



Interim Climate Change Action Plan

Darlington Borough Council
2023

INTERIM CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN

Introduction

In 2019 Darlington Borough Council declared a climate emergency, and a high-level strategy and a supporting action plan was produced.

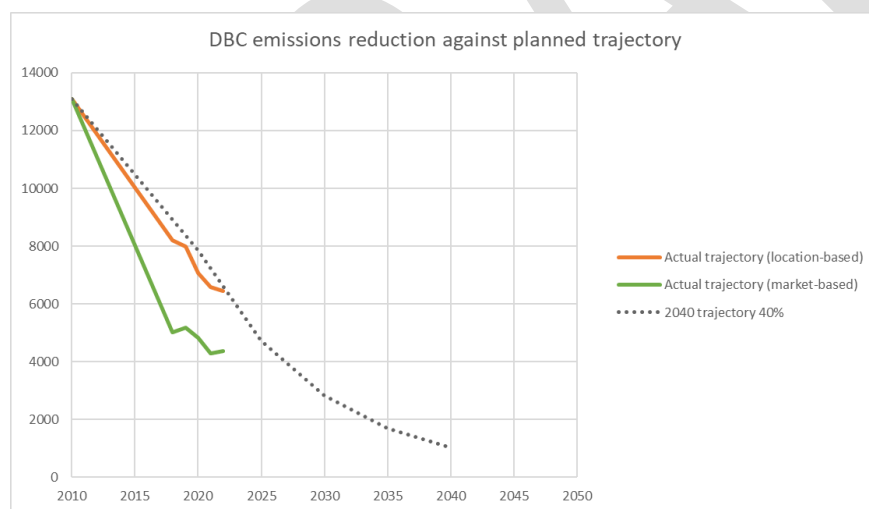
In July 2023, recognising the increased urgency of action, the Council reaffirmed the climate emergency, bringing forward the date for the Council to be carbon neutral to 2040. It also added firmer commitments to adaptation, to working with our suppliers and encouraging and influencing businesses and residents to come along on the journey with us.

Our strategy has been revised in line with the new, more ambitious target. This document is an interim action plan following the principles set out in the strategy, by which we will approach our response. The interim action plan touches on actions that appear in other plans such as the Housing and Climate Change Strategy, but the intention is not to duplicate those strategies and plans here.

A fuller plan will be produced in due course.

Our climate emergency declaration commits the Council to reducing its carbon emissions to net zero by 2040. That is our end date, and we will be making every effort to reach net zero at the earliest possible date.

The revised target of 2040 also requires us to revise our trajectory. Our new trajectory of 40% reduction every 5 years will give us an approximate 87% reduction in emissions by 2035.



We report our emissions in two ways:

- (a) location-based – this reflects the average emissions intensity of our actual energy consumption
- (b) (b) market-based - this reflects emissions from the zero-carbon electricity tariff that we have purposefully chosen.

The difference between the end point at 2040 and zero is where we will need to offset our emissions. We will make every effort to reduce this gap, but there will inevitably be some residual emissions that we will not be able to remove completely. The plan below includes an action to develop our offsetting strategy.

The Climate Change Strategy and this Plan build on achievements already realised by our teams, details of which have been reported annually and are available on our website. However, there is still much to do if we are to reach our targets and every new project will need to understand the capital and revenue implications of achieving net carbon zero and ensuring resilience. Our more ambitious target will undoubtedly put added pressure on already stretched budgets.

The action plan needs to be flexible to adapt and respond to new technologies, new understanding and government initiatives and so this will be an organic document. We will take advantage of all funding opportunities open to us and have already successfully bid for funds from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme and Heat Network Delivery Unit.

Milestones will be developed year by year to enable robust reporting to Full Council every six months and an annual report will be produced.

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PRINCIPLE 1: REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Our work to improve the energy efficiency of our estate is not new but we will continue to take advantage of new technologies and proactively seek innovative solutions to improve this area of work further. We will explore new ways to reduce the need for fossil fuels and we will continue to make improvements to our council housing to help our tenants lower their bills and enjoy their homes.

A number of changes to national planning regulations are forthcoming and we can show leadership in this area when we build new council houses. We continue to work with vulnerable residents through the Warm Homes Fund and our partners, CAB, to provide energy advice.

Any new measures we install must be maintained at the recommended schedules to ensure they deliver the savings predicted over their lifetime. Additional budget may be needed to ensure any additional maintenance cycles and upgrades are manageable, but this can be offset by expected long-term operational savings.

There is likely to be a national shortage of skills and resources available to deliver a programme of this scale, particularly when seen alongside similar ambition and demand from other local authorities and business and we will work with the universities and the Combined Authority to help address this.

