

CABINET
13 JUNE 2023

ADAPTATION PLAN

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Steve Harker, Leader of the Council**

**Responsible Director -
Ian Williams, Chief Executive**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval of the adaptation plan to ensure continued resilience to climate change.

Summary

2. Darlington Borough Council's climate change strategy and action plan sets out our ambition to be a carbon neutral council by 2050. It is vital for our residents that we can continue to deliver our services and for our staff to be able to do their jobs in a safe environment. Since 2020, we have changed some of our working practices and staff have proved their flexibility in successfully delivering their services remotely.
3. Blended working and flexible hours are important additions to our resilience. However, we cannot be complacent. Projected temperature rise is likely to lead to more storms, heatwaves, droughts and flooding. The adaptation plan attached, relates to actions in the adaptation section of the council's climate change action plan.
4. A spreadsheet was developed and circulated via senior management teams for completion. There are some activities that are relevant across the council, so they have been pulled out as generic activities. The service specific actions will be included in the next iteration of the action plan and reported on alongside the carbon reduction actions.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Cabinet approves the adoption of the attached adaptation plan.

Reason

6. The recommendation is supported by the following reason – adaptation to climate change is vital for us to continue to deliver services that our residents and businesses rely on.

Ian Williams
Chief Executive

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

Margaret Enstone: Extension 6229

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no expected impact on crime and disorder in Darlington
Health and Wellbeing	According to the WHO, climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century. This plan sets out how we will adapt our services, to ensure that the Council can continue to support and provide services to Darlington's residents.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The Council has recognised the need to consider the carbon impact of decisions it makes. This plan covers how we will adapt our services to the unavoidable effects of climate change.
Diversity	Climate change affects everyone, but has a disproportionate impact on areas of deprivation. This plan covers how the Council will ensure that we can continue to deliver services in the face of climate change.
Wards Affected	This plan covers how the Council will ensure resilience of its services. It will not affect any particular ward.
Groups Affected	This plan covers how the Council will ensure resilience of its services. It will not affect any particular groups.
Budget and Policy Framework	This plan does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	The adaptation plan will enable us to continue to deliver on targets in the Council Plan in the face of climate change.
Efficiency	The plan sets out a different way of doing things, taking into account increasing unpredictability and extremes of weather. The cost of not taking action could ultimately lead to greater costs in service delivery.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Darlington Borough Council's climate change strategy and action plan sets out our ambition to be a carbon neutral council by 2050. However, we are still at risk from unavoidable climate change resulting from greenhouse gas emissions already in the atmosphere and we are already seeing the impacts of climate change in recent unpredictable weather.
8. It is vital for our residents that we can continue to deliver our services and for our staff to be able to do their jobs in a safe environment. Our business continuity plans provide us with the tools to deal with emergencies but planning for future scenarios now will mean that we will not have to trigger those plans so often, we will save money over time if we invest in our future now and, most importantly, our most vulnerable residents will still receive the services they rely on.
9. Since 2020, we have changed some of our working practices and staff have proved their flexibility in successfully delivering their services remotely. We are, therefore, in a better position than we might have been, as we already have systems in place that do not necessarily require us all to be in the town centre.
10. Blended working and flexible hours are important additions to our resilience. However, we cannot be complacent. Some staff have to be on site, whether that is at an office building, at a depot or out in the community. We must make sure that these staff are safe and able to continue to deliver their services.
11. Projected temperature rise is likely to lead to more storms, heatwaves, droughts and flooding. We need to make sure that the Council is ready.
12. The adaptation plan attached, relates specifically to two actions in the climate change action plan:
 - (a) A11 Conduct a gap analysis of current activity to identify further actions which could be undertaken
 - (b) A12 Integrate adaptation measures in statutory plans, strategies and functions
13. A spreadsheet was developed and circulated via senior management teams for completion. The questions were designed help to understand what we are already doing to prepare and enable us to set out additional activities that each department will make to ensure we are able to continue to provide the services our residents and businesses depend on.
14. Responses were received from:
 - (a) Adult Social Care
 - (b) Asset management
 - (c) Building Services
 - (d) Community Safety

- (e) Environment
- (f) Housing
- (g) Learning & Skills
- (h) Leisure Services
- (i) Planning Policy

15. The responses have been pulled together to create the plan attached at **Appendix A**.
16. There are some activities that are relevant across multiple teams, so they have been pulled out as generic activities.
17. The service specific activities will be included in the next iteration of the action plan and reported on alongside the carbon reduction actions.

Financial Implications

18. Most of these activities require changes in the way we do things, rather than investment, so there should be minimal, if any, financial implications.

Legal Implications

19. Defra is currently consulting on whether to include local authorities in round 4 of the adaptation reporting power under the climate change act. If this is taken forward by government, we need to be ready.

HR Implications

20. None.

Carbon Impact and Climate Change

21. These activities relate to adapting to climate change rather than mitigation, so will have little impact on our climate emissions. In some cases, for example, encouraging better orientation of buildings and improving building fabric, will impact on both mitigation and adaptation.

Equalities Considerations

22. Adaptation is about making sure that our services can continue to be delivered in the face of climate change. Not adapting will put our most vulnerable residents at greater risk, relative to the least vulnerable.

Consultation

23. The adaptation plan was put together in consultation with teams across the Council.