

**GET
SERIOUS
ABOUT
CO₂**



September 2010

Briefing

Local Carbon Budgets

Contents

1. Introduction
2. How Local Carbon Budgets could work
3. Councils backing local carbon budgets
4. New legislation

'The best places to live, work and travel in the future will be those that face up to the challenge of cutting carbon and involve local people in solutions that work best for communities and the environment.'

**Andy Atkins,
Executive Director, Friends of the Earth**

Friends of the Earth makes life better for people by inspiring solutions to environmental problems.

We are:

- the UK's most influential national environmental campaigning organisation
- the world's most extensive environmental network, with around 2 million supporters across five continents and 77 national organisations worldwide
- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in more than 230 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- dependent on individuals for over 90 per cent of our income.

To join or make a donation call us on 0800 581 051

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1. Introduction

A step-change in locally coordinated action is needed if we are to meet UK commitments in the Climate Change Act.

The vast majority of UK's emissions (around 80 percent) are a result of local activity – how we heat and power our homes and workplaces and how we get around. As well as getting the big decisions right – such as making the electricity supply greener – it must be a priority to reduce this local energy use.

An integrated area-based approach to cutting carbon is cost effective, meaning that deeper emissions cuts are possible, and crucially, that local people can be involved in the low carbon future of their communities.

Local government is in a strong position to lead and coordinate action to cut carbon. It is trusted by local people, it already works with local business, the public sector and the third sector, and it has a democratic mandate.

Many local authorities are now taking climate change very seriously and are leading action to cut carbon across their local area. This work is creating green jobs, helping to tackle fuel poverty and reducing traffic.

But most councils are being left behind. A nationwide system is needed to ensure emissions come down in every local authority area, not just those prioritising action.

Friends of the Earth's *Get Serious About CO₂* campaign is calling for new legislation in this session of Parliament to introduce local carbon budgets.

Local carbon budgets would place a fair cap on emissions in each local authority area, and would make it easier for councils to lead and plan the local action needed, such as clean energy, green travel and home insulation.

Ambitious local action is politically and practically possible

Councils around the country have already committed to:

- CO₂ cuts across the local authority area of at least 40 per cent by 2020
- A climate change strategy showing what green measures will be implemented locally

■ **Birmingham** ■ **Brighton & Hove** ■ **Bristol** ■ **Durham County**
■ **Haringey** ■ **Harrogate** ■ **Harrow** ■ **Islington** ■ **Leeds**
■ **Manchester** ■ **Plymouth** ■ **Suffolk** ■ **York**

A model based on existing best practice

Friends of the Earth has developed an authoritative model of how local carbon budgets could work based on existing best practice.

We have worked closely with leading local authorities – both officials and elected representatives, the Energy Savings Trust, climate and local government experts to establish a fair and workable mechanism.

Costs

It will cost money to tackle climate change, but the price of not tackling climate change would be far greater.

Emissions cuts delivered through local carbon budgets will be part of the national effort needed to meet UK commitments in the Climate Change Act – not an additional challenge.

An area-based approach to cutting carbon is financially more efficient, and is likely to be money well spent because it will deliver outcomes that people want.

To make local carbon budgets work a relatively small amount of money will be needed for councils to undertake new work, such as technical feasibility studies to identify opportunities to cut carbon, and to draw up climate change plans. This detail of information and planning will be needed if we are to meet targets in the Climate Change Act regardless of the introduction of local carbon budgets.

Jobs and skills

Local carbon budgets will lead to significant local job creation – from plumbers, heating engineers and green workplace advisors, to energy planners and green financial experts in councils.

Community consultation and engagement

Local residents, businesses, and institutions like schools and hospitals will be part of a team to draw up the climate change strategy. There will be public consultation and a standing panel to be part of the process throughout. This will draw on existing best practice from leading local authorities around the country.

