
DARLINGTON CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Veronica Copeland,
Sustainable Environment and Climate Change Portfolio**

Responsible Director - Richard Alty Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

Purpose of the report

1. To seek Cabinet's approval of Council actions to form part of the Climate Change Action Plan.
2. The action plan is due to go to the Darlington Partnership's Economy, Environment and Transport Group for further consideration before going to the Board for approval. The Council's action will form part of a wider Darlington Partnership Climate Change Action Plan incorporating the actions of other partners.

Information and Analysis

3. Climate change is now widely accepted as one of the most pressing long term challenges. The debate is no longer about 'if', but more about 'what' and 'how much' we need to do to stabilise this change.
4. The UK Climate Change Programme sets out the Government's commitment to meeting the challenge of climate change with both emissions reduction programmes and adaptation strategies. The 2003 Energy White Paper, and its subsequent review, highlights the pivotal role of local authorities in delivering carbon dioxide reduction targets. The recent Climate Change Bill further strengthened this role.

Developing Darlington's Response to Climate Change

5. The Economy and Environment Themed Group agreed at its meeting held on 16 September 2004, to set up a Climate Change sub group to develop a local response to climate change. The Darlington Partnership signed the Darlington Declaration in November 2005, demonstrating a commitment to tackling the causes and effects of climate change. In September 2006, Darlington's first Climate Change Strategy was supported at Cabinet.
6. The new Sustainable Community Strategy has resulted in the establishment of a new 'Greener Darlington' Themed Group. This Themed Group will manage and monitor implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan.

7. Darlington is part of the Tees Valley Climate Change Partnership (TVCCP). The Tees Valley Climate Change Partnership was established for the sub region. The TVCCP aims are to develop a sub regional strategy, to support local strategies and action plans, to set emissions targets, to develop an effective emissions reporting protocol and methodology.
8. The Darlington Partnership has supported the development of a Tees Valley Climate Change Strategy, which provides sub-regional co-ordination, and the Council is contributing to funding a fixed term post to develop the sub regional response to climate change and to provide technical expertise to the Tees Valley authorities in developing their own strategies and action plans.
9. A climate change strategy for the Tees Valley sub-region has been developed and represents a high level, comprehensive approach to documenting the current situation in the Tees Valley. It also commits the sub region to achieving both short term and long term carbon dioxide emissions targets:
 - (a) a minimum 8.75% reduction below 2000 levels from 2006-2012;
 - (b) a further minimum 27% reduction from 2012-2030.
10. These targets are cumulative over the whole of the sub region and over the time period of the strategy. This means that whilst action is needed in each of the local authority areas, it is not the sole responsibility of the individual authority to reach these emission reduction targets as there are 9 Partners in the TVCCP.
11. The new Darlington Sustainable Community Strategy has 'Greener Darlington' as one of its five themes, with Climate Change being a significant part in this. This is expected to result in the establishment of a new 'Greener Darlington' themed group. This themed group will manage and monitor implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan.
12. The Darlington Climate Change Strategy, which sits within the sub-regional context provided by the Tees Valley Strategy provide the framework for producing Darlington's first action plan.

Emissions baseline

13. A vital part of any strategy or action plan is to have an accurate inventory for a baseline year. The baseline year for the Darlington action plan is 2000, which is in line with the national baseline.
14. To be successful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the main sources of emissions need to be established to allow the setting of reduction targets and benchmarking to give meaningful comparison over time. Using the Tees Valley Emissions Inventory and Emissions Reporting Protocol this emissions baseline for Darlington has been established.
15. Baseline emissions have been estimated for housing, commercial and industrial and transport sectors using data that is published by DTI, DEFRA and the Environment Agency for all local authorities. Waste data was calculated from data collected by Darlington Borough Council.

16. This emissions baseline has been used to inform Darlington's Climate Change Action Plan, to ensure that actions are targeted correctly. In line with national emissions data, the largest emitting sectors are Housing, Transport and Industry and Commerce. Waste is also a major sector as gases released from decomposing waste, such as methane are extremely harmful greenhouse gases.

Links to Other Strategies

17. The aim of the Climate Change Action Plan is to bring together, in a co-ordinated way, all of the actions in other strategies, directly or indirectly aimed at tackling climate change. This will enable the actions to be quantified in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and to allow for any gaps to be identified.
18. *Community Strategy* – The Community Strategy is currently undergoing review and tackling climate change is emerging as one of the key issues to be included in the new Sustainable Community Strategy.
19. *Local Development Framework* – the planning system provides the spatial element of tackling climate change. Within the emerging Core Strategy there are a number of policies linked to climate change, including renewable energy targets, energy efficiency standards of new homes and sustainability of new developments as a whole. In addition to the policies in the Core Strategy a Design supplementary planning document will set out the sustainable building standards for all new development in the Borough in more detail.
20. *Local Area Agreement* – The LAA will be structured around the aims and themes of the Community Strategy. The LAA is the delivery plan for the SCS and forms the strategic framework for monitoring progress.
21. *Local Transport Plan (LTP)* – The LTP already sets out clear targets for reducing the proportion of trips made by car. Through the Local Motion work these targets are being achieved, resulting in substantial reductions in CO2 emissions.

