



Cardiff Futures Forum Think Piece

Cardiff Carbon-Lite: Reducing the city's resource and carbon intensity

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Aims:

The aim of this paper is to recommend ways in which Cardiff can be positioned to address a future expected to be characterized by:

- Increasing local impacts resulting from global climate change;
- growing global competition for material, energy and water resources; and
- mounting regulatory and market pressures to mitigate global climate change.

Issues:

Climate change threatens coastal city regions, in particular, with economic and social dislocation and a major effort is needed to change Cardiff's infrastructure, households and businesses from how they are in 2008, into a shape better able to:

- deal with adverse weather conditions, sea level rise, tidal surge and other risks from climate change (such as disruptions to global food production); and
- gain and maintain competitive advantage in the face of major global market shifts and industrial restructuring.

Inaction risks locking the city into rising operating and insurance costs; exclusion from potentially massive markets for clean technologies; and, a deteriorating quality of life.

Moves to a low carbon UK economy depend heavily on energy market transformation driven by new Climate Change, Energy and Planning Bills. WAG policies support the UK approach, including a feasibility study of a £15Bn Severn Barrage on Cardiff's doorstep.

Also, the WAG wants Barrage and other renewable energy options to be considered alongside development of new technologies to extract energy from coal reserves and store carbon, and more attention to energy efficiency and micro-generation.

This presents Cardiff with an opportunity to regain a leading role in the world energy market through the Community Strategy 2007 - 2017 that commits the Council to development of Cardiff as a carbon-lite city based on energy efficiency, integrated transport, encouragement of green industries, and greater proportions of energy secured from renewable sources.

Success will enable the city to avoid huge future operating costs whilst securing potentially significant income streams from carbon permit trading and building a global reputation for the Cardiff city region as a centre for clean technology. The onus for positive change now rests heavily on the quality of leadership available to move Cardiff from where it is in 2008 to where it needs to be. The pioneering *Cardiff Energy Action* campaign, in 1985, points a way forward.



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This campaign identified the importance of *early mover* in delivering change. They are defined as 10% of the population and reducing the resource and carbon intensity of the city implies 30 000 people taking practical action now if the majority is to follow soon.

Cardiff Energy Action also exposed the importance of *sympathetic infrastructure* and the consequent need for statutory development plans and controls to be co-ordinated with practical public and private investment programmes.

Radically better performance of new buildings will be driven by regulations but urgent and ambitious action requires existing households and businesses to be motivated, and the relatively fast turnover in fittings, equipment and cars offers a good opportunity.

The options are not mutually exclusive but current high demand for ownership and use of cars conflicts directly with public policy to reduce carbon emissions. This raises issues around public investment in transport, the statutory control of land uses and development densities and the potential for mass switching to low carbon vehicles.

Overall, local area based approaches to demand management and supply of heat and power combined with a reputation for clean technologies would help stimulate local jobs in potentially global supply chains and attract business HQ functions to Cardiff.

Recommendations:

The Council is committed to reducing its own carbon emissions and to development of Cardiff as a carbon-lite city. These commitments are a basis for partnership with:

- unions and other public authorities and their suppliers in the City to recruit from their workforces (incl. members and executives) 30 000 *early movers* taking measurable action from 2008, towards delivering a carbon-lite city.
- *Vision Forum* members in steering a *Cardiff Carbon Lite* campaign and providing a campaign manager and team with the resources to develop in 2008 an action plan for which *Vision Forum* members can make a commitment to deliver.

30 000 *early movers* recruited from the *public sector* and commitments to action from leading public and private sector organizations represented on the *Vision Forum* has the potential to stimulate public support for long term programmes and major projects that, then, would carry lower political risks and be more attractive to investors.

The *Cardiff Futures Forum* can provide advice and support and could, if resourced, provide independent monitoring of progress towards agreed targets for improvement and milestones for achievement, with regular public reporting of progress.

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