrogate

Firstly, we would like to thank the councillors and staff who have drawn up this Carbon Reduction Strategy and acknowledge that having such a policy is constructive approach to transitioning to a low carbon economy.

There is much to be commended in the Draft Carbon Reduction Strategy:

- HBC taking its corporate responsibility seriously as a large local employer
- The clear desire for HCB to be a leader for the district in this key area, exercising its influence to effect change with other local employers and organisations
- Regular review periods for the strategy, as the carbon reduction targets and technologies available for meeting those targets is changing rapidly
- Some factual information about the current carbon emissions of generated from HBC activities, from which to set targets
- Annual reporting on HBC's carbon emissions
- The intention to publicise carbon emissions figures and reductions.

However to make the strategy more effective we would suggest:

More ambitious target setting

While it is understandable that the national legally-binding carbon reduction targets set out in the 2008 Climate Change Act have been used, these are widely acknowledged to be inadequate in combatting disastrous climate disruption and will not meet the Paris Agreement target of a maximum of 1.5 degrees of global warming. To achieve a "sustainable and resilient economy by 2035" net zero emissions should be reached by then. While challenging this is possible and could yield earlier additional cost and other benefits to both HBC and the wider community.

Front loading annual target setting

In order to limit the serious and severe effects of climate disruption greenhouse gas reductions will have most effect the sooner they are made. While the steady reduction target of 2.5% (220 tonnes of CO₂ per year) seems reasonable, it would be more effective to have higher targets initially, declining towards the end date. With this model the most cost effective and beneficial actions can be taken quickly (e.g. low emissions standards on all new build homes, releasing the benefits early in target setting period).

Further suggestions for 2b Sustainable transport in the wider district

- 26% of carbon emissions in North Yorkshire are from transport. This is higher than the national average. It is a key area to seek reductions.
- Work with NYCC to develop a sustainable transport strategy for the district. To include the infrastructure changes to encourage a modal shift to active and public transport such as:
 - prioritising pedestrian route ways and design
 - building a dense network of cycle routes focused initially on schools and main areas of employment
 - Developing “home zones” where cut through streets are blocked off to form cul-de-sacs, but also provide quiet routes for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Develop priority routes for buses to enable them to be a faster choice than the car. Bus lanes and routes through home zones
 - Establish a blanket 20mph zone in all urban areas
 - Reduce parking availability and increase parking charges to reduce traffic to town centres
 - Increase pedestrianised areas
- The establishment of car clubs in all urban areas
- Develop a bus framework agreement that ensures low emissions/electric vehicles are used in all public licensed fleets
- Develop a licencing agreement for taxis that penalise high emissions vehicles
- Utilise the legal framework for fining vehicles found idling. Work with local groups to run a campaign to ensure stationary cars switch their engines off

Further suggestions for 2c: Influencing new developments

Strengthen the planning process to stipulate (rather than encourage) features in new developments that will lead to carbon reductions:

- standards of energy efficiency in all new build homes
- renewable heating installation and the generation of electricity where ever possible for all new build homes
- Design to maximise active transport or use of public transport (e.g. minimal car parking space, pedestrian and cycle routes within and to new development, car club spaces)
- Design for electric charging of bikes and cars.
- Tree planting for high CO₂ absorption

Divestment of HBC Funds from Fossil Fuel investments

Commit to divesting all HBC financial holdings (e.g. bank accounts and pensions, from fossil fuel investments) by 2020. This is a relatively simple task which would both yield a significant reduction in HBC’s carbon footprint and would be a substantial public statement.

Carbon Offsetting

It is impossible to reduce all carbon emissions even in the long term. Carbon offsetting is essential now to mitigate for current emissions. Council land could be utilised for tree planting projects to achieve annual carbon neutrality.

Establish a Local Carbon Reduction Alliance

We acknowledge that HBC’s ability to take action is restricted by dwindling government funding for local councils. However, as the draft strategy acknowledges HBC does have significant local

standing and is ideally placed to draw together businesses and other organisations from across the district to establish an effective working group to tackle carbon emissions, such as the Leeds Commission on Climate Change.

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