Overall Objective: Darlington Borough Council uses less energy resulting in fewer emissions

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
Road maintenance			
E01	Continue to utilise sustainable road maintenance materials	Highway Asset Management	Ongoing
New build			
E02	Ensure that the prioritisation of carbon reduction is maintained throughout the design and build process.	Capital Projects	Ongoing
E03	Ensure new corporate buildings reflect and deliver the processes within the climate change strategy.	Capital Projects	Ongoing
E04	Reduce use of brick and blockwork in designs for our house building and increase the use of more sustainable processes and materials.	Capital Projects	Ongoing
E05	Require and analyse whole life costing during the building design process.	Capital Projects	Ongoing
E06	Investigate the implementation of a set carbon intensity parameters for construction of new council buildings (e.g. KgCO ₂ e/m ²).	Capital Projects	April 2024
Global initiatives			
E07	Review how building fabric air tightness could be improved through sealing, draught stripping and closing off unused ventilation openings.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
E08	Consider introducing and improving loft insulation.	Corporate Landlord	March 25
E09	Review hot water wastage.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
E10	Insulate all pipework, valves and fittings throughout.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
E11	Review opportunities for solar panels.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
E12	Review combined heat and power opportunity.	Corporate Landlord	
E13	Review solar water heating.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
E14	Introduce draught lobbies to reduce unwanted air infiltration.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
E15	Review building lighting strategies with particular focus to luminaires, control systems and daylighting provision. Install occupancy sensor controls to lighting in all rooms, WCs and corridors. Setting time delays to minimum practical levels.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
Corporate buildings			
E16	Undertake a rationalisation of the office portfolio to reflect the reduced occupancy levels following the COVID-19 pandemic and the numbers of staff working from home.	Corporate Landlord	March 2024
E17	Consider introducing or improving wall insulation (internal lining) to solid single skin structures of the Town Hall.	Corporate Landlord	March 2024
E18	Consider replacing or improving glazing (single glazed integral windows) of the Town Hall.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
E19	Consider introducing or improving insulation of flat roofs at the Town Hall.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
Dolphin Centre			
E20	Consider variable speed drives for fans, pumps, and compressors.	Corporate Landlord	March 2024
E21	Review BMS installation and submetering monitoring.	Corporate Landlord	March 2024
E22	Consider fitting secondary glazing and under glaze sky lights where appropriate.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
E23	Consider how the pool complex air tightness can be improved and sealed better.	Corporate Landlord	March 2024
E24	Review condition of fabric for measures to improve energy performance i.e. building pressure tests for air tightness and thermography tests for insulation continuity.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing
E25	Consider replacing any legacy sodium-based lighting with LED.	Corporate Landlord	March 2024
E26	Review use of pool covers.	Leisure Services	March 2024
E27	Dolphin centre - investigate solar panel options	Leisure Services	September 2024
E28	Dolphin centre - New Windows for front of house - plans to be in place Sept 2024	Leisure Services	March 2025
E29	Dolphin Centre - triple glazed windows around pool hall	Leisure Services	January 2024
E30	M&E phase 3 works	Leisure Services	July 2025
E31	New CHP plant	Leisure Services	July 2025
E32	Variable speed fan for AHU1	Leisure Services	July 2025
Hippodrome			
E33	Introduce expandable entrance collars to connect the rear of the delivery vehicles to loading areas to reduce heat losses.	Corporate Landlord	March 2024
Housing			
E34	Deliver on Housing Services Climate Change Strategy	Housing Services	Ongoing
E35	Enforce private rented and non-domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards regulations.	Private Sector Housing	Ongoing
Future plans			
E36	Develop pipeline of projects ready for future funding streams	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	December 2024
Business			
E37	Developing the net zero business sector.	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
	Planning		
E38	Include a request in planning applications for expected carbon impact of developments.	Development Management	March 2024
	Schools		
E39	Ensure all maintenance, upgrades and refurbishment of Council maintained schools considers environmentally friendly options and adheres to the new guidance	Skills and Employability	Ongoing
	Libraries		
E40	Reduce paper across both sites, digitalising historical information and promoting this with staff.	Library Service	Ongoing
E41	To evaluate how efficient the heating system is at Cockerton and explore the option of more efficient fans.	Library Service	September 2024
	Hopetown Darlington		
	<i>Food & Beverage</i>		
E42	Food & beverage will be locally sourced where possible.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E43	No single use plastic will be used. Food and drink packaging will be from sustainable materials.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E44	Leftover packaged food will be offered to the local food bank	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E45	Left over fresh food will be offered to the Too Good to Go scheme	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E46	Waste packaging to landfill will be reduced through recycling & composting	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
	<i>Retail</i>		
E47	Where possible stock will be locally sourced	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E48	Toys & other items sold will not be made from plastic unless it has been recycled first	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
	<i>Events</i>		
E49	Material will be recycled and reused as much as possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E50	Hire equipment will be from local companies to reduce road mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E51	Retail, food & beverage will be from sustainable sources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
	<i>Exhibitions</i>		
E52	Material will be recycled and reused as much as possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E53	Hire equipment will be from local companies to reduce road mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E54	When hiring in exhibitions the mode of transport and distance travelled will be taken into consideration	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E55	Retail sold will be from sustainable sources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E56	Single use presentation materials such as foamboard will be avoided.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
	<i>Collections management</i>		
E57	A clean hand policy will be introduced to reduce amount of single use gloves	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E58	Nitrile gloves and acid free paper will be recycled when they can no longer be used	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E59	Climate control methods such as dehumidifiers will only be used when essential	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing

