

**CABINET**  
**9 JANUARY 2024**

---

**REVISED CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY**

---

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

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

---

**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Cabinet approval of the Revised Climate Change Strategy and change to net zero trajectory.
2. To note for information the Interim Climate Change Action Plan.

**Summary**

3. Following the motion at Council in July 2023, the original Climate Change Strategy needed to be revised. The strategy details our approach to achieving the carbon neutral Council target of 2040 adopted in the new motion.
4. Our baseline year remains as 2010/11, allowing us to demonstrate that we have been addressing our energy use and carbon emissions for some time. The scope of our ambition includes those areas where emissions are significant, we have control over them, and data is robust. Some areas of operations do not yet have robust data. We will continue to monitor these and will include them as and when we can be certain of the data.
5. Our baseline carbon footprint has been calculated as 13100 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. Since then, we have reduced our carbon footprint by 50%.
6. We report our carbon footprint using both market-based reporting and location-based reporting, as is considered good practice. Location-based reporting demonstrates the carbon footprint of our actual energy usage. Market-based reporting considers the choices that we make in where we source our electricity.
7. The Strategy sets out four principles, which underpin the proposed actions:
  - (a) Reduce our overall energy consumption.
  - (b) Reduce our demand for fossil fuel-based energy.
  - (c) Contribute to a greener grid.
  - (d) Sequester carbon.

8. Progress reports to Council are given every six months. In addition to monitor our progress, we have produced a trajectory with a target of 30% reduction in emissions every five years. We propose to amend this to 40% reduction every five years.

### **Recommendations**

9. It is recommended that: -
  - (a) Cabinet approves the adoption of the attached Climate Change Strategy (see **Appendix 1**).
  - (b) Cabinet approves the revised trajectory.
  - (c) Cabinet notes the Interim Climate Change Action Plan (see **Appendix 2**).

### **Reason**

10. The recommendations are supported as 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 strategy sets out how we will approach reducing carbon and adapting 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 the decisions it makes. This strategy sets out how we will approach reducing our carbon emissions and adapt 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 strategy covers how the Council will address its own carbon emissions and resilience, giving us the ability to demonstrate through good practice what other people can do themselves.
Wards Affected	This strategy covers how the Council will address its own carbon emissions and resilience. It will not affect any particular ward.
Groups Affected	This strategy covers how the Council will address its own carbon emissions and resilience. It will not affect any particular groups.
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	Yes
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
Council Plan	<p><b>Children with the best start in life:</b> activity under this strategy will include supporting schools in their climate change education.</p> <p><b>A safe and caring community:</b> we will be suggesting actions for residents and businesses which will support communities to be safer and more resilient.</p> <p><b>More people active and involved:</b> we will be using our influence to inspire people to reduce their own carbon footprint and increase their resilience. One of the ways we can do this will be to encourage people to travel actively.</p> <p><b>More people healthy and independent:</b> climate change threat has been shown to be a threat to health. The strategy is one way of supporting the Council's work on improving public health.</p> <p><b>More businesses and more jobs:</b> through the strategy we will be supporting skills development</p>

	<p>and encouraging innovation in dealing with the impact of climate change.</p> <p><b>More people caring for our environment:</b> a thriving natural environment will help us to deal with the threat of climate change.</p> <p><b>Enough support for people when needed:</b> adapting to the impacts of climate change and becoming more resilient will allow us to continue to deliver services.</p> <p><b>A place designed to thrive:</b> we will include consideration of climate change impacts in our decision making, our capital programme and all policies and programmes.</p>
Efficiency	<p>The strategy sets out a different way of doing things. This does not necessarily mean more. Once potential actions have been examined and costed, there may ultimately be budgetary implications in the short term as we invest to save. However, we are expecting that continued actions to improve efficiency will save money.</p> <p>Some suggested actions might require employing staff to manage particular projects.</p>
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report does not directly impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

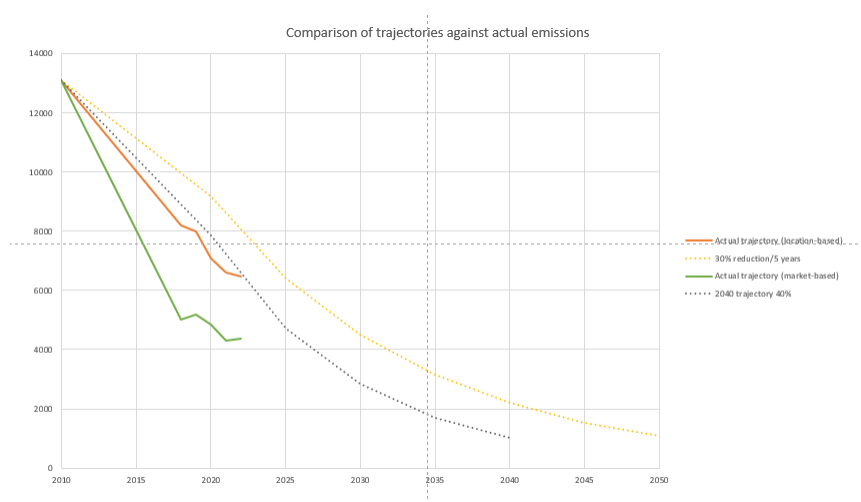
## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

11. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has stated that without substantial efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade we are likely to face severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts on societies. Human activity has already led to global warming, which is resulting in damaging impacts on lives, infrastructure, and ecosystems. As a result, we need to both mitigate and adapt to climate change.
12. The predicted impacts of climate change in Darlington include more frequent and intense flooding, drought, episodes of extreme heat and stormier conditions. These impacts are expected to lead to an increase in heat-related deaths, particularly amongst the elderly, damage to essential infrastructure, reduced availability of drinking water, increased cost and scarcity of food, disruption to supply chains and service provision, sea level rises, greater coastal erosion, and impact on habitats from rising temperature and weather events and from invasive species.
13. In July 2019, Members passed a motion committing the Council to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
14. In July 2023, Members reaffirmed that commitment and brought forward the date for the Council to reach net zero carbon emissions to 2040.

15. The new motion also added additional responsibilities to use our role as a leader in the community to influence more widely.
16. As a result, the existing Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan need to be revised in line with the Council's new objectives.
17. The strategy sets out the baseline of the Council's carbon emissions and identifies the principles by which the Council will meet this commitment.
18. It references other strategies and plans that have been written since the original motion was passed and focuses on our plans to both mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as our plans to engage and influence externally.
19. Internally, the strategy concentrates on the emissions we can measure and have direct control over.
20. Four principles are set out, which underpin the proposed actions:
  - (a) Reduce our overall energy consumption:
    - (i) Increase the efficiency of our estate.
    - (ii) Manage our buildings to reduce energy demand.
    - (iii) Train staff to change their behaviours.
  - (b) Reduce our demand for fossil fuel-based energy:
    - (i) Move away from gas heating.
    - (ii) Increase on site renewables.
    - (iii) Support renewables with batteries
  - (c) Contribute to a greener grid:
    - (i) Increase off-site renewables.
  - (d) Sequester carbon:
    - (i) Offsetting
21. The scope of our carbon reporting includes:
  - (a) Corporate estate
  - (b) Energy for streetlights
  - (c) Business mileage
  - (d) School estate (where schools are still under LEA control)
  - (e) DBC residential/care homes/communal areas of flats
22. These are all areas where we retain responsibility for bill management and payment and have control over the emissions produced.

23. We have used 2010/11 as our baseline year, to take account of actions taken since the previous carbon management plan was produced.
24. At 2010/11, our carbon footprint was 13100 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. Since then, actions taken by the Council have reduced our carbon footprint by 50%.
25. We report our carbon footprint using both market-based reporting and location-based reporting. This is considered good practice and is recommended by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol. Location-based reporting demonstrates the carbon footprint of our actual energy usage. Market-based reporting considers the choices that we make in where we source our electricity. In our case, we have chosen a zero-carbon electricity tariff.
26. We monitor our progress against a trajectory that was drawn up against the original 2050 target. The trajectory gave us a target of 30% reduction every five years, in line with government ambition. This left us with approximately 1,000 tonnes of carbon to be offset.
27. If we retain those 30% / five years trajectory, we will need to offset around 2,000 tonnes of carbon at 2040. Amending the trajectory to 40% reduction every five years will leave us with 1,000 tonnes of carbon to be offset at 2040, matching the original expectation.
28. This would be challenging but we believe is achievable.



29. The attached Interim Climate Change Action Plan has been produced with the assumption that Cabinet will approve the revised trajectory.
30. A newly appointed Climate Change Officer is due to join the Council in January 2024. As he will be managing this plan, progress, and reporting, we would like him to develop the action plan further.

### Financial Implications

31. The Strategy sets out our approach to achieving the new commitment which will have a financial impact due to the earlier 2040 target date. The action plan is being revised and further work is underway to review the actions to determine the options to take forward, and the anticipated change in costs to meet the revised timeframe.

32. There is expected to be a need for investment in technologies and different ways of delivering services. This will potentially impact on all the resources of the Council including, finance, fleet, accommodation, ICT, staffing etc. The impact on the cost of resources will be determined as part of the action plan, including expected financial savings through better ways of working and efficiencies.

### **Legal Implications**

33. There are no legal implications, but with increasing public pressure to take action on the threat of climate change, a strategy demonstrates how we will deliver on the motion commitments and may protect the Council from future legal challenge.

### **Equalities considerations**

34. 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**

35. This strategy relates to reducing the Council's carbon emissions and increasing its resilience to the impacts of climate change. No public consultation has been carried out.