**Parish and District Councils: Changes required to become a Carbon Neutral 2030 (draft1)**

**A briefing for action once a climate change emergency is declared.**

1. To become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030 is a very ambitious target and will require partnership with a wide range of partners and all the citizens of the area.  For the vast majority of councils this target is technically feasible but there are likely to be considerable political and regulatory constraints. There is also potential public resistance because this is no longer business as usual it is an emergency which will require radical action.   However, taking purposeful action creates great opportunities and the potential to realise significant economic, social and environmental benefits as well as minimising future litigation risk.
2. Most parish and district councils will probably set up a small working group made up of councillors and members of the community to beginning working on implementation.  A key role for the town and parish council is to provide leadership and effective communication to the residents and businesses within its area.
3. Many Town and Parish councils are declaring a climate change emergency and it will be important to those in the same area to link to share expertise, knowledge and experience.
4. The changes required over the next 11 years to become carbon neutral are already well understood. They are, by and large, the changes required nationally and internationally to move to a low carbon economy, as documented in official Government national strategies and plans.
5. These fall into several broad categories as set out below.   Potential actions to be taken by town and parish councils are then listed.   In order to become carbon neutral by 2030 action will need to be taken on all or most of the 9 nine points below:  it is not matter of either/or. Action is required on every front by the majority of the population within the parish/town area.  Priorities should be to cut energy use and to maximise renewable energy generation.
6. **a complete shift to very low or zero carbon electricity generation, mostly renewable and much of it decentralised;**
   * Currently 30% of electricity in the UK is from renewable sources and the Government target is for at least 50% by 2030. **Therefore, each town and parish council  should be aiming to generate 50% of its electricity from renewable sources within the parish/Town by 2030.**
   * Electricity use  is reported at District council level  by the UK Government on an annual basis ***(Beis 2017)*** [***https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/regional-and-local-authority-electricity-consumption-statistics***](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/regional-and-local-authority-electricity-consumption-statistics). An estimate for the electricity use in your parish/town by households can be made by multiplying the number of houses within the parish/town by the mean electricity use per domestic meter for the District. For urban areas the electricity use will be lower than the average and in rural areas it will be higher. Business and industrial electricity use is more complicated to calculate at a town and parish level and is obviously dependent  on the number and type of businesses in the area.
   * To estimate the current renewable energy generation within the  parish/town, one could map and record the number and size of renewable energy generation sites.  These will be largely in the form of PV on domestic and business roofs, although some parishes may benefit from large scale solar.
   * To increase the percentage of renewable energy generation:
     + the Council can use its own buildings and land. This could be in the form PV on the roofs  on council owned properties or, if suitable, wind turbines.
     + New renewable generation may be funded out of council funds, loans via Salix <https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils> or through crowd funding and /or a community share offer.
     + Work with community energy groups to develop new renewable energy generation within the parish/town boundary.
     + Switch to 100% Green electricity being supplied from a company that is investing in new renewable energy generation rather than an electricity supply that is just trading in Green Energy
     + Propose areas for renewable energy generation in the Neighbourhood Plan or next revision of the Neighbourhood Plan
     + Introduce policies in the Neighbourhood plan for all new buildings within the parish/town to be Carbon Neutral
     + Introduce polices in the Neighbourhood plan to support installation of PV on housing with the parish/town
     + Actively support small and large planning applications for new renewable energy in the parish/Town boundary
7. **smarter and more flexible management of electricity demand, including storage, to enable higher penetration of variable renewable generation and to optimise electricity system operation;**
   * If the council has or is planning to install PV on its own buildings, it should consider adding battery storage to allow the use of energy generated during the day and night. Salix funding may be available [https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils%20)
   * Introduce polices in Neighbourhood plan to support installation of Battery storage within the parish/town .
   * Where Parish/Town councils include areas that have the potential for large amount of renewable energy generation linked to new development option for energy independence/energy islands separate from the national grid should be considered
8. **huge reductions in energy demand by improving significantly the energy performance of all buildings (across all sectors and all tenures) and the equipment and processes within them**;
   * All parish and town councils should monitor their energy use within the buildings directly under their control This will then allow the setting of energy reduction targets.
     + Action to improve energy performance of building should include reducing drafts, insulation of walls and roofs and then windows and floors, installation of more efficient heating systems and replacing of lighting with the currently most efficient diode lighting. Salix funding may be available [https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils%20) (Randwick Village hall has undergone retrofit to reduce drafts, improve insulation and the installation of underfloor heating)
   * Parish & Town councils and their Councillors can actively promote improving the energy performance of all housing within the area. Larger older houses in rural areas tend to have much poorer energy performance than smaller more modern housing and therefore result in much greater CO2e emissions.   However, owners of larger older houses tend to have more disposable income and can afford to improve the energy performance of their homes, drastically reducing CO2 emissions  and making significant savings on their energy costs.
   * Parish and Town councils should investigate encouraging groups of households, particularly those houses of similar construction to approach retrofit companies to offer bulk discounts for works on several houses within the parish. The council may be in position to act as honest broker in negotiating such discounts**.  Link to Energy** is a free-to-use online directory helping you to find sustainable energy installers and tradespeople in the South West, West Midlands and surrounding areas  <https://www.linktoenergy.org.uk/>  This is run by the charity Severn Wye Energy <http://www.severnwye.org.uk/>. We need to find the equivalent for South EAST
   * There are still a small number of government grants available to those households meeting certain criteria to improve their energy performance.  Check with Warm and Well for latest details <http://www.warmandwell.co.uk/> 0800 500 3076.  This is run by the charity Severn Wye Energy <http://www.severnwye.org.uk/>
9. **decarbonisation of heat (i.e. stop relying on fossil fuel gas and oil) for buildings, hot water and industrial processes;**
   * to remove fossil fuel from the gas network and replace with biomethane and or hydrogen will require action at a national level. However, town and parish councils could switch from the use of oil or gas to heat their buildings to electricity by using air or ground source heat pumps, potentially powered by PV and energy stored in batteries.  Salix funding may be available [https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils%20) (Stroud district Council has installed Air source heat pumps and PV on a number of “off gas” council own houses around the district)
   * Parish and Town councils in rural areas can support farmers and landowners to diversify and build anaerobic digesters to use farm waste and/or silage to create biomethane to inject directly into the gas grid network, replacing fossil fuels.
10. **dramatic steps to cut the CO2e emissions of transport by switching to walking, cycling, efficient mass transport (not powered by fossil fuels), cutting out flying and a huge rise in the use of electric vehicles;**
    * Replace council owned vehicle with suitable Electric models when existing petrol, and diesel vehicles come to the end of usable life.
    * Development of safe walking and cycle routes in partnership with district and county councils.
    * Promote cycling and walking as the preferred form of transport around the town/parish
    * When replacing council vehicle with EV consider making EV charging points available to public when not required by council vehicles.
    * Offer cycle to work loans (including Electric cycle as well) for all Parish/Town staff
    * Install sufficient safe secure cycle parking
    * Work with local companies and business to promote walking and cycling to work
    * Promote car free streets, car free days, cycle to work summers
11. **ensuring new build developments achieve their full low carbon potential and contribute effectively to a smarter energy system;**
    * in responding to planning applications request all new building to be low carbon development
    * Any new building developed by council or on council land to be carbon neutral
12. **a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural food production and land use**
    * Actively promote low carbon/methane/nox emission food consumption (vegetarian, vegan, extensive pasture grazed animals)
    * Minimise cutting of council owner grassed area to minimise carbon emissions and maximise potential for wildflower and pollinators
13. **a huge reduction in the generation of waste and a dramatic increase in low carbon means of dealing with waste;**
    * Minimise waste generation from own operations
    * go single use plastic free
    * Ensure council maximises recycling from own buildings
    * If council rents out room for public event it should ensure all food waste is not sent to land fill and sent to an aerobic digester (In Gloucestershire Andigestion provide a food waste collection service https://andigestion.co.uk/)
    * set up a Teracycle Scheme for hard to recycle material not typically collect by District Council schemes.  See <https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/>
14. **a dramatic increase in the capture of carbon particularly, but not necessarily exclusively, through tree planting and land management.**
    * Parish & Town councisl can reduce the frequency of cutting of grasses areas.
    * encourage the development of woodland either by tree planting or re-wilding of council owned land.
15. Although, in the continuing age of austerity there are few government grants available, loans via Salix funding may be suitable for some projects [https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils](https://www.salixfinance.co.uk/loans/parish-councils%20%20)
16. Not all these ambitious targets can be realised by local town and parish councils acting alone; it will require concerted effort from district and county councils, national government, national network operators, national and local businesses  and finance working together. However, there are several crucial roles that a Council can play working in partnership with their citizens, key statutory and non-statuary partners and, most importantly, with businesses. These include leadership & delivery, coordination, engagement, policy development and planning.
17. Many town and parish councils may want to establish baseline figures for CO2e emissions  from their parish or own operations. Government publish data by principal Local Authority area  Beis 2018 [https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics%20) but  not at a parish level. However, estimates can be made based of the average emissions per person in the district multiplied by the population of the town or parish. Adjustments as to rural or urban areas and the presence of large industrial estates may then need to be made.
18. Some town and parish councils made want to audit their own emissions. This can be done by measuring energy and fuel use through the years and calculating using recognised conversation factors. The Carbon Trust  provides details on conversation factors and carbon calculators [https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/tools/](https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/tools/%20%20%20%20)
19. It needs to be recognised that delivery will require dramatic changes which are likely to lead to resistance from various quarters and it will be important to remain highly focussed and purposeful whilst avoiding being distracted by potential conflict.

