



BEYOND DRAX: A REAL GREEN FUTURE FOR YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER

KEY POINTS:

- **Drax is the UK's single largest carbon emitter**, and should not be part of decarbonisation plans within Yorkshire and the Humber or the UK
- Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage is technology entirely unproven at scale, prohibitively expensive and would do nothing to address the environmental or health impacts of burning woody biomass at scale
- Negative emissions claims are founded upon faulty carbon accounting: **BECCS will not help the UK achieve Net Zero by 2050**
- A minimum of **73,000 foundational green jobs** are needed over the next 10 years to decarbonise Yorkshire and the Humber
- These are direct jobs ranging from renewable energy, to retrofitting homes, improving our public transport services and ecologically sound food production

WHAT'S WRONG WITH DRAX?

Drax Power Station is the UK's single largest carbon emitter and world's biggest wood burning power station. In 2023, Drax emitted **11mt of carbon dioxide** into the atmosphere from burning wood pellets alone. Burning wood in power stations emits just as much, if not more, carbon than coal. It takes **44-104 years** for this carbon to be reabsorbed by new tree growth - far beyond the timescale needed to decarbonise our energy system and reach Net Zero. However, due to a carbon accounting loophole these emissions are not counted in the UK. This flawed system means Drax is eligible for renewable subsidies, receiving **£7bn to date**.

Drax sources from protected and biodiverse forests around the world, including **primary and old-growth forests** in British Columbia and biodiversity hotspots in the Southern US. Drax's pellet production sites in the Southern US have been repeatedly linked to **driving environmental injustice and racism** through the dangerous pollutants emitted from pellet production processes.

BIOENERGY WITH CARBON CAPTURE AND STORAGE

Reliance on Carbon Capture and Storage puts the UK at grave risk of failing to meet emissions reduction targets, instead prolonging the life of polluting industries. Claims that BECCS can offer 'negative emissions' are premised upon false carbon accounting which counts burning woody biomass as zero carbon. BECCS is entirely unproven at scale, and there have been decades of fossil fuel CCS technology failing. **Energy think tank Ember estimates that BECCS at Drax could cost the British public £41bn over 25 years.**

Drax further claims that 'at the peak of construction' BECCS will bring 10,000 jobs to Yorkshire and the Humber. However, this claim is vastly inflated, relying on induced and indirect jobs and the reality is just **375 direct long term jobs with no guarantees these jobs will go to local people.**

BEYOND DRAX REPORT

To truly decarbonise Yorkshire and the Humber and the UK investment is needed in the jobs of the future, in renewable energy, building retrofit, transport, waste management, and food and farming. The Beyond Drax report found that over a 10 year period a minimum of 73,000 direct green jobs are needed in Yorkshire and the Humber.

Renewable Energy Jobs

Vision: *An energy system powered by renewable energy, where electricity is used for most transport and heating as well as its current uses.*

Total direct jobs: 9,910

As we move away from fossil fuels and towards decarbonisation, electricity demand is predicted to increase even as overall energy use decreases. This research demonstrates that Yorkshire and the Humber could become a renewable energy Powerhouse, providing a substantial contribution to national demand. Onshore renewable generation potential in Y&H has a total of 14199.6MW. For onshore wind and solar alone there is potential for over 31GWh. The total jobs number excludes jobs in manufacturing and supply, offshore wind, grid transformation and investment in demand management and storage and anaerobic digestion.

REUSE AND RECYCLING OF WASTE JOBS

Vision: *A society where products last longer, are repaired and reused much more, with far less packaging, which reduces the amount of waste produced. Most of what remains as waste is recycled with new industries making use of that recycled material in the UK, reducing imports of raw materials and exports of waste.*

Total direct jobs: 4,981 over 10 years

These jobs estimates are based upon an increase to a 90% recycling rate, including increased reuse, repurposing and refurbishment and subtracting the number of landfill and incineration jobs lost to avoid overestimating numbers of new jobs.

BUILDINGS AND HEAT

Vision: Buildings are energy efficient so require little heating or cooling. The heat they do need is provided primarily by heat pumps.

Total estimated jobs: 32,701 over 10 years

Over half of Yorkshire and Humber's territorial greenhouse gas emissions are from homes (28%) and public and commercial buildings (26%). These emissions can be roughly halved through retrofit programs, installing heat pumps and ensuring all new builds are to a Passivhaus standard. The report targets a standard of 75% of homes retrofitted in total to at least a B EPC rating.

