

## BRADFORDS SUBMISSION FOR BUSINESS CHAMPION STATUS FOR CO2NSTRUCT ZERO APRIL 2021 – DAVID YOUNG, CEO & GILES BRADFORD, COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT MANAGER AND SUSTAINABILITY LEAD

### ❖ Why is making progress on Net Zero important to your business?

Bradfords has been a part of the South West community for 250 years. As a significant and well-known brand in our region, we have a fundamental responsibility to set an example. We want to support the future sustainability of the community and help it to thrive.

There are, as we see it, three imperatives that drive NetZero: commercial, moral, and regulatory (notwithstanding the reality of what's happening to our environment). Our future customers will *expect* the highest standards from us: we will have to meet the sustainability brief if we want them to continue to trade with us. Morally, we owe it to our communities to the extent that one of our three core strategy pillars is called 'sustainable communities'. Built environment regulation on Net Zero is only a matter of time; morally we want to be ahead of the regulation but being prepared now will set us up for success when those regulations are introduced.

### ❖ Which of the 9 priorities are more relevant to your business and clients and why?

We believe that the key priority for Bradfords is not covered in the 9 identified priorities. For us the priority is education about the Net Zero programme. As the distributor of building materials, we need both our people and our customers to understand the value of choosing net zero products for future built environment projects. In a sector that is very price sensitive and traditional, we know that this is key to the buy-in because it represents a huge shift in buying and selling behaviour. Our teams need to be confident talking to customers around this subject, and our customers need to be able to make informed choices.

It's worth noting that when we look at Net Zero at Bradfords, we split our actions into three distinct categories:

- 1) Upstream in our supply chain
- 2) Our downstream influence on the built environment by the products and materials we supply
- 3) Our own corporate internal actions.

Whilst the latter is perhaps the easiest, we also know that for the built environment contribution to Net Zero as a whole, it is also the one with the least impact in terms of CO2 emissions and embodied carbon. However, it is also the one that sets our marker in the sand around this issue. We cannot expect to influence up or down the supply chain if we ourselves are not walking the walk.

If we specifically focus on the 9 then our priorities are:

#### **Priority 2:** Reducing waste both from product packaging and our own sites, and carbon emissions through



improved efficiency of our deliveries represents both a commercial and moral win. We have the influence to challenge our suppliers on packaging and have taken internal steps to reduce the amount of new packaging we use internally. We've invested in a cardboard perforator at our distribution centre removing any need for bubble wrap and making good use of cardboard packaging that goods arrive to us in. Dialogue with suppliers is at an early stage, and we believe the best solution will be to act under the umbrella of the BMF to

lobby for change and to get the best traction. We are not at the point where we can choose not to accept a product based on its packaging (or embodied carbon) yet, this is an aspiration. There is no doubt that many of our suppliers are gearing up for this already.



We have just rolled out technology that radically improves our ability to plan our deliveries more efficiently which of course gives us a win not only in terms of CO2 emissions but also commercially. This system is still being embedded at our branches, but we track delivered efficiency via several metrics which will give us the data we need to understand what effect this is having and where we need to focus to ensure that it is being used to best effect.

**Priority 3:** EV charging discussions are well underway, particularly accelerated by the decision to remove tax relief from diesel for forklift trucks. The goal is an integrated EV charging system which allows us to charge our MHE, our car fleet and the vehicles of our customers. In addition, we understand the scale of the challenge around charging both EV and electrical equipment on construction sites and have challenged our tool hire department to investigate how we can help.

**Priority 4:** Whilst our influence over new builds is limited, our core customer base is the RMI sector; of which national retrofit is intrinsically a part. In the South West we will be a significant part of the solution, providing many of the materials and products to achieve the national retrofit targets. It is therefore crucial that we position ourselves to be able to achieve this.

*We have:*



- Established our first Sustainable Homes Centre in partnership with a local renewable energy equipment provider, RES, at Glastonbury. This gives us a location to point interested customers where they can get expert advice, but also gives us a training hub for customers and staff alike.

*We will do this through:*

- An education programme for our people, customers, and communities to support the retrofit programme and create demand.
- Ensuring robust supply chain in place to be able to supply retrofit projects.
- We are working with Trustmark to pilot initiatives and trials in the South West to identify how to create effective strategies for roll out of government initiatives, including providing umbrella support to small trade outfits to be able to contribute to the required retrofit effort.
- We have scoped work with the Digital Building Centre Research team to develop self-assessment for homeowners/tenants by offering our staff as the guinea pigs for tech tools which achieve this.

**Priority 5:** We know that the energy source of a home is the single biggest impact item in terms of CO2 emissions. Much as to be truly effective it needs to be combined with other measures including insulation, our goal is to have the maximum positive impact on our communities. With that in mind, our partnership with RES allows us to champion, educate about and provide low carbon energy systems. In addition, our teams engage regularly with the likes of Worcester-Bosch to ensure that we are up to speed on the latest boiler technology.

**Priority 8:** This priority closely aligns with our strategy to be involved with construction products as early as possible. We have the expertise and knowledge to help architects and designers to understand the options available to them in terms of both materials and products before the specification is finalised. Our education programme looks to ensure that we continue to offer this with regard to factoring carbon into the decision process, and we intend to hold roadshows/CPD for those at the design end of construction to



further help. Crucial to this will be the staff education programme which ensures that we can offer the advice when required.

❖ What are doing to make progress against the relevant priorities (of the 9) in the short and long-term?

See above.

❖ How have you helped your supply chain understand what is required against the 9 priorities?

See above. Understanding the cost of waste packaging on construction sites allows us to bring that to them and to challenge them to think differently about how they go about this. Internally we follow ESOS 2 as well as working hard to ensure minimal waste to landfill and maximum recycling. We've recently renegotiated our waste provision. By the end of Feb 2021 over 95% of our waste was diverted from landfill. From an energy perspective we already have 100% of our electricity supplied from renewable sources. We've challenged our fleet suppliers for both cars and delivery lorries to provide the greenest solutions. Our latest delivery lorries meet the most stringent criteria, whilst our company car fleet provider has been tasked to ensure there are hybrid options in every class of vehicle, we offer employees.

❖ As a business leader what do you think the biggest challenge is and how are you working to overcome it?

Public buy-in. Improving the energy efficiency of the built environment requires a long-term view and doesn't have the same immediate tangibility as a new patio, fence, or bathroom. And at the moment the cost of not buying-in is not apparent. Whilst we have traditional customers doing traditional work on traditional properties, we face a huge challenge to get them to think differently.

Our education programme is well defined and designed to support both our own teams, customers, and homeowners alike in the South West. With plans to have a low carbon/renewables range in place by October 2021, phase 1 of this programme will be in place to ensure that when this range is launched, it is backed up by knowledge, confidence, and awareness.

❖ In your view what is the one innovation or change that is going to have the biggest impact on carbon or progress in our industry?

Consumer behaviour. At the end of the day, we must meet the demands of the end user. Our goal should be to ensure that that demand is the right one. Buildings have always been designed to last, but we need to ensure that this sentiment is reinforced and that people really understand what that means and the impact we can make through the life of that building.

