

COUNCIL
28 SEPTEMBER 2023

CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE 2022-2023

**Responsible Cabinet Member -
Councillor Chris McEwan, Economy Portfolio**

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Council on progress for financial year 2022/23 towards the Council's net zero target.

Summary

2. Following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in July 2019, a Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer was appointed in late January 2020. The Climate Change Strategy was adopted in July 2020 and working with lead officers across the Council, an action plan was produced and adopted in October 2021.
3. Milestones have been developed and these have been used by the Climate Change Officer to monitor progress. At the end of the 2022/23 year, we were working to deliver 126 of the actions in the climate change action plan. 50 actions have been completed and 72 are on track.
4. A trajectory of 30% reduction in the Council's emission every five years was agreed at Cabinet in October 2021. Council emissions for 2022/23 were 6,461 tonnes/CO₂. The emissions we report are made up of the energy use in council buildings; business mileage; fleet emissions, and streetlighting and signs.
5. We do not currently measure emissions from our supply chain or from waste. However we commissioned a report from an external consultant into supply chain emissions and will be looking further into how we can reduce these going forward.
6. The Sustainable Darlington webpage and Sustainability and Climate Change intranet page have been updated and will be used to share information with residents and staff. We also plan to include a youth tab on the Sustainable Darlington page, working with young people to produce content.

7. Members will be aware that an amendment to this declaration was agreed by Council in July 2023 to bring that target date forward 10 years to 2040 and call on central government to provide funding and resources to achieve this aim. The Council resolved to:
 - (a) Reaffirm its declaration of a 'Climate Emergency'.
 - (b) Work to make Darlington Borough Council carbon neutral by at least 2040, considering both production and consumption emissions, both directly and indirectly caused by the council (scope 1 and 2), as described by the Carbon Trust [3]. For scope 3 emissions the Council will publish data (where available) to monitor emissions and inform procurement practice.
 - (c) Call on central government to develop the strategies and deliver the funding necessary to make this possible.
 - (d) Develop a carbon emissions reduction trajectory that supports the central government commitment to the Paris Agreement of no more than 1.5°C global temperature increase.
 - (e) Ensure that Darlington Borough Council is adapting to climate change so that it can continue to provide vital services.
 - (f) The Council is one of several organisations who have a leading role within the Borough, and within that role we will work to encourage and persuade businesses, third sector and public sector organisations, and residents to reduce emissions and become more resilient.
 - (g) Pledge to publish the emissions for the whole Borough and track this against a 2040 net-zero pathway.
 - (h) Work with nurseries, schools, and colleges to signpost them to appropriate learning aids and encourage young people to get involved in decision making and peer learning about how to tackle climate change.
 - (i) Work with other local authorities, organisations, and governments within the UK and internationally to share best practice methods on responding to the climate emergency.
 - (j) Continue the cross-party working group to oversee the climate change work and to provide support and guidance.
 - (k) Provide an amended action plan to reflect revised timescales within six months, with reporting on progress to Full Council every 6 months, thereafter.
8. The strategy and action plan are being revised in line with the new 2040 target and we are working with the Cross-Party Climate Change Working Group to understand the implications of our more ambitious target and develop a new trajectory.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that Council acknowledges the report.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reason: with increasing public pressure to act on climate change, we run the risk of significant damage to our reputation if we do not deliver on our stated commitment to dealing with the Council's contribution to climate change.

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 report is a progress report of our journey to becoming a carbon neutral council.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The Council has recognised the need to consider the carbon impact of the decisions it makes. This report is a progress report of our journey to reducing our carbon emissions and adapting our services to the unavoidable effects of climate change.
Diversity	Climate change affects everyone, but it has a disproportionate impact on areas of deprivation. This report demonstrates how we are addressing our own carbon emissions and resilience, giving us the ability to demonstrate through good practice what other people can do themselves
Wards Affected	This report covers how the Council is addressing its own carbon emissions and resilience. It will not affect any particular ward.
Groups Affected	This report covers how the Council is addressing its own carbon emissions and resilience. It will not affect any particular group.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No
Council Plan	This report has no particular implications for the Council Plan

Efficiency	Our approach to reducing emissions will mean that resources are used more efficiently
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

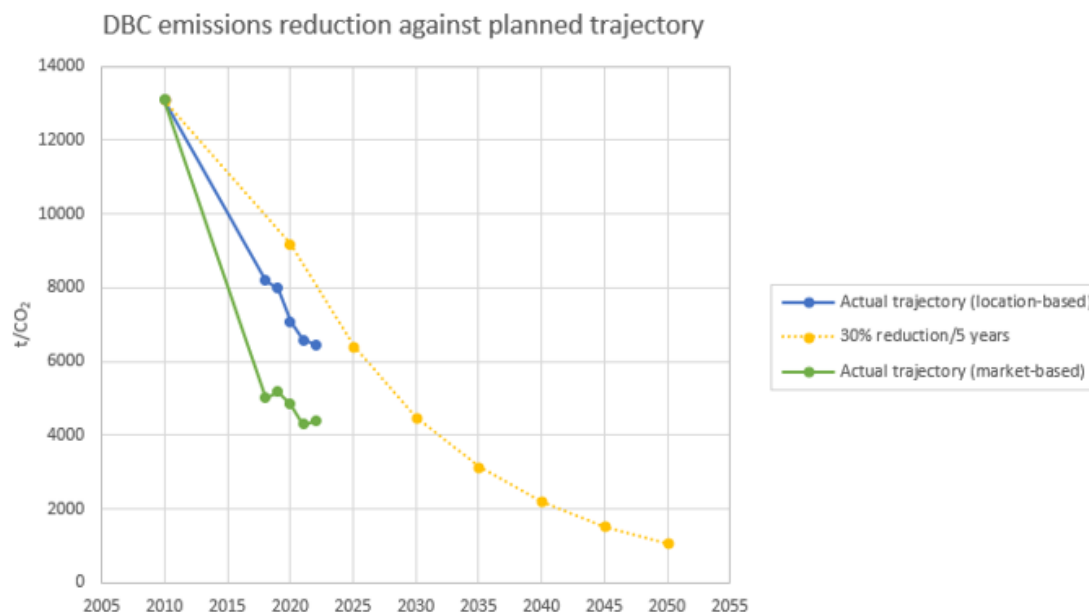
11. Following the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration in July 2019, a Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer was appointed in late January 2020.
12. The Climate Change Strategy was adopted in July 2020 and working with lead officers across the Council, an action plan was produced and adopted in October 2021.
13. Milestones have been developed and these have been used by the Climate Change Officer to monitor progress.
14. At the end of the 2022/23 year, we were working to deliver 126 of the actions in the climate change action plan. 50 actions have been completed and 72 are on track.
15. Two actions have been delayed due to staff capacity and one due to supply issues. One action is unable to progress due to the withdrawal of a delivery partner.
16. A trajectory of 30% reduction in the Council's emission every five years was agreed at Cabinet in October 2021.
17. Emissions to date:

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂
Streetlighting	3,487	759	596	515	458	412
Corporate Estate	7,564	5,928	5,907	5,014	4,864	4,709
Business Travel	2,050	1,509	1,482	1,426	1,270	1,328
Total	13,101	8,196	7,985	6,955	6,592	6,461
Total estimated working from home emissions/tCO ₂ e				125		

18. Electricity generation from the solar panels on the roof of the Town Hall:

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation
	kWh	kWh*	kWh	kWh	kWh	kWh
Total		1,008	7,846	8,597	9,015	9,028

19. Trajectory*:



*Note, as this report relates to 2022/23, the trajectory shown here is to 2050. A new, more challenging, trajectory for 2040 is being determined.

20. We report emissions as recommended by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and show both location-based emissions, which use the average grid emissions that reflect the energy that we are using and market-based emissions, which take into account the zero carbon tariff that we have chosen.
21. The emissions we report are made up of the energy use in council buildings (not including council homes as we do not control how residents use the energy); business mileage; fleet emissions, and streetlighting and signs.
22. Reporting emissions from our supply chain is optional under the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and we do not currently measure these emissions. However, we feel that it is important to understand what these emissions are and we partnered with a consultant to help us identify where our supply chain emissions are coming from.
23. Not all data was easily extracted so there is a considerably amount of estimation in the results, but the consultant’s report judged that our supply chain is responsible for approximately 49,644 tonnes of CO₂.
24. We will take the results and explore them more deeply going forward.
25. A gap analysis has been carried out on our current resilience to climate change and adaptation actions drawn up for teams. This is an organic piece of work that will develop as our understanding of the impacts of climate change and their effects on the council’s delivery of services evolves.

Teamwork plan

26. The Climate Change Officer has, unfortunately, taken a role in the newly formed Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. He will be replaced once we have firmed up plans for the team going forward.
27. We have produced a work plan for the year, which includes:
 - (a) Following the change to our net zero target, work is underway on both a strategy and action plan review. We will ensure that we recognise and address the greater impact of climate change on our most vulnerable residents. We will also take into account new strategies such as the housing and climate change strategy and the health impact assessment.
 - (b) A deep dive into the supply chain emissions results produced by our external consultant and a plan to deal with them.
 - (c) A trial project using hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO) to replace diesel in six of our refuse vehicles. HVO is a direct replacement for diesel, requiring no adjustments to vehicles, but producing significantly lower CO₂ emissions.
 - (d) Ongoing monitoring and reporting on actions in the action plan.
 - (e) Developing our offsetting approach.
 - (f) Working with young people.
 - (g) Developing our communications internally with Members and staff and externally with residents and business.

Climate change fund

28. £100k was allocated in the Medium-Term Financial Plan to help fund projects that will help us meet our target. To date we have spent approximately £50,000.
29. This year, we have provided and committed funding to:
 - (a) An external consultant to examine the emissions from our supply chain.
 - (b) Support the sustainability event held in June 2023.
 - (c) Cover the difference in cost between the usual diesel to fuel the refuse vehicles and the HVO for use in the trial.

Communications

30. We continue to improve the Sustainable Darlington page on the council's website to increase the information available.

31. Youth pages have been added and we are working to make sure that young people are involved in writing and developing it.
32. A sustainability article is included in every One Darlington and regular social media is published.
33. We have been adding to the sustainability and climate change intranet page to improve the information available to staff.
34. A series of drop in events for staff were trialled, offering the chance for staff to ask questions on a variety of topics. These were not particularly successful, but we will work with the climate champions to see if we can improve staff engagement.
35. We are trying to have a sustainability article included in each staff Briefing.

Financial Implications

36. Although funding has been made available for specific climate change actions in the MTFP, and grant applications have been successful, funding for other climate change initiatives are to be identified. Options for financing climate change actions continue to be explored.
37. We have trialled a tool for capturing the costs of severe weather events. This will be developed further to include a broader cross section of council teams.
38. Systems are being developed to report on and monitor expected savings across climate change initiatives.

Legal Implications

39. There are no legal implications, but with increasing public pressure to take action on the threat of climate change, we must demonstrate how we will deliver on the motion commitments.

Equalities Considerations

40. Climate change affects everyone, but it has a disproportionate impact on areas of deprivation. By ensuring that the Council is resilient to the effects of climate change, we ensure that we will be able to continue providing services to all residents.

Consultation

41. This report is a progress report for the Council's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions and increasing its resilience to the impacts of climate change. No public consultation has been carried out.