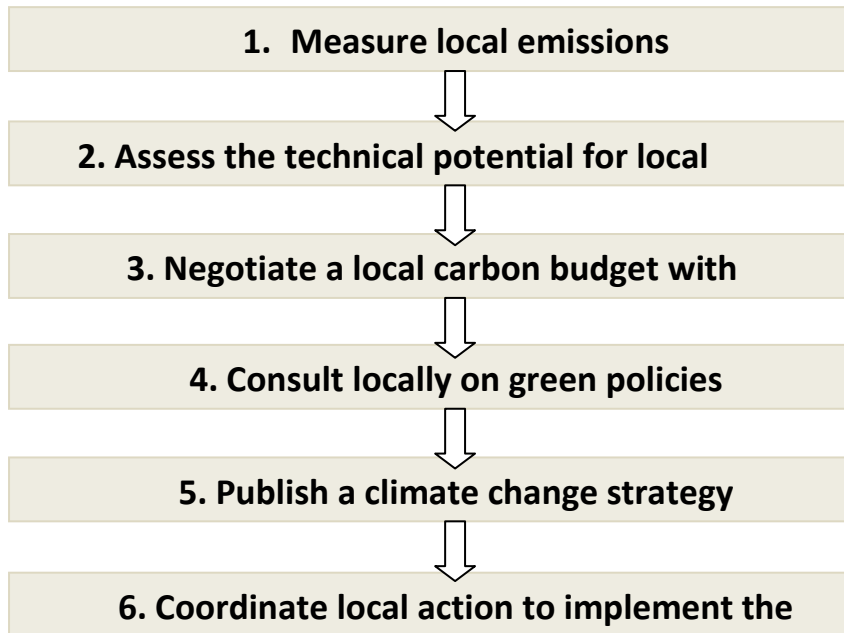
Local Carbon Budgets would:

- Introduce **transparency and accountability** in action to tackle climate change locally
- Ensure **rigorous, timely data** on local emissions
- Transform understanding of the **technical feasibility of emissions cuts** locally
- **Ensure community involvement** and support for carbon cutting projects
- **Assemble resources** to tackle climate change locally
- Mean new **green jobs** and skills
- Increase **certainty** for investment and planning

Local people would have a right to their say in the low carbon future of their communities.

2. How Local Carbon Budgets would work

Each local authority – or grouping, such as a city region – would take the following steps:

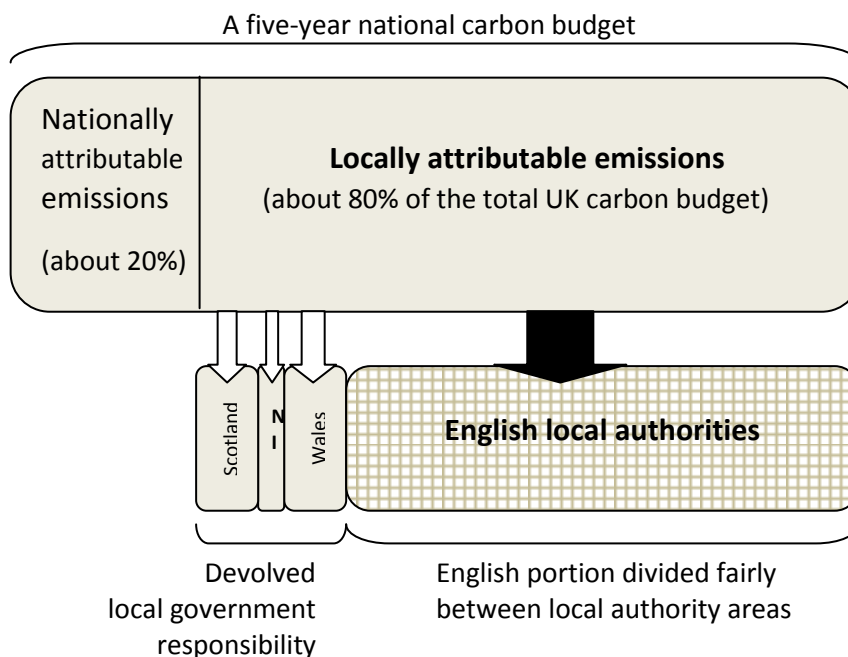


Allocation of Local Carbon Budgets

Each local authority area would have a fair cap on local emissions over a five year period.

The emissions cap will be based on two considerations:

- The need to meet the national carbon budgets
- Local circumstances



Good quality data

Local authorities would have new access to already existing timely data at address or substation-level. There would also be improved traffic emissions information.

