

'Get Serious About CO2' Cutting carbon emissions in Camden

The Friends of the Earth 'Get Serious About CO2' campaign asks councils across the UK to commit to show leadership on tackling climate change by reducing carbon emissions by 40% by 2020. Camden Friends of the Earth ask councillors to consider the many benefits from significantly reducing carbon emissions in the borough, and therefore asks councillors to put this target in their party manifestos.

Why set this target?

- The UK has a world-first Climate Change Act with a legally-binding target of an 80% emissions cut by 2050, and shorter-term national carbon budgets ensuring year-on-year emissions cuts.
- As councillors will be aware, Local authorities have a big say in how we heat and power our homes, our local services and infrastructure, and are vital to building low carbon communities and meeting our national climate commitments.
- Camden Council is already committed to 10% emissions reductions in 2010, however wider policy changes and infrastructure development need a longer timescale, which is why we are asking for the council to aim to cut carbon emissions across the borough by 40% by 2020 (on a 2005 baseline). While this target is challenging, it is achievable, and we believe it is essential that Camden Council takes on this challenge.

12 councils (from all political parties) have already signed up to the target:
Islington, Haringey, Harrow, Birmingham, Bristol, Durham, Harrogate, Leeds, Manchester, Plymouth, Suffolk, and York.

Can Camden be the next to show leadership on this issue?

Public support

Over 350 people living in Camden have signed postcards to support the Get Serious campaign, asking the Council to commit to reducing emissions in the borough by 40% by 2020.

The campaign is supported by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and Environmental Protection UK and locally by community groups including Transition groups from Bloomsbury to Hampstead, Camden Cyclists, and a number of local businesses including the NUS, Alara Wholefoods, Camden Arts Centre, Camden Cycles, Inspirial Lounge, Planet Organic, Camden Coffee House, Triyoga, Camden Garden Centre, Unison and University College Hospital.

Benefits to all in Camden

Everyone who lives and works in the area stands to benefit from significant action to reduce carbon emissions. Benefits include:

- **Job creation** - Independent research by Carbon Descent suggests a move to install insulation and renewable energy across the borough of Camden can create up to 422 jobs to boost the local economy.ⁱ

- **Energy security** - Increasing local low-carbon energy supply is safer and less dependent on imported oil and gas and will generate revenue for the council via feed-in tariffs.
- **Fuel poverty will be reduced** - Kirklees Council in Yorkshire have cut average household fuel bills by £150 as a result of their free home insulation scheme.ⁱⁱ
- **Improving quality of life and health for local people** - through improving housing stock, e.g. with better insulation, or fitting council-owned housing with high quality double / triple glazed windows.
- **Better air quality** - Less traffic and improved low-carbon transportation infrastructure reduces air pollution – very important, as our air in Camden is so polluted that it often exceeds European legal limits.
- **Financial savings** - Kensington & Chelsea's aim to cut their emissions by 40% by March 2014 (through energy efficiency actions around buildings, schools and street lighting) will save them £1.5 million a year.ⁱⁱⁱ

How emissions reductions can be achieved

Research by Carbon Descent shows how local authorities can cut CO2 emissions by 40% by 2020 with measures around energy, housing and transport. These include domestic energy efficiency, domestic renewables, traffic reduction, improved vehicle efficiency, conversion of district heating schemes to CHP, and more efficient commercial lighting.^{iv} CHP is particularly viable for Camden, and the Renewable Heat Incentive and Feed-In-Tariffs make renewable energy financially feasible.

We would ask the Council to do the following:

- Work with neighbouring local boroughs to approach European funding sources (like the EU regional development bank and the EIB) to access funds for retrofit / district heating and waste heat use.
- Utilise prudential borrowing to fund the improvement of all council owned buildings (homes and commercial premises)
- Work with the Kings Cross centre on construction training to improve the energy efficiency skills in the local construction industry & implement tighter quality controls on all refurbishment work done in the local authority to enforce agreed standards

In light of forthcoming elections, we ask councillors to make a commitment to the Get Serious target in their party manifestos. That is, a reduction of carbon emissions in Camden by 40% by 2020, with year-on-year cuts and annual reports on progress.

We also ask councillors to commit in their manifestos to:

- Commissioning an action plan for how the emissions cuts will be made
- Integration of the 40% goal into all relevant future council plans and strategies
- Supporting the Friends of the Earth Get Serious About CO2 campaign for
 - more money and support for local authorities to take action to cut carbon
 - the introduction of local carbon budgets for every council

We would welcome any questions. Thank you.

Notes

ⁱ 'Job creation from local action on climate' research by Carbon Descent (Dec 2009) analysed the labour needed needed to insulate homes and businesses, and to install green energy on buildings. http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/job_creation_carbon_descent.pdf

ⁱⁱ Kirklees Council in Yorkshire has insulated 21,000 homes since the year 2000 - with each household saving around £150 a year on fuel bills. <http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/warmzone>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Carbon Management plan aims to reduce emissions by 40% by 2014 through a range of measures including: draught proofing, insulation, upgrading lighting and air conditioning systems, voltage optimisers, motion sensors for street lighting, LED lights on road signs and bollards.

More information:

<http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/cut-carbon-reduce-costs/reduce/public-sector/Public-sector-case-studies/Pages/Kensington-and-Chelsea-Council.aspx>

^{iv} Carbon Descent 'Pathways to 40%' report shows that 40% emissions cuts by 2020 can be achieved by the following measures:

	Domestic energy efficiency	Domestic renewables	Traffic reduction/eco-driving	Improved vehicle efficiency	Conversion of district heating schemes to CHP including biomass (e.g. through ESCOs)	Overall de-carbonisation of the electricity grid (including more local approval of renewable energy)	More efficient commercial lighting	Total reduction in CO2 (%)
Tower Hamlets	2.9	0.15	1.6	2.7	7.5	24.3	1	40.1
Middlesbrough	5.6	0	2.4	7.0	2.9	22.2	0	40.1
Hampshire	6.2	1.5	5.0	7.2	3.7	16.5	0	40.1

The full report 'Pathways to 40%' can be found at:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/reports/pathways_to_40_percent_report.pdf

Further resources

Funding: Research on funding of emission reductions measures and examples of projects undertaken by local authorities both nationally and internationally are available here:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/get_serious_finance_report.pdf

Briefings and case studies: Additional briefings and studies concerning local authority emission reductions can be found here:

http://www.foe.co.uk/community/campaigns/climate/get_serious_about_co2_resources_2064_4.html.