

4.3 Phase 3: Lobbying

When, how and who to lobby

For most groups, this stage of the campaign won't kick in until the autumn, though this will vary depending on the situation in your area > see [Section 1.2](#) , page 4 for a campaign timeline.

Top tip! Read *How Your Council Works* for further information on council procedures and processes

The ultimate aim of your lobbying is to get your council to commit to making 40% cuts by 2020, and creating a plan for how to do so. This commitment will normally be made through a council motion. However, one sympathetic councillor willing to put forward a motion for you won't be enough: you need to **be sure you have enough support on board to get a motion passed**. If it fails, it may be some time before it can be put forward again, and you'll have extra work to do to regain lost ground. So the first part of your lobbying needs to focus on building sufficient support from councillors, and only when you are confident of having secured enough support should you go for the motion.

A note on lobbying

You don't have to be an expert. It's your council's job to work out how to deliver services that will benefit the local community - and to respond to local people's concerns – this is what you are representing to them through your campaign. Obviously, if you're confident about the technical aspects of the policy, that's great – but don't feel you have to do their job for them.

How to lobby

Whenever and whomever you are lobbying, here are some top tips to remember:

Before a meeting:

- ✓ Do your research into the person's interest and record on the issue you are going to see them about
- ✓ Arrange a meeting and make sure you know how to get there and how long your journey will take
- ✓ Agree who is going to attend the meeting – if more than one of your group is attending, agree who will say what, when
- ✓ Write down the key areas you wish to talk to the person about so you have this clear in your own mind

- ✓ Agree what specific commitments you are looking for from the person (what action do you want them to take following your meeting)

During the meeting:

- ✓ Take notes (or make sure one of your group is taking notes)
- ✓ Stay focused
- ✓ Remember the key points you want to raise with the person
- ✓ Bring along further research or supporting documents if this will strengthen your case
- ✓ Be clear and specific in what you are asking the person to do
- ✓ Stay polite

After the meeting:

- ✓ Write and thank the person for their time – remember to specify what it is that the person has agreed to do
- ✓ Follow up on any actions you agreed in the meeting
- ✓ Get in touch with your local media (if applicable) – this is especially relevant if you have photos from your meeting

Top Tip! For further guidance see:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/lobby_your_elected_rep.pdf

b) Arranging meetings

The thought of lobbying more than half of your local councillors probably seems a bit daunting – but never fear. There are lots of ways you can reduce the workload so you don't need to arrange 20 or 30 different meetings.

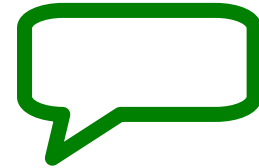
- 1) **Prioritise.** In your research and experience of the campaign to this point you may have already identified some councillors who are going to be very hard work. If you think you can get sufficient support without these councillors backing the campaign, then you might decide to use your resources elsewhere. Alternatively, can you email or write to some councillors, at least initially?
- 2) **Meet more than one councillor at once.** Ask if you can meet all the councillors for a ward together, or if you can make a short speech at the meeting of party political groups. Alternatively you may be able to talk at council meetings. For example, there may be opportunities to make the case at council scrutiny panels, held in public on a regular basis. Councillors, council staff, experts and the public may all give evidence on issues being scrutinised - these could be a good way to talk to a cross-party group of potentially sympathetic councillors together.
- 3) **Organise an event and invite local councillors.** You could plan this as a public meeting where you demonstrate the community support for council action (this would be a particularly good option if you've recruited local allies who would be prepared to talk about why they support the campaign),

or something less serious such as a film showing followed by a short presentation. You could display a gallery of photos showing how many people want the council to Get Serious About CO₂. Whatever you do, remember to invite those you need to be there far enough in advance and find a time and venue that is convenient for councillors. Don't forget you can publicise important events to individual supporters of Friends of the Earth through your website updates – choose your opportunity carefully and plan ahead.

- 4) **Use your allies to lobby for you.** If you have already secured the support of some councillors, ask them to talk about it to other councillors, particularly those in their own party group, and those they share a ward with. Make sure you follow up with them to find out who they've spoken to and the reaction they received.

c) Communicating councillors' support of the campaign

When councillors say they support the campaign, you should communicate this so it raises the profile of the campaign further



You can ask them to:

- give you a photo of them for the local pages of the Get Serious About CO₂ website
- write a letter to the local paper expressing support for the campaign
- give a supportive quote for a press release or leaflet
- take part in a media stunt. Once there is a significant group of councillors – like several wards or a whole party group could organise another media stunt with the Get Serious About CO₂ props. You'll receive a template calling notice for this stunt with the props.

Be aware that a councillor's indication of support for the Get Serious About CO₂ campaign doesn't necessarily mean that they would definitely vote in favour of the motion if it came before the council. It's still worth making the most of any political support though – partly because it adds credibility to the campaign, and partly because councillors will be more likely to follow through on their pledge if it has been communicated to their electorate.