

FRIENDS OF THE PEAK DISTRICT/CPRE SOUTH YORKSHIRE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY POLICY

Our position

Climate change is the greatest threat to our countryside today. It will have devastating impacts on the UK's landscapes and wildlife. To minimise this threat, rapid and deep cuts in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions will be required. We support the national target to reduce GHG emissions by at least 80% by 2050 and to generate 15% of our energy from renewable sources by 2020. Reaching these targets will be easier if everyone (individuals, communities, developers, business, local government and industry) curbs energy demand, uses energy more efficiently and supports a wider range of renewable technologies.

The impact of renewable technologies on the countryside, including our finest landscapes, must be seen in the context of the much greater changes that will occur as landscape tries to adapt to a new climate. FPD and CPRE SY will seek to balance meeting the urgent national need for low carbon energy generation with our stated aim of promoting a beautiful, yet living and working countryside. This must be achieved using a strong, plan-led system which steers appropriately scaled energy developments to areas where the least landscape impact will occur.

Our vision

FPD and CPRE SY aims to protect the countryside by campaigning against threats to its landscape, tranquillity, and character. We promote development and lifestyle choices that help support a sustainable rural economy with vibrant local communities. We all need to recognise that growing energy demand, the widespread use of fossil fuels and associated carbon emissions are unsustainable. Reducing demand through energy conservation and energy efficiency is key to our vision.

We want a countryside where energy demand is low and sustainable. This can be achieved by increased uptake of energy saving technologies and practices, by meeting energy needs with appropriately scaled local generation and reducing distances travelled by goods and people. We want renewable energy technologies to fit with landscape and village character and offer opportunities for economic diversification. They will include: small scale hydro, biomass (wood and short rotation crops), anaerobic digestion plants, appropriately scaled wind turbines plus domestic scale installations (e.g. micro combined heat and power, heat pumps, solar power). Even areas designated for their wildness or nature conservation can and must make an equitable contribution to achieving a low carbon future.

How will we help make this happen?

A local low carbon future can only happen through a plan-led system that is democratic, transparent and flexible enough to respond to challenge of climate

change. Planning for renewable energy should reflect local choices about the appropriate mix of technologies and where infrastructure should be located. Local authorities must agree spatial plans for siting renewable energy.

To achieve our vision of a low carbon Peak District and South Yorkshire we will:

1. Put our own house in order by meeting a 10% reduction in our energy use by end 2010, 20% by 2015 and 35% by 2020. We will maintain a rolling review of all our policies to ensure they help deliver low carbon outcomes.
2. Scrutinise all major planning applications, policies and strategies to ensure they meet, and where appropriate exceed, or promote high standards of low carbon development and overall sustainability.
3. Support development that helps sustain rural livelihoods and skills and where there are clear benefits for local communities.
4. Utilise an approach which starts with reducing energy use; then using energy more efficiently; then using renewable energy; as a last resort, any continuing use of fossil fuels must be clean and efficient. However, using this energy hierarchy is not an overriding reason to object to appropriate forms of new low carbon supply.
5. Actively promote and support appropriately sited low carbon development including renewable energy technologies which do not significantly affect our most valued landscapes, natural environments or historic features.
6. Press local authorities to identify suitable areas and sites to accommodate renewable energy based on robust assessments of environmental and landscape capacity; where appropriate, we will play an active role in helping identify suitable areas and sites.
7. Promote the creation of local heat and electricity grids whilst reducing the landscape impacts of energy transmission and distribution networks.
8. Lobby for renewable and energy efficiency technologies which provide a better range of landscape-friendly choices at varying scales from large offshore wind farms, wave/tidal technologies to innovative micro technologies such as modern waterwheels.
9. Call for financial incentives (grants, payment tariffs, green taxes and charges) that assist in the adoption of low carbon technologies and/or penalise unsustainable practices.
10. Work together with like-minded local authorities, organisations and communities nationally, regionally and locally) to achieve our vision.
11. Engage with our members, supporters, local communities and the general public to raise awareness, publicise the benefits to our countryside of forcefully addressing climate change threats and to effect real change.

Adopted November 2009

[to be revised November 2012]