

BARROW BOROUGH COUNCIL

Climate Change Policy

2020-2025



**BOROUGH OF
BARROW IN
FURNESS**

Background

Barrow Borough Council acknowledges the overwhelming evidence that human activities are having a profound effect on our climate. Globally, extreme weather is predicted to become more common and its consequences will be felt at the local level from the associated impacts of increasing temperatures, rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions. Our low lying coastal areas will be susceptible to the effects of sea level rise and coastal erosion and the Borough of Barrow in Furness (the Borough) will face increasing risk from river and surface water flooding connected to extreme weather patterns.

The 2018 Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reviewed over 6,000 sources of evidence and found that, with a rise of 1.5°C, there would be risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth. A rise to 2°C would be even more catastrophic. It warned that we have only 12 years left within which to take the serious action required to avert this crisis and avoid the worst impacts.ⁱ

Following the recommendation of the Committee on Climate Change,ⁱⁱ the UK's independent climate advisory body, the Climate Change Act 2008 was amended in June 2019. This commits the Government to reducing all UK greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 and to contribute to global emission reductions.ⁱⁱⁱ

Net zero means emissions could be balanced by schemes to offset an equivalent amount of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere, such as planting trees or using technology like carbon capture and storage for processes that would otherwise be unable to reach zero emissions.

The Barrow Borough Local Plan established our ambition to positively address the impact of Climate Change, through encouraging development to: realise the potential of the Borough for renewable and low carbon energy generation; achieve higher energy efficiency standards; increase the use of sustainable forms of transport; mitigate and adapt to flood risks; protect trees and woodland and enhance biodiversity.^{iv}

In July 2019, Barrow Borough Council declared a Climate Change Emergency. We recognise the need to quickly decarbonise and increase the resilience of our communities to help minimise the impacts from unavoidable climate change. We are well placed to drive and influence emissions reductions in wider areas through the services we deliver, through our role as a social landlord, community leader and major employer, as well as through regulatory and strategic functions.

The vision of the Council Plan 2020-2024 is to work together to set clear priorities and actions around increasing prosperity through a growing and diverse economy, improving the environment by providing better homes and preserving the Boroughs

natural beauty, and supporting all people in our Borough; we will make Barrow a great place to live, work and visit. It includes a commitment to create a climate emergency action plan, to protect our natural environment, enhance green spaces, parks and beaches, reduce our use of natural reserves through reduction, recycling, reuse and to work with partners to raise awareness of natural assets and celebrate them.

A working group has been established comprising Members, Officers and other interested parties to look at all areas of policy and delivery and through that working group, this Policy has been created to outline our ambition for emission reductions and provide a starting point for our climate emergency action plan.

Objectives

The Borough of Barrow in Furness aims to reach net zero carbon no later than 2037

To start the work on becoming a zero carbon Borough, a dedicated piece of analysis has been produced by the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research that establishes a 'carbon budget' for the Borough.^v The report recommends that, in order for us to make our fair contribution to global climate goals, the Borough must not exceed a 'budget' of 2.7 million tonnes of carbon emissions for the period of 2020-2100.

At the rates of energy consumption in 2017, we would use this entire budget by 2027. Based on their analysis, the Borough would need to make immediate cuts to emissions and be zero carbon no later than 2042 in order to make our full contribution towards the Paris Climate Change Agreement.^{vi}

Data from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) puts the annual 2017 emissions for the Borough at 407.9 kilotonnes (kt) CO₂e, which is 66.4% of 2005 levels. Should we continue to reduce emissions at this rate, our estimated net zero date would be in 2041, making our target date within reach.

The Climate Change Working Group have suggested going further, aiming to reach net zero carbon no later than 2037.

This is an ambitious ask for a Borough Council alone, so we will continue to work with Cumbria County Council and other partners to ensure we can meet or exceed our target. As a partner of the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership, we are committed to working towards zero carbon Cumbria.

