

Response by Carbon Neutral Cambridge to the Cambridgeshire County Council's Climate Change Strategy. January 2020



Carbon Neutral Cambridge

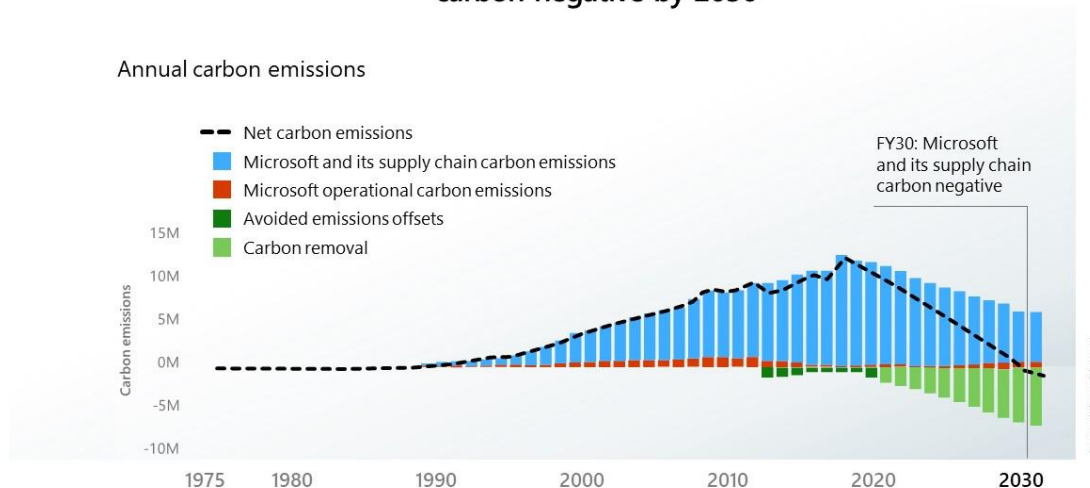
Summary

We welcome the preparation of the Cambridgeshire County Council's Climate Strategy and your explicit recognition of the importance and urgency of taking action to mitigate (ie reduce) carbon emissions, help the community cope with the consequences of climate change and increase the Natural Capital in our region. It is useful that you are making a clear distinction between actions taken to reduce the Council's own emissions, and those intended to help reduce the emissions of the wider Cambridgeshire community.

However, the actions proposed are wholly inadequate to achieve those targets. We urge you being much more ambitious in setting a clear Science Based decarbonisation pathway, setting targets compatible with this pathway, leading and enabling decarbonisation action throughout the county, and communicating the results. We commit that if you try hard to meet ambitious decarbonisation targets, we'll support you even if you don't quite achieve them.

For an example of good discussion of how to meet ambitious targets, see this blog discussing how Microsoft plans to reach Net Zero by 2030 <https://blogs.microsoft.com/blog/2020/01/16/microsoft-will-be-carbon-negative-by-2030/>

Microsoft's pathway to carbon negative by 2030



Scope 1 and 2 emissions (action plan p1-3)

We are pleased that Cambridgeshire County Council has set the target of halving the fuel and electricity used in council buildings, council vehicles and street lighting by 2023 (referred to in the action plan as Scope 1 and 2 emissions) However, it is incorrect to assume that the council's electricity is all already zero carbon. Being on a green electricity tariff is insufficient: to truly be using zero carbon electricity, you need to be either generating it using your own assets (eg solar and wind) or have signed power purchase agreements with renewables providers. As electricity use is 75% of your scope 1 and 2 emissions, this makes a substantial difference.

As power purchase agreements can be done quite quickly, we would like to see all your Scope 2 electricity use truly zero carbon by YE 2021

We welcome the Council's investment in renewable power generation (which should also be a good financial investment for the future) and would like to see rapid progress in increasing the proportion that you generate. This should be reported to the community annually.

Scope 3 emissions. (target 4, action plan p5-6)

We welcome your target of reducing the council's Scope 3 emissions by 50.4% by 2030, but want you to be much more ambitious in what you include. Scope 3 should include the indirect emissions from your whole value chain. This should include the carbon emissions involved in the following; producing and shipping the various supplies used by the council (from burgers to building materials); staff getting to work; pupils getting to council maintained schools; your "customers" (a.k.a. ratepayers) accessing the services you provide.

We recognise that collating and quantifying this information is a big task, and that there are sometimes difficult judgement to be made about what lies inside or outside the boundary, so support the proposal to get started now and expand the scope later.

We want you to set up a clear and transparent reporting method so that the community and your partners can track progress and help the decarbonisation process

Target 6: Reducing emissions in the wider community (action plan p9-11)

The County Councils own emissions are only around 1.5% of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough community's emissions, but you have significant influence over the community's emissions, even if they aren't your direct responsibility. We want the council to be much more ambitious and creative in identifying areas in which you can make a difference and enable additional emissions cuts in the wider community.

The current statement of target 6 is too weak. Signing up to "a shared target" can be accomplished in an afternoon. We would like it to be modified to read "To work with partners and the community to reach specific and measurable carbon reduction targets in a number of areas, totalling a 50.4% reduction by 2030"

It should be noted that analysis by the Tyndall centre <https://carbonbudget.manchester.ac.uk/> suggests that the Cambridgeshire area's Carbon emissions in the energy sector should reduce by

13.7% pa to be compatible with the UK's Net Zero 2050 target. This corresponds to a 77% reduction by 2030.

The obvious major omission in this section relates to the Council's role in leading the decarbonisation of the transport sector. CUSPE figures suggest this is 39% of the Cambridge and Peterborough emissions, but your proposed actions are limp. "Raising awareness of options to travel sustainably" is no more than business as usual and is far less than will be required for the radical transformation we need. Electric vehicles are good, but on a life-cycle basis they typically only halve emissions.

We note that your previous targets on carbon reduction for transportation have been missed by a large margin <https://carbonneutralcambridge.org/cnc-response-to-the-combined-authority-local-transport-plan/>

You have significant power and influence to drive a modal shift to low carbon transport. Council and GCP led policy measures such as bus subsidies, congestion charging and workplace parking levies would rapidly transform driver behaviour patterns. Improving rural broadband would help/ Longer term, ensuring that planning policies (and enforcement) stopped developers creating car dependent communities would substantially reduce carbon emissions, while improving the wellbeing and prosperity of your ratepayers.

The local Growth Agenda makes decarbonisation much more difficult. We recognise that that some growth is dictated by central Government and would be difficult to challenge, but additional growth such as proposed by CPIER, Oxford-Cambridge Arc etc should be robustly rejected on climate/environmental grounds.

We want you to work with the community and be creative and responsive in identifying less obvious areas in which you can very easily make a big difference.

To take just one example. The propellant left in asthma inhalers is a highly potent greenhouse gas. The NHS estimates it is responsible for 5% of NHS carbon emissions, or 1 Million Tonnes pa. On a population basis, Cambridgeshire's share of this would be around 10,000 Tonnes: ie 30% more than all the County Council's Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions. We would like to see the council take urgent action to eliminate Cambridgeshire's share of these emissions, through providing proper recycling facilities for asthma inhalers (eg in schools, recycling centres, shopping centres, pharmacies, GPs etc) and running a public awareness campaign, in partnership with the local NHS. This should be an easy opportunity for a significant "quick win"

We have a range of other suggestions, and our volunteers would like the opportunity to work together with the county council to help accelerate the decarbonisation of our region.

Anne Miller ref 18994

On behalf of Carbon Neutral Cambridge 29 Jan 2020