

More help on Planning and research

Planning is the key to any successful campaign. From May onwards, you should meet regularly to develop your campaign plan and to monitor progress. Developing a plan may seem daunting or too time-consuming, but it will help you to focus your activities where they will have most impact and ensure that you maintain energy throughout the campaign. It's better for both your group and your campaign to do a smaller number of things well than take on too much and burn-out.

Your campaign aim is for your local council to:

- commit to cutting carbon emissions in their area by at least 40 percent by 2020, and to produce an action plan to make the changes really happen; and support Friends of the Earth's campaign for national action to assist local authorities, including for more funds and for a new duty on councils that fail to act on climate change by 2012.



Your campaign aim is your destination - the point that all your campaign activities need to move you towards.



Your campaign plan is the map – the route you will take to get to your destination. Your campaign plan should work backwards from the aim, considering what circumstances would need to be in place for it to be achieved and the steps necessary to create those circumstances. Write up the campaign aim on piece of flipchart paper and pin it up during each group meeting so everyone in your group can see what you are working towards.

The steps below explain how to get started on planning Get Serious About CO₂ in your area.

a) Before your first Get Serious About CO₂ planning meeting



Checklist

- ✓ Share this action guide around the group - available from www.foe.co.uk/community/getseriousaboutCO2
- ✓ Agree for one person to read the Dossier on your local council
- ✓ Arrange for one person to do some preliminary research into the political context of your council > **See Appendix 3 (Section 5.3) for more details**
- ✓ Download campaign planning guidance and information from the Community website (www.foe.co.uk/community) > **see part (c)**

b) Holding your first Get Serious About CO₂ planning meeting

There are 3 phases to local group campaigns: Phase 1: Planning and research

Phase 2: Build public support

Phase 3: Lobbying

Section 1.2 has a detailed diagram of the timings and phasing of Get Serious About CO₂. These phases will help you structure your local campaign plan. By the end of your first planning meeting as a group you should have answers to the following questions:

Q.1 What are you trying to achieve and what are the systems you're trying to influence?

This is about sharing your campaign aim with the group and ensuring that each person in the group has a copy of this action guide and understands the campaign rationale.

Q. 2 What is your council's current position on climate change and what needs to change?

Make sure that someone has read over the Dossier on your local council. You can supplement this with your own local knowledge and additional research.

Q.3 Who are your targets at each phase of the campaign?

This is where it is important that someone has undertaken a bit of research on the current political context of your council. Likely targets are councillors with specific roles within the council, as well as council officers. Remember your targets may change according to what stage of the campaign you are in – so review your targets on a regular basis.

Q. 4 What are your main opportunities (and obstacles); Who are your main audiences and allies?

This is the public-facing part of your campaign and includes street campaigning, alliance building and developing your media strategy. Your opportunities could include any upcoming events you are participating in, as well as announcements or events initiated by the council. Key audiences might be people living in a specific ward or area within your local authority. Allies might include other community groups and supportive councillors or other politicians or businesses.

Glossary - Wards

Ward are electoral districts: a council is divided into a number of wards, each of which elects councillor(s) to represent that area.

Making your plan

1. Write up the campaign aim and stick it up on the wall
2. Read over the materials and resources section > **Section 2**
3. Ask each of the people who have read over the Dossier and done some research into the current political context of your council to do a short (5 mins) summary
4. Using questions 3 and 4 above as a guide brainstorm all the possible targets, opportunities, obstacles, allies and audiences you have for this campaign. Write each one of these on a post-it note

5. Move the post-its around so that you can see clearly how one element of the campaign relates to another and you agree as a group on the order in which things need to be done
6. This gives you a rough outline of your campaign plan. The next stage is to identify objectives for each activity (e.g. “collect 20 signed postcards at X event”, or “arrange meeting with local residents group”). Agreeing and setting objectives for each part of your campaign plan may not be possible in your first planning meeting but you can use the outline you agree in this session as the foundation for your ongoing planning work.

Your campaign planning – further resources:

There are lots of different ways to get started on campaign planning. Why not check out these guides for further information on how to plan campaigns and look ahead:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/cyw_39_campaign_strategise.pdf

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/how_tos/cyw_70_plan_ahead.pdf

Section 3.3 of the Handbook also has a good template guide for planning campaigns:

http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/guides/lg_handbook_online_action.pdf

c) Ongoing research and monitoring

Don't forget – a good plan should mean you are focusing your resources effectively on achieving the change you want to see. But your plan is only a guide – campaigning is a dynamic process of creating change, and many changes in the outside world will be unpredictable and outside your control. Your plan is not a blue-print, but a guide to keep you focused on achieving your objectives in an effective manner – if it is no longer doing that, then you need to revisit it. It's worth doing this as you move on to each phase - are you on track? Has anything changed?

Changes in the political make-up of your council, and the profile your council maintains in the local media will affect your campaign so it is important that both of these areas are monitored on an ongoing basis to inform your campaign progress.

It is also important to keep an eye on how you are doing as a group, especially during periods of time where there might be fewer people around (for example during holiday periods, or if someone's personal circumstances change). It is worth checking if you could achieve your objectives by doing less, or doing it more slowly. Can anything be de-prioritised? Can you find extra resources or focus on recruiting more members?

d) Working as a group – roles and remits

It is essential in this campaign to work well as a team. One person won't be able to keep all the different strands of this campaign on track so you will need to work together to achieve your goals. You could use the beginning of this campaign as an opportunity to review and strengthen the skills mix within your group. For example:

- ✓ Involve new people in the group – there are plenty of ways to contribute to this campaign

- ✓ Build the strength and sustainability of your group by taking the opportunity for existing members to share skills – transferring knowledge to other members
- ✓ What are the skills gaps within your group at the moment – what skills would group members like to learn?
- ✓ Is there one person who holds all the skills and experience in a particular area – for example, in working with your council - and so ends up taking on all of a particular sort of work? Could you do more if more people were able to take on that role? What would your group do if that person left the group – can you improve this way of working?
- ✓ Help people feel more comfortable about taking on new tasks by pairing them up with someone more experienced and confident in that area. If you do identify any skills gaps or would like further resources or support contact your Network Developer.

Top Tip! Try the teamwork section of the handbook for more ideas:
http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/guides/lg_handbook_online_teamwor.pdf

Sub-groups

Your campaign aim and plan will inform what the different priorities are in the campaign at any given time. It may be that your group decides to split into sub-groups to take forward different priorities, for example a sub-group working on publicity, another on planning events, and another on policy and research. If this happens it is important to agree the remit of each sub-group – what is the sub-group trying to achieve? You will also need to check that what each sub-group is working on fits with the overall plan. Sub-groups should report back regularly to the whole group and to check whether plans need to be adapted as a result of other pieces of work.

Key roles

How you organise and work as a group is up to you, however there are a few key roles that will help your campaign if these are agreed at an early stage. These are:

- ✓ **Campaign coordinator** – this doesn't necessarily need to be the coordinator of your local group, in fact it may be better if this was someone else. This person is responsible for maintaining an overview of the whole campaign and for ensuring that the different parts of the campaign work effectively together.
- ✓ **Media contact** – this person is the named contact for media work. Their contact details are used on press releases.
- ✓ **Local council researcher** – this could be several people as there is likely to be a lot of information to gather and process. These people develop a sound knowledge of the workings of your local council and the political context you are working in.