The partnership has jointly commissioned a baseline carbon audit for the county from carbon footprinting expert Mike Berners-Lee of Small World Consulting, which is under review and should be published soon.^{vii} We will work towards the target date agreed by the partnership, should it be sooner than 2037.

To achieve net zero, we will:

1. Reduce emissions from Barrow Borough Councils estate and operations;
2. Reduce energy consumption and emissions from homes and businesses in the Borough;
3. Reduce emissions from transport;
4. Reduce consumption of resources, increasing recycling and reducing waste;
5. Increase carbon capture to offset emissions;
6. Increase public awareness around climate change.

1. Reducing emissions from Barrow Borough Councils estate and operations.

We want to demonstrate leadership and make our contribution to meeting carbon budgets by reducing emissions from our own estate and operations. The main opportunities are in our own buildings, assets, transport, housing improvements and procurement. In order to achieve these reductions the council will carry out annual carbon audits to plan effectively and to ensure that emissions are decreasing, so that we can reach net zero for our own estate and operations as soon as possible.

Energy efficiency is one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing carbon emissions. Typical energy efficiency measures include retrofitting properties with better insulation, installing more efficient heating and energy management systems. These measures will be considered for all council buildings and any works will be carried out when most appropriate to do so.

Procurement will play an important part in reducing emissions, by ensuring that low emissions are a key part of the criteria used when awarding contracts. We will also identify systems of working to ensure we are minimising our carbon footprint, such as finding ways to reduce the amount of driving that is necessary during work.

2. Reducing energy consumption and emissions from homes and businesses in the Borough

The Barrow Borough Local Plan includes the promotion of sustainable transport, planning for new developments in locations and ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, actively supporting energy efficiency in buildings and helping to increase the use and supply of renewable and low-carbon energy. Generating energy locally will create jobs and support the local economy. By developing a portfolio of options for clean energy we can deliver energy security and value for business and consumers.

15.1% of all households in the Borough are currently living in fuel poverty, which is higher than the national average of 10.9%.^{viii} Fuel poverty is defined as spending a high proportion of income on required energy costs to maintain a warm, well lit home with hot water and required appliances. As fuel poor households get more energy efficient, they have lower costs required to heat their homes and reduced cold-related health problems.

The Council Plan commits to developing a Housing Renewal Policy which focuses on delivering improvements to improve the quality of life for residents. Through this

we can identify and highlight ways to reduce energy consumption and emissions in homes throughout the Borough.

3. Reducing emissions from transport

We will promote sustainable public transport including electric buses, walking and cycling, alongside a comprehensive approach to wayfinding. Encouraging more active travel not only reduces emissions but improves the health of the population through increased activity, cleaner air and decreased noise. This will require improvements to infrastructure in our main public areas as well as engaging with key stakeholders such as Cumbria County Council.

Increasing the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV) such as hybrid-electric, full-electric and hydrogen fuel vehicles is also essential if we are to reduce emissions from transport. The Government's Road to Zero strategy set an ambition that no new conventional petrol or diesel cars will be sold by 2040.^{ix} More recently the Government has recently announced plans to bring forward an end to the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans to 2035, or earlier if a faster transition is feasible, as well as including hybrids for the first time.^x

While ULEVs can have increased emissions during manufacturing, these can be recovered after only two years compared to driving an average conventional vehicle and as the proportion of renewable and low carbon electricity supplied via the grid continues to grow, electric vehicle emissions will continue to fall in parallel.^{xi}

We recognise that we will need more charging infrastructure for electric vehicles. Some installation for chargepoints will need to happen immediately in order to encourage the uptake of ULEVs and we have started to work with partners to create a strategy for electric vehicle charging infrastructure to ensure fair access to charging for all drivers, including residents with no designated parking, small businesses, taxi drivers and buses.

