

Fuel and energy



Nuclear power? Give it a miss.

What we stand for

- A city that thrives and prospers while being as energy-efficient as possible.
- A city that provides as much of its own energy, in the form of renewable generation such as solar and wind, as is realistically possible.
- A city in which our daily needs (work, school, friends, shopping and services, medical care etc.) can all be accessed conveniently and safely with the minimum use of the private car (see *Transport*).

What's happening now

The security of supply, rising prices, and unpredictable consequences of fossil fuels have hardly left the headlines recently. In York we face three related issues:

- Climate change: more floods, more storms, rising sea levels.
- Peak Oil and Gas: the UK has recently changed from being a net exporter to net importer of both. The supplies of 'easy' fossil fuels (that is, where little energy is needed to extract and process them) are running out, leaving only those which are more costly, distant or which need a lot of energy (i.e. more oil!) to process.
- Biofuels and poverty: we must get the balance right so that the enthusiasm for growing biofuels (particularly for transport) does not detract from our ability to feed our local population.

It may seem incongruous to include problems of such obviously international scale in a local election manifesto, but we believe that the answers to many of these problems lie closer to home than many people think.

What we will do

- Reduce fuel poverty by working with local healthcare and voluntary organisations to roll out the benefits of the Warm Front programme, which provides energy efficiency grants to the elderly and those on benefits, to more households in York.

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- The rapid roll-out of other measures to improve energy efficiency such as the Energy Efficiency Commitment (working with the energy supply companies to implement energy saving measures), particularly aimed at private housing in the city which accounts for the largest percentage of energy demand.
- Work with social landlords to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in York.
- Specify 'Zero Carbon' buildings on all new developments (not just housing), in advance of the National Government's deadline of 2016.
- Expand the 'Display' scheme supported by Green councillors which will display Energy Ratings, similar to those for domestic appliances, prominently in all council buildings in York and progressively reduce energy use in Council buildings. The details would also be available on the council website to demonstrate progress by the council in reducing its own 'environmental footprint'

Green councillors have:

- Pushed for a council-wide energy strategy as part of an overarching Environmental Management System subject to external audit.
- Attended national and regional conferences that led to the city making a commitment to the 'Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change' and 'Energie Cités' – the Association of European local authorities promoting sustainable energy policy.
- Pressed for new council energy contracts (eg: Street lighting) to specify that electricity should be purchased from renewable resources. (We do not class waste incineration as a renewable source of energy – see *Waste management*).
- Spoken at planning committees and public inquiries demanding higher standards of insulation in new developments to reduce future CO₂ emissions and energy use. This has included pressing the issue at each stage of the plans for the University expansion at Heslington East, and the proposed major housing developments at Derwenthorpe and Germany Beck.
- Proposed and worked on council scrutiny aiming to reduce energy use and losses from public and private sector housing in York (see *Housing*). This is producing a strategy to pilot measures tackling the issue in wards with the most serious levels of 'fuel poverty'.
- Promoted 'Warm Front' energy surveys and insulation grants in Fishergate ward.