	<i>Marketing</i>		
E60	Digital marketing rather than paper will be used wherever possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E61	Local photographers, videographers and drone operators will be used for professional footage to reduce mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E62	All internal advertising screens, donation points etc will be switched off during closing hours	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
	<i>Learning</i>		
E63	Colouring sheets or trails will not be printed unless for a specific purpose or need	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E64	Materials for workshops will be sourced locally where possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
E65	The sustainability of materials used in formal and informal workshops/activities will be considered	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing

PRINCIPLE 2: REDUCE DEMAND FOR FOSSIL FUELS

Finding alternative sources of energy is vital to achieving our target. As the electricity grid becomes cleaner, we will need to be looking to switch from gas to electricity, where we can. We have already chosen a zero-carbon tariff for our electricity supply, but as prices continue to rise, we should reduce our reliance on grid electricity.

Staff transport does not form the greatest portion of the Council's carbon footprint, although transport is a significant portion of the Borough's emissions. It is still, therefore, an important area to address. Through actions in this sphere, we can influence behaviours beyond the organisational boundary. The Council's fleet needs to deliver a wide range of services, such as refuse collection to street cleaning, from buildings services to highway maintenance. Low emission version of some of these vehicles are still prohibitively expensive so we need to ensure that our transition plan is robust and forward looking.

Overall objective: Reduce reliance on fossil fuels to meet the Council's climate change ambitions

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
	Influencing bus services		
F01	DBC to assist with TVCA's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), which seeks to decarbonise the Tees Valley bus fleet. Reinforce Darlington voluntary agreement of switching off bus engines after 2 minutes in the town centre (if bus is not fitted with automatic cut off).	Transport Planning	Ongoing
	Staff travel		
F02	Include questions in staff survey to establish travel habits pre, during and post lockdown.	Transport Planning	Ongoing
F03	Include questions in staff survey regarding current and potential cycling incentives schemes.	Transport Planning	Ongoing

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
F04	Have a pool of low emission/hybrid/electric cars for staff to use for work related travel to try and encourage staff members to travel to and from work more sustainably.	Transport Planning	Ongoing
F05	Investigate setting up a car club for travel to, from and during work.	Transport Planning	Ongoing
Active travel			
F06	Following survey; support Active Travel Hub in Darlington, delivered by Sustrans through TVCA contract.	Transport Planning	Ongoing
F07	Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)	Transport Planning	Ongoing
Electric vehicles			
F08	Rollout of additional Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs)	Transport Planning	Ongoing
School safety			
F09	Implementation of a package of safety measures around schools including - 20mph zones / safe routes to school / waiting restrictions / schools streets / school crossing patrol service / pedestrian and cycle training	Transport Planning	Ongoing
Council fleet			
F10	Identify infrastructure needs for fleet transition.	Waste & Transport Services	Ongoing
F11	Identify sources of funding for fleet transition.	Waste & Transport Services	Ongoing
Influencing transport providers			
F12	Continue to encourage taxi drivers to switch to electric by offering reduced licence fee as part of taxi policy	Licensing	ongoing
New build			
F13	Incorporate district heating schemes into developments.	Development Management	Ongoing
Influencing travel modes			
F14	Sustainable travel options will be promoted to visitors	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
F15	Sustainable travel options will be promoted to schools	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing

PRINCIPLE 3: CONTRIBUTE TO A GREENER GRID

To reach net zero carbon we will need to increase the amount of energy generated from renewable sources. We will need to explore all forms of renewable energy to maximise the benefits for the Council and the Borough's residents and businesses.

Overall objective: An increase in renewable energy generation

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
G01	We adopt a presumption in favour of renewables and batteries across our whole estate, integrating these technologies as standard in all capital projects.	Capital Projects	Ongoing
G02	Our building design process takes a whole system approach to low carbon technologies, exploring all options for energy standards, such as Passivhaus standards.	Capital Projects	Ongoing
F13	Revisit heat network feasibility	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025

PRINCIPLE 4: SEQUESTER CARBON

A strong and healthy natural environment with a variety of habitats, will support our ability to be resilient to climate change and will act as to collect and store carbon from the atmosphere.