Councils will undertake a technical feasibility study to assess the potential for carbon reduction in their area, including considerations such as the state of the housing stock, potential wind and solar resources and heat network opportunities.

Leading local authorities, both urban and rural, have already undertaken such studies. Existing best practice in how to conduct them can be rolled out nationwide.

Councils will assess other important local factors such as the number of people living in fuel poverty.

A national roll-out of best practice methodology would mean rigorous and comparable local carbon information.

Climate Change Strategies

Local authorities will draw up a climate change strategy detailing how the combination of local and national effort will meet the local carbon budget.

The local authority's responsibility will be to carry out the strategy, and work with others to fulfil their commitments in the strategy.

The strategy will be reviewed. If emissions cuts are not on track to meet the local carbon budget, extra green policies will be added.

Climate change strategies will support partnership working and introduce clarity over responsibility for action.

National Government responsibility

National Government will remain responsible for ensuring the national commitments in the Climate Change Act are met.

The Secretary of State will produce a detailed plan showing how national measures (for example, decarbonising the electricity grid and regulating for higher vehicle efficiency standards) will affect the emissions produced within all local authority areas.

It will be in the interests of national government to support local government in delivering the biggest emissions cuts possible locally to help meet the national carbon budgets.

Timescale for implementation

Friends of the Earth proposes that local carbon budgets would come into effect alongside the second five-year national carbon budget period at the start of 2013.

Three successive local carbon budgets will be set at any time to enable longer-term planning. They will be subject to amendment to reflect changing local circumstances.

3. Councils backing local carbon budgets

In June 2010, Secretary of State Chris Huhne asked councils to make an 'offer' about how they will do their bit to help meet the UK Climate Change Act targets.

In responding to the request, council leaders from all political parties are backing a petition for new local carbon budgets legislation to be introduced in this session of Parliament. Initial signatories include:

Sir Richard Leese, Leader, Manchester City Council (Labour) ■ Cllr Barbara Janke, Leader, Bristol City Council (Liberal Democrat) ■ Cllr Louise Goldsmith, Leader West Sussex County Council (Conservative) ■ Cllr Claire Kober, Leader, Haringey Council (Labour) ■ Cllr David Faulkner, Leader, Newcastle City Council (Liberal Democrat) ■ Cllr Paul Tilsley MBE, Deputy leader, Birmingham City Council (Conservative, Liberal Democrat coalition) ■ Cllr Mehboob Khan, Leader, Kirklees Council (Labour) ■ Cllr Mike Heenan, Leader, Stafford Borough Council (Conservative) ■ Dorothy Thornhill, Elected Mayor, Watford Borough Council (Liberal Democrat) ■ Sir Steve Bullock, Mayor, Lewisham (Labour) ■ Sian Reid, Leader, Cambridge City Council (Liberal Democrat)

The petition is here: http://www.foe.co.uk/council_petition

To add your support or to find out more, please contact Donna Hume donna.hume@foe.co.uk 0207 566 4088

4. New legislation

Friends of the Earth is campaigning for local carbon budgets legislation to be introduced in this session of Parliament.

Under the last Government, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, John Denham MP, initiated an area-based approach to cutting carbon, similar to local carbon budgets, by introducing a groundbreaking Local Carbon Framework pilot scheme.

Local carbon budgets would build on the Local Carbon Framework approach and drive ambitious emissions cuts by helping local authorities to lead effective carbon reduction strategies across their local areas and bring benefits like clean energy, green travel and home insulation.

Local carbon budgets are urgently needed as a successor to the existing national indicator 186 system which is set to be dismantled as a local government performance framework (Government will collect and publish the data only). It would be a serious retrograde step to leave councils without a framework for action on climate change.

During the General Election, both Chris Huhne MP and Oliver Letwin MP, for the Conservative Party, pledged their support for local carbon budgets as a means of helping to meet the UK Climate Change Act targets. Friends of the Earth, along with council leaders, are asking them to fulfil their pledge and introduce local carbon budgets.

For more information, please visit our website, or contact Donna Hume: donna.hume@foe.co.uk 020 7566 4088

Our website is packed with information about the Get Serious About CO₂ campaign, local carbon budgets, and how to cut carbon locally. Visit:

www.getseriousaboutco2.org