

Climate Change Annual report 2020/21

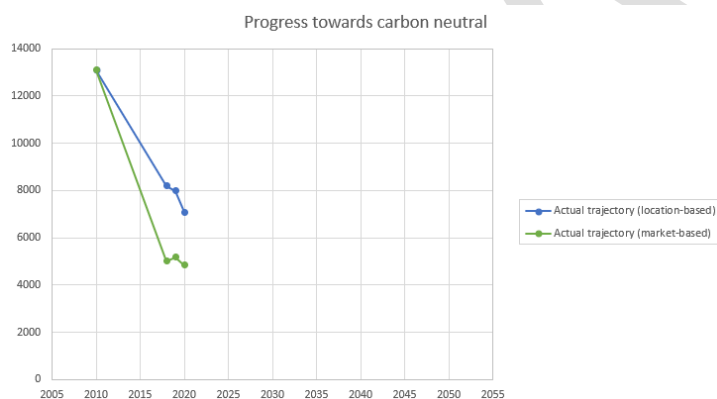
Introduction

In July 2019 DBC declared a climate emergency and committed to becoming a carbon neutral council by 2050. A dedicated lead officer was appointed in January 2020 and a climate change strategy was approved by Cabinet in July 2020. Regular reporting to Cabinet and Full Council via Cabinet Members is ongoing, but an annual report will be produced each year to highlight progress towards our target.

Emissions for 2020/21

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂
Streetlighting	3,487	759	596	515
Corporate Estate	7564	5,928	5,907	5,014
Business Travel	2,050	1,509	1,482	1,426
Water	0	0		-
Total	13,101	8,196	7,985	6,955
Total estimated working from home emissions/tCO ₂ e				125

Emissions from water supply and waste water are not included because there have been some issues with transferring data onto the system. However, we estimate CO₂ emissions at around 60 tonnes.



By the end of 2020/21 our carbon footprint is 7,080 tonnes CO₂e using location-based reporting.

Using market-based reporting, which takes account of our zero-carbon electricity tariff, our carbon footprint is 4,835 tonnes CO₂e

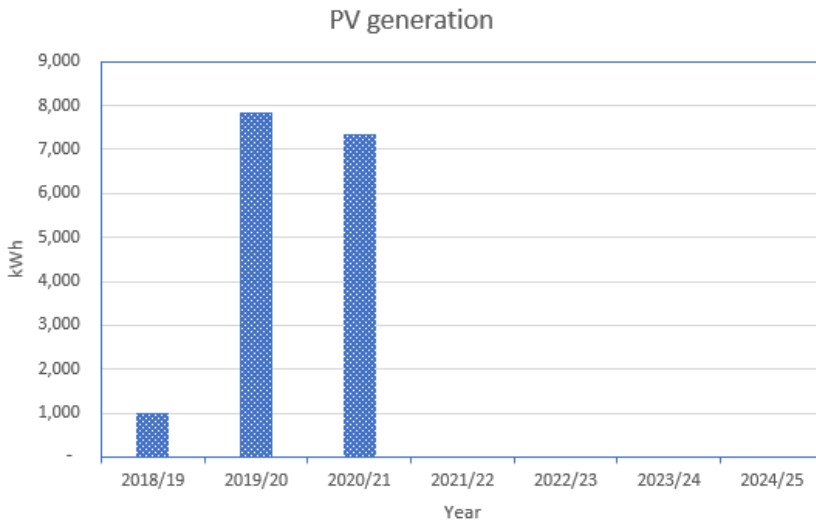
Homeworking emissions

The first lockdown in March 2020 saw most staff working from home. For some staff that was not feasible and there are some services that need to work from the office. Some staff were also diverted from their substantive jobs to dealing with the emergency needs of a pandemic situation.

The majority of meetings moved online, which has resulted in a drop in travel using staff's own cars. However, our Council fleet continued working as usual, so the difference in emissions from travel is not as great as might have been expected.

Emissions from our buildings are lower, as would be expected from a lockdown situation, but not all buildings were closed. This means that heating was still required over the winter months. For the staff working from home, any emissions directly

related to their use of IT equipment have not been removed but simply displaced. To account for this, we have used a calculation developed by EcoAct.¹ Using this method, the total estimated working from home carbon emissions are 125 tonnes.



In 2020/21, 7,362 kWh of electricity was generated by our solar panels. This is slightly down on the previous year. Generation can never be guaranteed as it is so weather dependent.

Highlights

A significant piece of work over the year has been to develop a climate change action plan. Lead officers across the authority were tasked with producing plans for their own departments. These plans have been brought together to form an action plan for the whole Council. Actions have been divided into ongoing, short-term (1-3 years), medium-term (3-5 years) and long-term (5+ years).

The Action Plan is designed to be a rolling, organic plan. It will be continually reviewed to allow us to respond to new technologies, new understanding and government initiatives as they arise.

Successful grant applications have been made to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund, Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery (LAD) scheme 1b and 2. The grants will enable work on the corporate estate and will fund energy efficiency measures to almost 900 properties across Darlington. We were also able, with additional support from the Tees Valley Combined Authority, to successfully apply for funding from BEIS Heat Network Delivery Unit. This grant is funding a feasibility study into a district heat network. Taken together, these grants total more than £2m.

A training module on climate change for staff has been developed and rolled out. Cabinet approved the addition of this training to the compulsory staff training modules. At time of writing, 907 staff with access to the on-line training portal had completed the training (65%).

A revised tree and woodland strategy was published, including a commitment to plant at least 20,000 trees over three years. Almost 10,000 have already been

¹Ecoact [Homeworking Emissions Whitepaper 2020](#)

planted or are planned. Unfortunately, around 300 whips were subsequently removed by vandals.

A network of climate champions is in place across the Council and we are taking forward their ideas for improving sustainability.

Engagement

Several social media posts, news items and One Darlington articles were published. Feedback received was generally positive.

We have continued to work with local, regional and national partners including our neighbouring authorities, the Tees Valley Combined Authority, the Tees Valley Nature Partnership, Tees University, Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

What comes next?

With the Action Plan in place and to aid delivery, we will be developing an annual set of milestones. These will help us to improve how we report on our path to net zero. We will be looking at how we can demonstrate our progress in a clear way suitable for all audiences.

We will explore how we can improve our data gathering, particularly around waste disposal and our supply chain. We know that these are vital areas to include if we are truly to be a net zero Council.

We will continue to work collaboratively with partners, looking for all opportunities for exciting and innovative ways of meeting the challenges facing us.

We will step up our engagement with residents, businesses and schools to ensure that we are all equipped to play our part in tackling climate change.