



EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

Sustainable Home Guide



Why Should You Live in a Sustainable Home?

Climate Change is described by many world leaders as the single biggest threat to mankind. Global Warming through an increase in greenhouse gas emission, has already started to make significant changes to the environment. The East Riding of Yorkshire is particularly at risk from climate change, due to its eroding coastline and locality along the Humber Estuary. A change in climate would have dramatic effects, forcing agricultural trends to adapt, whilst farmers would experience a reduction in soil quality. The country's strained water supplies will come under yet more pressure as weather extremes become more frequent. The flora and fauna of Britain will have to adapt to the new conditions, many species native to our shores are already becoming endangered.

We must all make greater efforts to reduce the future impact of climate change on the East Riding and globally. If we all pull together the small changes we make in our lives really can make a big difference. This guide contains lots of free, quick, easy changes you can make to your home lifestyle to reduce your environmental impact. If you would like to take your sustainable life further with some initial investment this guide explains more extensive projects you can undertake. Many of these lifestyle changes have the added benefit of saving you money. Undertake as many of the changes listed as you can to help the environment and save yourself money!

Your Key to a Sustainable Home

 Energy	Nearly all of the CO2 emitted by western industrialised countries is sourced from burning coal, oil and gas for energy. Every time you turn on your television or boil the kettle think about where that energy is coming from.
 Water	Climate change coupled with our extensive water usage is putting a huge strain on the country's reservoirs. Droughts may become ever more common, we must take steps to use water more efficiently so it lasts longer when resources are low.
 Waste	Waste sent to landfill sites produce greenhouse gases as it breaks down. By reducing, reusing and recycling our waste we can limit its effect on the environment and use the world's resources more efficiently.
 Biodiversity	Local wildlife is being forced to adapt to the changing climate. By developing our gardens into wildlife havens we help provide creatures with the link required for their safe passage across urban developments into more suitable areas of habitat.
 Travel	Reducing CO2 emissions from transport is the single biggest way a person can reduce their carbon footprint.

Hints and Tips Around the Home

Living Room/Bedroom



Close curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.



Always turn lights off when you leave the room and adjust curtains and blinds to let in as much natural light as possible during the day.



Don't leave appliances on standby and remember not to leave appliances on charge without reason. A television on standby can use 80% of the energy it uses when fully turned on!



Use energy saving light bulbs. One can save you about £100 over its lifetime and they also last 12 times as long as a normal light bulb!



Avoid using plug-in air fresheners as these waste electricity, instead try using standalone units such as gel pouches.



Draught-proof your windows and doors. If your windows are not double glazed a short term cheap alternative is to tape specially designed polythene across the windows. You will find a range of these products at your local DIY store.



A 3rd of a tonne of CO₂ can be saved each year by insulating your floor. Timber floors can be insulated by lifting the floorboards and laying mineral wool insulation supported by netting between the joists. This can be carried out as a DIY job for around £100, and should pay itself back within 2 years. You can also use a regular tube sealant, such as silicon to fill gaps between floorboards and skirting boards to stop draughts. A note of warning, don't block under-floor airbricks in your outside walls as floorboards will rot without adequate ventilation. This can be carried out as a DIY job costing around £20, it will repay itself within 1-2 years. Alternatively you can hire a professional to carry out the work for you, however if you do, the cost will be more and hence take longer to pay itself back.



Fitted carpets reduce heat loss through floors much more than vinyl coverings or wooden floors. Floor insulation is further improved by fitting a good quality underlay.



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Kitchen



Wash clothes at 30°C, modern washing powders operate effectively at lower temperatures.



Do not leave fridge or freezer doors open for long periods. Avoid putting hot food straight into the freezer, allow it to cool first. This helps maintain the device's correct operating temperature, saving energy.



Defrost your fridges and freezers regularly to keep them running efficiently and cheaply.



Cooking requires a lot of energy. Energy consumption can be extensively reduced, for example don't overheat ovens or hobs and use lids on pans.



Try alternative cooking devices such as steamers, pressure cookers, slow cookers, toasters or microwaves. A microwave uses 70% - 90% less energy than a regular oven!



When replacing your oven look to install a fan assisted oven. These use 20% less energy than conventional ovens.



When replacing old white goods pay attention to the EU energy label that rates the efficiency of the product from A+ (most efficient) to G (least efficient). The more efficient the machine the cheaper it is to operate!