**Background Documents**

**2016 Carbon Emissions  *Beis 2018 (***[***https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics***](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics)***)***

**Annual Electricity Consumption  *(Beis 2017 )*** [***https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/regional-and-local-authority-electricity-consumption-statistics***](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/regional-and-local-authority-electricity-consumption-statistics)

**Annual Gas Consumption 2017 *(Beis)  <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sub-national-gas-consumption-data>***

**Renewable Energy Generation by local authority (2016)  <https://renewablelocator.green-alliance.org.uk/>**

**Change Starts Now: Towards Carbon Neutral Bristol 2030**

**Here are some links to some of the carbon calculators**

**WWF calculator** [**https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/**](https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/)**simple but well researched a good starting point for individuals**

**National Energy Foundation  <http://www.carbon-calculator.org.uk/>  Good calculator that show calculation, conversation factors and assumptions**

**The Resurgence Carbon Calculator** [**https://www.resurgence.org/resources/carbon-calculator.html**](https://www.resurgence.org/resources/carbon-calculator.html)**This is a much more detailed calculator that  although developed over ten years ago can provide a good insight to the emission from you house and lifestyle**

**Carbon Trust** [**https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/tools/**](https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/tools/) **range of tools and a calculator for small business**

**Carbon Footprint** [**https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx**](https://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx)**… more detailed commercial site which will offer you way to offset you emissions relatively low costs.**

**UK Carbon Footprint** [**https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uks-carbon-footprint**](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uks-carbon-footprint)**how the government calculates the UK Carbon footprint**