These jobs estimates only include retrofit and installation of heat systems in homes, not public buildings, other non-domestic buildings or industrial demand for heat. If done correctly this work will enable deeper retrofit of buildings and the jobs required for public buildings, community and publicly owned buildings mean the total amount of work required to retrofit buildings across the region is far greater than that set out here, and will continue into the future.

TRANSPORT JOBS

Vision: There is less need to travel and more of the journeys that are made are by walking, cycling and public transport rather than by private car. Buses and trains have good disabled access and are within easy reach of where people live. Most vehicles with internal combustion engines (ICE) are replaced by electric vehicles (EVs). The railways are electrified, use green hydrogen or batteries.

Total direct jobs: 9,855 over the next 10 years and onwards*

Transport currently accounts for around 28% of Yorkshire and Humber's territorial emissions, most of which are due to road transport. The Zero Carbon Britain scenario involves reducing the distance travelled, a shift from private vehicles to public transport (that uses zero-emissions technology) and to some extent cycling, with the remaining private vehicle travel using electric vehicles. This is a target, and will not work without active policies to encourage it.

Food and Farming Jobs

Vision: Fruit and vegetable growing has increased in both rural and urban settings to make best use of the land to provide healthy food for the local population. Farming practices are regenerative and agroecological rather than industrial, caring for the soil so that future generations can be fed.

Total direct jobs: 13,552 10+ years

Yorkshire and the Humber has a proud tradition in food and farming, and with food production contributing up to a third of greenhouse gas emissions, changing how food is produced, processed and distributed is central to the green transition. There are two key paths to this transition: regenerative farming practices and food re-localisation. Both paths generate more jobs than a global industrialised food system and increase community resilience. The job numbers have been developed in two main areas: horticulture and urban farming. Estimates take into account the seasonal variations of jobs in food and farming and the mix of voluntary and paid positions within urban farming.

GREEN JOBS BEYOND FOUNDATIONAL INDUSTRIES

Whilst the job numbers set out above take a conservative estimate to the direct, foundational jobs required for just decarbonisation, there are many other sectors that are fundamentally 'green' jobs. A green transition entails a focus on living healthier lives, as indicated by more active travel, well insulated homes and better diets from local food systems as well as a more convivial approach to community that supports mental wellness. We have not included these jobs in our total, but note the vacancies and need for workers in these areas. We have also not included supply chain jobs in our total as we can't quantify these with any certainty, however those jobs are vital and would significantly increase the total figures.

Health and Care: The need for care will remain when people are sick, live with disability or need support as they age. Jobs in the health and care sectors should be seen as green jobs in a future where health and care are prioritised and recognised as foundational in our society. The job numbers below have been estimated based upon vacancies across three key sectors (the NHS, adult social care and children's services): **21,091**

Training and Skills: Skills to bring about a zero carbon transition for the UK must be developed across the country, requiring training to be carried out in all regions. Creating local demand, for onshore as well as offshore wind, increasing the region's circular economy through a scaling up of reuse and recycling, programmes of retrofit of buildings and transformation of farming and wider productive land use will require skills from leadership through to on-the-ground delivery. **The scale of the training need is huge, estimated at around 3% uplift in the overall work.**

Council area	Total Job Creation (Buildings, Renewables, Food and Farming, Waste and Resources, Transport, Training and Skills)		
	Year 2	Year 10	Long-Term
Kingston upon Hull, City of	1,537	2502	1230
East Riding of Yorkshire	5,397	10626	7070
North East Lincolnshire	1,043	1711	857
North Lincolnshire	1,939	3861	2550
North Yorkshire	7,787	14360	8985
York	982	1981	1249
Barnsley	1,442	2584	1537
Doncaster	1,970	3579	2059
Rotherham	1,513	2649	1515
Sheffield	3,427	5702	2966
Bradford	3,005	5096	2740
Calderdale	1,358	2191	1065
Kirklees	2,592	4750	2834
Leeds	4,777	7890	3895
Wakefield	2,099	3648	2049
Total	40,868	73,130	42,601

There is huge potential across Yorkshire and the Humber for decent green jobs that both support the transition to Net Zero and improve the quality of life for all across the region. Subsidising the biomass industry and unproven carbon capture technology takes money away from the green industries needed to decarbonise. For more information please contact

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