When using a washing machine, dishwasher or tumble dryer, operate them with full loads. If this isn't achievable use the half load or economy settings.



In a kettle, only boil the amount of water you require, ensuring you put enough in to cover the filaments.



Don't clean dishes under a running tap, instead fill a bowl or sink. A tap left running for ten minutes can waste up to nearly 100 litres of water.



Shop for goods that have minimal packaging to help reduce the amount of rubbish you produce.



Reuse as much as you can, e.g. hold a garage sale or buy reusable shopping bags.



Use your blue bin to recycle all papers, plastic bottles, tins and cans.



You can request 55-litre black boxes by calling customer services on 01482 393939. The boxes are free and are particularly useful for collecting cardboard and glass which can be recycled at your nearest bring site or household waste recycling site. Each glass jar recycled provides enough energy to light an energy saving light bulb for 24 hours!

Bathroom



Don't wash or shave under a running tap instead fill the sink. A tap left running for ten minutes can waste up to nearly 100 litres of water.



A dripping tap losing one drop a second will waste around 15 litres of water a day! If this is a hot tap you will also be wasting energy. Fix them!



About a third of water used in the home is flushed down the toilet. If you have an older cistern, reduce your water usage by three litres per flush by installing a toilet cistern bag.



Take a short shower instead of a bath and save around 40 litres of water.



Don't brush your teeth with the tap running as this wastes almost nine litres a minute.



Fit aerating taps, these can reduce water flow by 50% without harming performance.



When refitting a bathroom take into consideration water saving measures. Through careful selection you can fit aerating taps, efficient showers, low volume baths and cistern tanks to create a more sustainable bathroom.

Loft and Heating System



Turn your thermostat down by 1°C. Most people are comfortable in a room temperature of 19°C. This small change could cut your energy bills by up to 10%.



Your water thermostat doesn't need to be set higher than 60°C.



Ensure you have a good fitting insulating jacket for your hot water tank. It should be at least 75mm (3") thick. They cost around £10 and will pay for themselves within a few months. Alternatively if you are unable to fit a jacket onto your tank, you can insulate using heat resistant spray foam.



Always insulate your hot water pipes. It costs just £1 per metre and will save you around £5 per year!



25% of a house's heat is lost through the roof, if you currently have no loft insulation and you install the recommended 270mm depth you could save depending on size of house between £180 - £220 a year on your heating bills and nearly 1.5 tonnes of CO₂ per year. It costs around £230 to install and can repay itself in a year (if you previously had no insulation). It can be carried out by a professional installer or as a DIY task. If you are on means tested benefit there are grants available to help fund loft insulation. For information about the available grants please contact the 'Warm Front Team' on Freephone 0800 316 2814.



Around a third of all heat in an un-insulated home is lost through the walls. By installing cavity wall insulation you can save around £130-£160 a year on your fuel bills. It costs around £260 to install, but will give you a payback in just under a couple of years, saving 1 tonne of CO₂ a year. If your house was built before 1920 the chances are you will not have cavity walls. If this is the case there are alternative insulating methods albeit more expensive, that can be used. For information on alternative methods and grants available to people on means tested benefit to help with the installation, contact the 'Warm Front Team'.



If your boiler is over 15 years old then replacing it could reduce your heating bills by up to 20%. When replacing look to install a condensing boiler as these are far more efficient than a conventional boiler. The best high efficiency condensing boilers convert more than 90% of their fuel into heat, compared to 60% for conventional types.



If your house is centrally heated, you can make the heating more efficient and less expensive by upgrading your heating controls. A time switch or programmer allows you to set heating and hot water to come on only at times when needed. Room thermostats, which automatically switch the heating off at a certain temperature, will also save energy. Similarly, individual radiator thermostats can be fitted which allow you to control each room's temperature separately. By introducing an efficient heating control system at the same time as installing a new modern boiler you can reduce heating bills by up to 45%!



Switch to a green electricity tariff from your energy supplier. Green tariffs are designed to provide as much electricity as possible from renewable sources, avoiding the harmful emissions associated with burning fossil fuels, or the risks that come with nuclear power. The green tariffs currently available in this country typically involve the payment of an additional premium, which the energy supplier invests in renewable energy development. For more information about green electricity, contact your energy supplier.

