

ENSURING A RESILIENT COUNCIL

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.

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.

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.

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.

Projected temperature rise is likely to lead to more storms, heatwaves, droughts and flooding. We need to make sure that the Council is ready.

There are 57 adaptation actions in the climate change action plan. The activities below relate specifically to two actions in the action plan:

- A11 Conduct a gap analysis of current activity to identify further actions which could be undertaken
- A12 Integrate adaptation measures in statutory plans, strategies and functions

Teams identified what activities were already underway to aid resilience in service delivery (see Appendix 1) and what additional activities could be undertaken in light of expected impacts of climate change.

As with the climate change action plan, this document is intended to be organic and will be amended as and when necessary.

ACTIVITIES

GENERIC ACTIVITIES	
	Ensure all staff understand and recognise the symptoms of heatstroke and heat exhaustion/stress
	Take note of other services' actions and put relevant ones in place within own teams
	Ensure blinds are functioning and office areas are adequately ventilated for hot spells
	Ensure home working staff have appropriate space to work
	All staff responsible for communicating messages to their customers (internal and external). Additional training may be needed
	Include a wellness check in with 1:1s
	Use of technology to reduce need to travel where possible
All services with staff who work outside	Consider working hours, earlier starts, split shifts and encourage regular breaks Provide water and appropriate clothing
Services with outside areas	Provide shaded areas for staff/customers

Service specific activities

ADULT SOCIAL CARE	
Business operations	Escalation if required via emergency services Contact carers Link with voluntary and community sector. Ensure adequate staffing, rotas adjusted if required.
Opportunities	Signpost and advise how to access local facilities
Health & wellbeing staff	Flexible hours Awareness raising re signs of heat exhaustions or cold.
Health & wellbeing customers	Review ability to deal with increased numbers of vulnerable people

ASSET MANAGEMENT	
Health & wellbeing staff	Sun safety and cover up policy checked and updated at the start of Summer

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COMMUNITY SAFETY	
Business operations	<p>Scan older documents to reduce risk of damage from flood</p> <p>Office reconfiguration</p> <p>Online appointment booking</p> <p>Transfer front counter to contact centre</p> <p>Promote green spaces in planning applications</p> <p>Encourage raised electrics and concrete flooring during refurbishments</p> <p>Promote low carbon heating, high energy efficient appliances and efficient orientation of buildings</p> <p>Increase promotion and availability of solar panels through energy efficiency schemes</p>
Opportunities	<p>Utilise increase in community engagement to strengthen community confidence in the local authority and use existing and new partnerships to manage any increased demand</p> <p>An increase in sunlight hours will give greater capacity for engagement events where residents feel safer than in darkness</p> <p>Policy reviews: Licensing Act, Street Traders Policy, Pavement Café Policy</p>
Business sector	<p>Encourage private rented sector to move to EPC C before legislation changes and enforce once minimum standards are enacted</p> <p>Promote green spaces</p> <p>Encourage raised electronics and concrete flooring during refurbishments</p> <p>Encourage green roofs and reflective walls</p> <p>Promote gas boilers capable of working on 10% hydrogen gas for new gas boiler installations</p> <p>Encourage taxi proprietors to renew their vehicles with those that are emission free for air conditioning without carbon emitting engines.</p>
Health & wellbeing staff	<p>Risk assessment to take excessive heat into account</p> <p>Extend flexible working hours to later hours</p> <p>Increased use of remote inspections for initial assessments</p>
Health & wellbeing Customers	<p>Trading Standards could consider a local test purchase exercise to check that factor rating on sunscreen to see if they are accurate. This would have to be done in collaboration with Primary Authorities and the Office for Product Safety and Standards.</p> <p>Consider noise impact from licensed premises when windows/doors are open to allow heat escape</p> <p>Promotion of life long homes through the planning process</p>

BUILDING SERVICES	
Business operations	(a) Be more flexible in our approach to tenants if risks remain for a prolonged period. (b) Consider split shifts or temporarily increase operatives.
Health & wellbeing Customers	a) Where possible, have an understanding of people’s health. Work with carers, nurses and relatives to ensure people are not alone. (b) Have a plan to deal with flooding, including assessment of halls/leisure centres which could provide temporary accommodation (providing sleeping bags, hot food and drink) and have people on hand to provide advice and guidance. Agreements with and use of local establishments (B&Bs, hotels) could also be considered for extreme conditions. (c) Work with Emergency Services. (d) Have as many people as possible First Aid trained. (e) Give regular updates; communication is key.
Buildings	(a) To improve on building quality, so dwellings are cool in the summer and warm in the winter. (Simple ideas can include installing shutters on windows, so during the summer months they can be closed and the windows remain open.) (b) The quality of the build is key. Consider proven methods for existing properties for how buildings can be adapted to take extreme weather changes.