4. Reducing consumption of resources, increasing recycling and reducing waste.

We are committed to reducing our use of natural reserves through reduction, recycling, reusing materials and working with our residents to increase our recycling rates. Waste sector emissions of all greenhouse gases accounted for approximately 4% of UK emissions of greenhouse gases in 2017, but have fallen by 69% since 1990.^{xii}

We work with our partners across Cumbria through the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership, formed by all the Cumbrian Waste Collection Authorities and the Waste Disposal Authority to work together to develop the most cost effective and practical methods of dealing with waste. The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy sets the strategic direction for waste policy in Cumbria and this will be renewed in 2020.^{xiii} The partnership will shape the new strategy taking into account climate change, the Resources and Waste Strategy and the changes to be introduced through the Environment Bill.^{xiv xv}

5. Increasing carbon capture to offset emissions

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and others have stated that in addition to a program of emission cutting measures, extracting CO₂ from the air will be needed if we are to bend the rising temperature curve before the end of this century.^{xvi} Global deforestation has been a significant factor in driving up emissions of carbon, so we are proposing to plant more trees in the Borough. Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) consist of both emissions and removals of CO₂ from land and forests, this can compensate for the effects of non-CO₂ greenhouse gas emissions in the Borough that cannot currently be reduced to zero.

The report also says that there is a lot of potential for increasing the amount of carbon that is stored in living plants and sediments found in the marshy lands near the sea shore and on the edges of river estuaries. They include mangroves, tidal areas and seagrass beds. Together, these wetlands contain the highest carbon stocks per unit area of any ecosystem.

We will investigate what is the most efficient and effective way of offsetting carbon emissions for our Borough and work with partners to ensure we are increasing carbon capture to the Borough's full potential.

6. Increasing public awareness around climate change

Engagement with the wider public, local groups and partnerships is crucial in order to meet our targets. We are aware that there is a growing number of people for whom the environment is a priority and we want to work with those stakeholders to ensure we are doing all we can to meet our ambitions for the Borough.

We are also aware that for some, the environment is not a priority and as such we need to explain why we are taking certain actions and highlight the co-benefits to reducing carbon emissions, such as lower energy bills due to energy efficiency measures or improved air and water quality through a reduction in polluting vehicles.

There are simple, practical steps that we can all take to lower our carbon emissions, such as making informed choices about the products we use or changes in diet, transport and how we heat and power our homes. Through setting an example ourselves, utilising our communications channels, by working with partners by educating and encouraging behaviour change in order to reduce our individual carbon footprint. This will involve increasing public awareness about the effects of our dietary, transport and energy consumption choices on the environment.

Taking action and monitoring impact

An immediate programme of CO₂ mitigation to deliver cuts in carbon emissions is required in order to meet or exceed our target. A range of actions, along with possible funding sources have been identified and included in the action plan.

The Climate Change Working Group was established following the climate emergency declaration and has been meeting monthly to ensure progress with the policy and action plan. Membership of the working group includes cross-party councillors and officers from across the council because we recognise that the actions needed to reduce carbon emissions will take a collective effort and will need to include a wide range of partners. The working group will meet quarterly and will be responsible for ensuring progress towards our programme of CO₂ emissions. The action plan will remain a live document, to be maintained by Public Protection Services.

Actions in progress and completed actions will be displayed on the website, along with a way for members of the public to contact the working group with suggestions. The website will be just one element of our climate emergency conversation, we will be introducing a number of ways people can have their say on the range of measures required to meet or exceed our target. We will actively engage with the public to seek ideas as well as critical feedback of our ongoing emissions reductions programme.

We will carry out carbon audits of our own estate and use available data to review carbon budgets for the Borough, to ensure targets are met. We will also use available modelling techniques to calculate our expected date for net zero, monitor the impact of our actions and make adjustments.

Cumbria County Council have produced the Cumbria Carbon Baseline Report which creates a footprint for Cumbria including both direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions that arise throughout supply chain activities and products in carbon equivalents. We have representatives from our working group on both the Cumbria wide Local Authority Climate Policy Group and the Cumbria Climate Change Working Group.

We recognise that to achieve our ambitious target we will need to work with local partners and neighbouring Councils to help local residents, local businesses and other organisations to reduce their energy consumption, to reduce congestion, to improve the local environment, to deal with fuel poverty in our communities and to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Further to this, we will call on Central Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible.

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