Garden



Patio heaters waste as much energy in 6 months as a gas hob does in a year. As a nation our use of them is growing at an unprecedented rate, these luxurious gas guzzlers are threatening to offset our energy saving measures. If you want to sit outside in the evening and not be cold wear a coat or jumper instead!



Think about using solar power for lights and water features in your garden.



Install a water butt in your garden to collect rainwater. Use it to water your garden or wash your car.



Hosepipes can waste up to 1000 litres of water an hour! Instead use a watering can for your garden and a bucket and sponge for your car.



Consider installing a grey water system at your home. These recycle all the water you use for washing to be used to flush the toilet or water your garden. A full system is costly but your water usage will dramatically decrease. Combining installation with house renovations can vastly reduce costs. During a hosepipe ban you are still allowed to use a hose if the water is being sourced from a grey water system.



A cheap alternative to fitting a complete grey water system is to purchase a 'grey water syphon pump' for around £20. These can be used to effortlessly empty water from the bath or sink into your water butt for use in the garden.



Don't put your garden waste in your green bin, instead take it to your local household waste recycling site or home compost it. To purchase a home composter at a reduced price visit www.recyclenow.com/compost or phone 0845 077 0757.



Through using a wormery or green cone you can recycle all your kitchen food waste.



Recycle - be inventive. A great place to reuse old products is in the garden, e.g. bottles to make birdfeeders or tyres to make planters. Recycling can be fun and can create some unique talking points for your garden!



Don't use peat-based composts as they lead to the destruction of irreplaceable peat bog habitats. Not only are these habitats valuable for their wildlife they are also carbon sinks, through their drainage and destruction CO₂ and methane is released contributing to climate change.



If timber is required in the garden, or indeed in the home use wood from sources certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). This ensures that the supply of the timber does not

contribute to the overall loss of woodland habitat, that the environment is protected and that forest dependant people are not put at risk.



Try to plant native species in your garden rather than exotic varieties, these will on the whole benefit native wildlife more and there is no danger that they will escape into the wider countryside becoming invasive and smothering native flora.



Avoid using pesticides, as these are harmful to wildlife. Instead try organic methods for weed and pest control.



Put up bird, bat or bee boxes in your garden to attract wildlife.



Plant berry and seed bearing shrubs to provide food for wildlife.



Build a small pond to create habitat for wetland species and a drinking point for other creatures.



Leave a corner to go wild creating habitats for insects and small mammals.



Select plants with high pollen and nectar content to attract an array of insects.



Give financial or volunteer support to a local or national conservation organisation (e.g. the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, BTCV, RSPB or one of the smaller conservation, naturalist or countryside groups).



Report sightings you make of species or wildlife to your local records centre, North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC). These can be of common or rare species, alive or dead. This will help build up a better picture of the biodiversity of your area, which can be used to ensure important habitats and species are protected, or to focus conservation effort. For more information about making reporting sightings please visit <http://www.neyedc.co.uk/newfile1.html>

Travel



Nearly a quarter of all car journeys made in the UK are less than two miles. Instead for shorter journeys walk or cycle. This will lower your CO2 emissions and will help improve your health and quality of life.



When making long journeys avoid cars and domestic flights. Try public transport instead. The East Riding has good rail and coach links to major settlements across the whole of the UK.



If you drive to work daily a great way to significantly save money and reduce your carbon footprint is to car share. The East Riding has an extensive car share network that's free to join. For information visit www.eastridingcarshare.com.



Efficient driving can improve your fuel efficiency by up to 30 per cent. Always ensure your tyres are inflated to the correct pressure, avoid accelerating or braking aggressively, stick to speed limits, switch your engine off when stationary and regularly service your vehicle. All these steps will help your fuel last longer.



Next time you replace your car buy the most efficient model possible to suit your needs. Consider buying an electric vehicle. Combining this with a switch to a green energy provider can potentially more than halve your carbon footprint!

Useful Links for Further Information

Climate Change: www.climatechallenge.gov.uk
Carbon Footprint: www.dft.gov.uk/ActOnCO2
Energy Advice: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
Saving Water: www.yorkshirewater.com/becool
Recycling: www.recyclenow.com
Local Biodiversity: www.neyedc.co.uk
Wildlife Friendly Gardening: www.rspb.org.uk/advice/gardening/wildlife-friendly_garden.asp
Car Sharing: www.eastridingcarshare.com
Efficient Driving: www.dft.gov.uk/ActOnCO2