ENVIRONMENT	
Business operations Risks	Consider more resource on gully cleaning Consider more out of hours service Longer growing/cutting season impacts on grounds maintenance teams - consider how that could be funded
Business sector	Monitor impact on income from servicing if increased numbers of businesses fail
Health & wellbeing staff	Consider change of hours
Customers	Monitor potential loss of income from reduced cremations/burials through fewer winter deaths
Infrastructure	Increased clearance of gulleys etc as response to increased rainfall Scarcity of bottled water could be an issue, consider supplying all staff with re-usable bottle(s) Increase number of trips for gritters spreading sand on melting roads
Natural environment	Alter grass cutting regime in drought periods Change planting in horticultural areas to drought resistant Potential public safety from stressed trees dropping branches?

HOUSING	
Business operations Risks	Review responsive repair times Review budgets for repairs
Opportunities	Drop communal area temps down 1°C Continue solar panel installations
Business sector	Plan for potential increase in insurance premiums Potential disruption to building Potential for council tax issues
Health & wellbeing staff	Potential issues with building services & construction
Buildings	Continue work with Northumbrian Water on flood risk areas

LEARNING & SKILLS	
Health & wellbeing Staff	Negotiate further adaptations by landlord as required
Customers	Negotiate further adaptations by landlord as required

LEISURE SERVICES	
Business operations Risks	Review due on Business Continuity Plan following restructure Ensure Climate Change Readiness Review is captured and considered within future business planning
Opportunities	Draft financial impact from changes in building operating hours and capture in Dolphin Centre Business Plan Business case around extended hospitality offer and footprint is being pulled together Invest to save business case to be submitted to DBC for solar panels
Health & wellbeing staff	Ensure any updates are completed to risk assessments Flexible hours and agile working. Train staff to recognise symptoms and deal with heat exhaustion for staff and customers Education around effects from extreme weather caused due to Climate Change and what we can do to help ourselves
Customers	Review Emergency Rest Centre role alongside Emergency Planning Team Train staff to recognise and deal with symptoms of stress/heat exhaustion - could be incorporated within our ongoing staff

	training programme Identify any vulnerable customer groups that could be at higher risk for example G.P. Referral clients and agree what measures would be put in place for these customers
	Consider Climate Change readiness information included within tenancy agreements and hire agreements

PLANNING POLICY	
Customers	Review of local plan Include information in health impact assessment

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Appendix 1: Activities put in place by teams across the Council

- Access to counselling, health and wellbeing initiatives for staff
- Additional breaks and access to water can be implemented now at the discretion of management
- Advice given to all council house tenants on hot weather
- Agency details in case additional staff is needed
- All local care providers have their own contingency plans
- All training centres are in low risk areas for flooding by rivers or surface water
- Alternatives for catering suppliers in case of supply failure
- Business continuity plans in place across the council Can switch Learning & Skills online delivery if necessary or use alternative sites
- Corporate communications protocol
- Corporate support through Alliance available
- Customer engagement electronic
- Double glazing in nearly all properties
- Education on new technologies such as air source heat pumps
- Emergency Rest Centre procedure is in place but may need to review if demands for these rise
- Emergency Rest Centre Protocol - plan exists for customers/staff stranded in the Dolphin Centre
- Encourage breaks, exercise, self care, access to water
- Encourage customers to exercise outdoors and meet with friends etc
- Energy efficiency scheme promotes solar panels
- Ensure patrolling staff have opportunities for rest from heat, cold and rain and keep well hydrated
- Extreme weather risk assessments in place for Eastbourne Sports Complex
- Home working and use of online/phone contact with customers
- Hot & cold weather plan for Lifeline, with increased contact
- Increased digital services
- Increased pavement cafes and premises using outside space
- Increased solar panels on social housing
- Increasing insulation
- Inspections assess for excess heat and for ventilation in properties
- Insurance premiums on all buildings
- LED lighting at Eastbourne Sports Complex currently being installed
- Minimum energy standards enforced
- Natural environment captured with planning process for any developments
- Natural ventilation
- Old windows being replaced across the front of the building
- Ongoing staff meetings and 1:1s feature climate change
- Opening windows during hot spells
- Outside workers provided with PPE and water
- Partnership working between Horticulture Team and Eastbourne Sports Complex
- Plan for relocation to alternative buildings if required
- Promotion of improved insulation, double glazing, draught proofing
- Promotion of mental health first aiders and health & safety champions
- Providing fans, using window shades, access to water
- Responsive to severe weather damage
- Signposting for customers to keep safe, warm, cool etc
- Software failure protocol
- Solar panels currently being explored for the Dolphin Centre

- Sun safety training, cover up policy
- Support provided for people who need to move into temporary accommodation
- Update on M&E within building 2023/2024
- Use of local suppliers as part of social value
- Use of lone working safety devices
- Waste collection routes adjusted according to the weather
- Water hanging baskets and bowling greens
- Water stations available for staff and in key areas such as the gym customers
- Wellbeing checks for customers including environmental checks, signposting to warm home initiatives, encourage use of fans/shade when hot

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