Darlington Climate Change Action Plan

22. The Darlington Climate Change Strategy has as a vision, which is supported by 4 objectives:

'Darlington's community will be protected from climate change'

- (a) Reducing the emission of gases that are causing climate change;
 - (b) Ensuring that we adapt to the level of climate change that is already occurring;
 - (c) Raising awareness throughout Darlington of the impacts of climate change, the adaptation measures and greenhouse gas reduction measures;
 - (d) Measuring the effectiveness of our actions and revising and developing further actions to ensure we continue to be effective.
23. The action plan has been developed around each of the objectives outlined in the Climate Change strategy.

24. As the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan are Partnership documents, the Action Plan need to be fully integrated into the activities of the Darlington Partnership and partner organisations identified.

Mitigating and adaptation

25. Many of the actions in the action plan aim to reduce future greenhouse gas emissions, which is a key part of tackling climate change, however, to be robust the action plan must also include adaptation actions. Climate change is already occurring and there is the need to be prepared to adapt to this change.

Awareness Raising

26. Education and awareness raising must underpin each of the actions outlined in the action plan. Some of the actions require acceptance by the wider community, others require action by the community.
27. Communication and engagement of communities, businesses and other organisations is a key theme in tackling climate change. There is a need for both behaviour and attitude change. Generating support for policy changes and using growing awareness of climate change can further promote action. The changes, choices and behavioural changes required need to be made attractive by decoupling quality of life from environmental damage. Reducing energy use does not have to lead to poorer living standards and quality of life, but quite the opposite.

Monitoring, review and responsibilities

28. Darlington will report annually on its greenhouse gas emissions through the Tees Valley Emissions Inventory and Emissions Reporting Protocol to the Tees Valley Climate Change Partnership. This annual report can be considered by the Council's Economy, Environment Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet and by Darlington Partnership's Economy, Environment and Transport Group to maintain focus on the actions and outcomes.
29. Monitoring the success of the action plan will be based on measuring achievements against the implementation of actions outlined in the plan in addition to recording greenhouse gas emissions reduction.
30. To be successful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, Climate Change must be a key consideration in all activity within Darlington. Darlington Partnership will consider the Darlington Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan in all of its activities and decision-making. It is the responsibility of all Council departments to ensure that the actions outlined in the action plan are incorporated into service plans where relevant, so they are tracked through normal performance management processes.

Outcome of Consultation

31. The action plan needs to be based on robust consultation and have high level support to ensure success in its implementation. A number of consultation exercises have been undertaken to inform the development of the action plan

32. *The Scrutiny Committees* - On Thursday, 5 July, 2007, a Climate Change Event was held at the Town Hall to which all Members were invited to attend to discuss how this Council, through its Scrutiny Committees, can undertake relevant reviews within their remits and feed back their findings for inclusion in the Climate Change Action Plan
33. A special Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee was held on 6th December where each Scrutiny circulated items for consideration within the Climate Change Action Plan. 52 suggested items for inclusion in the Action Plan were circulated. After careful consideration, the majority of these actions have been incorporated into the Action Plan. Where there was overlap, some actions have been grouped together, particularly within Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee and within Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee's biodiversity recommendations.
34. A special Children and Young People's Scrutiny meeting on Climate Change was held in October 2007 where children from each of the Primary Schools attended and participated in Committee-style debate.
35. *Sustainable Community Strategy* - As the Darlington Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan are Darlington Partnership documents, consultation has taken place alongside consultation on the new Sustainable Community Strategy. This has included public consultation events, facilitated workshops involving other partners and organisations, and has been open to all sectors across Darlington
36. *Key Account Management (KAM)* - The Energy Savings Trust approached Darlington Council in Spring 2007, offering to undertake a Sustainable Energy review of the council's operations and services. The outcome of the review is recommendations are made as to how the council can tackle climate change through sustainable energy management.

Financial Implications

37. Appendix 1B indicates that there may be future resource implications. Budget and procurement processes will be considered more fully when individual actions are taken forward. Not all resource implications will require expenditure, but may result in financial savings for the Council.

Legal Implications

38. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

39. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

40. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

41. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.

Key Decision

42. This is a key decision because it is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more Wards in the Borough.

Recommendation

43. It is recommended that Cabinet agree the actions for the Council in the **attached** Climate Change Action Plan

Reason

44. The recommendation is supported by the following reason:

To accord with the Council's commitment to tackle the causes and effects of climate change as set out in the Darlington and Tees Valley Climate Change Strategies.

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Background Papers

TV Climate Change Strategy
Darlington Climate Change Strategy