



news release

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HOW BIG ARE YOUR FEET?

Herefordshire Council launches innovative Community Carbon Footprint Calculator

An online calculator that will enable Herefordshire citizens to work out their carbon footprint using recognised government data and calculations was unveiled on Wednesday 20th June by Herefordshire Council.

Herefordshire Council has been working in partnership with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) as the first local authority in the country to develop its own version of their 'Act on CO₂' calculator for local communities.

The Herefordshire calculator largely draws on the same underlying data and calculations as a new Government web-tool – the Act on CO₂ calculator – launched on the same day.

The environment secretary, David Miliband said of the government initiative: "We want to cut through the confusion. This carbon calculator will help people decide what they can do – and be sure it will make a difference."

Climate change and the environment minister, Ian Pearson said: "This is just the sort of initiative we are hoping to encourage by developing a calculating engine that others can use. We hope that a wide range of organisations will either link to the Act on CO₂ Calculator itself, or develop their own calculators using the back-end engine and government data. This will help spread the vital message about tackling climate change to the widest range of audiences."

Carbon footprinting is a way of assessing the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) that an organisation or individual is responsible for producing in the course of using energy for things such as heating, cooking or driving. CO₂ is a greenhouse gas which causes global warming and climate change.

Publicised under the slogan "How Big Are Your Feet?" the Herefordshire Community Carbon Calculator is a feature of the new www.myherefordshire.com community portal website - also launched on Wednesday - and will soon be available to every Herefordshire citizen online.

Councillor John Jarvis, Herefordshire Council's cabinet member for the environment and strategic housing, said: "I am delighted we are in a position to launch this ground-breaking project.

"Each small step in the form of one individual's carbon footprint will build up into a valuable picture of climate change activity throughout Herefordshire, at county level and for each parish and will help us to formulate plans on how we can tackle the problem at a local and national level.

“We also hope that by being able to compare their footprint with people in their own parish or the county as a whole, the calculator will encourage the involvement of the whole community in reducing the impact of climate change,” he added.

To use the carbon calculator people must register some basic details about themselves so they can log in. They are then asked to provide some simple facts about their energy usage, transport and purchase of food.

The footprint “size” is calculated and people will then be given advice about actions they can take to reduce it, either individually or by joining a local carbon-reduction group. This will help the environment by reducing the amount of CO₂ they produce and save them money by reducing their energy bills.

The data collected will enable the council to track climate change activity locally and feed aggregated data to Defra for national and possibly international use. It is anticipated that other local authorities will be interested to learn from Herefordshire’s approach.

The council is looking for interested parties to test the first version of the calculator and provide feedback before it goes ‘live’. Anyone resident or working in Herefordshire who wishes to join the pilot group is asked to email their contact details to enquiries@myherefordshire.com.

For more information about the Act on CO₂ calculator and development of the calculating “engine” please see the Defra press release at :
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2007/070620a.htm>

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