Where we can measure the carbon captured by environmental projects, we may be able to use them as a carbon offset. A carbon offset is a way to compensate for your emissions by funding an equivalent carbon dioxide saving elsewhere. We aim to reduce our emissions as far as possible so that any offsetting is only required for a very small proportion of our emissions. When considering offsetting projects, we want to secure the widest benefit for Darlington, so we will invest in local projects that also deliver wider social and environmental benefits.

Overall objective: A strong and healthy natural environment

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
S01	Explore opportunities for enhancing roadside verges and open space.	Countryside Services	ongoing
S02	Plant 20,000 new trees.	Countryside Services	March 2024
S03	Food waste collection - Implement food waste collection service	Waste & Transport Services	March 2026
S04	Council in joint project to develop a carbon neutral waste to energy plant	Waste & Transport Services	March 2028
S05	Develop plan for offsetting emissions, including how it would be funded.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025

GOVERNANCE

Governance measures exist to ensure that we deliver our objectives. We will ensure that governance procedures are updated to account for the changing policy landscape.

Overall objective: The Council's policies and procedures support its climate change ambitions

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
Go01	All cabinet reports, scrutiny reports, plans and policies will include a climate change impact assessment.	Democratic Services	March 2024

PROCUREMENT

Each year, we spend approximately £120 million in the private and voluntary sector. This spend presents a significant opportunity and responsibility to influence our supply chain. Through our procurement process, we can motivate beyond our corporate boundary.

Overall objective: We use our purchasing power and influence to deliver climate change benefits

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
P01	Work with procurement to reduce our supply chain emissions and influence supplier's climate change practices	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing
P02	Review the current criteria and encourage school transport drivers to switch off engines when stationary and move to electric vehicles.	Procurement	March 2024

FINANCING

We are working in a time of increasingly constrained budgets, but we must make sure that the resources to invest in the actions we need to take are available to us. We will need to investigate, and be prepared to invest in, all potential solutions and accept that the payback period may be longer than we are used to.

Overall objective: Resources are available to support the Council's climate change ambitions

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
Fi01	Lobby government for funding to be available, for example, the long-awaited UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and allocated on a fair basis.	Finance	Ongoing
Fi02	Investigate the practicality of issuing bonds.	Finance	March 2025
Fi03	Explore risk/scrutiny of using financing from specialist climate/carbon reduction schemes offering interest free loans (i.e. Salix Finance, etc.)	Finance	Ongoing
Fi04	Investigate a system to ring-fence (all or proportion of) savings achieved as a direct result of council climate change policies	Finance	March 2024

	which can be used to support further investment.		
Fi05	Use of CIL to fund transport & infrastructure linked to climate change objectives.	Finance	March 2025
Fi06	Explore opportunity to use existing resources & funding allocated for projects but with bolt-ons for meeting climate change objectives.	Finance	March 2024
Fi07	Explore introducing a climate change question at the selection stage of procurements	Procurement	March 2025
Fi08	Explore legal/statutory powers to add a climate levy to schemes/projects.	Legal	March 2025

ADAPTATION

The world's climate is changing. Even if all emissions ceased today, our climate would continue to change as a result of historic emissions and we need to be prepared. The 2015 Paris Agreement of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is a globally binding commitment to reduce emissions and keep the world's temperature rises below two degrees, and ideally below one and a half degrees. Even so, the world will experience significant impacts; increases in extreme weather, droughts, floods, sea level rise and biodiversity loss, and risks to vulnerable people and populations. As temperature rises continue these impacts will increase. Cutting carbon emissions remains the most cost-effective step that local authorities can take, but adaptation needs to be considered alongside mitigation to ensure that our systems and our services are resilient. We also need to ensure that residents and businesses understand the risks and what they can do about them.

In 2019 Association of Directors of Environment, Economy Planning and Transport (ADEPT) with the Local Adaptation Advisory Panel (LAAP) published guidance for local authorities on improving resilience to climate change. The actions listed here will ensure that the Council has achieved the guidance's 'initial adaptation level' across the entire organisation.

Overall objective: The Council, residents and businesses understand the risks of climate change and are working to improve their resilience

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale
A01	Monitor impact of climate change on rivers and potential water safety issues	Community Resilience	ongoing
A02	Maintain links with voluntary and community sectors to ensure continued service delivery with changing weather patterns	Adult Social Care	ongoing
A03	Adjust rotas if changing climate affects staff ability to safely work	Adult Social Care	ongoing
A04	Consider flexible hours for staff during extreme weather periods	Adult Social Care	ongoing

A05	Ensure staff recognise and deal with signs of heat exhaustion/heat stroke	Adult Social Care	ongoing
A06	Review ability to deal with increased numbers of vulnerable people through risk management.	Adult Social Care	ongoing
A07	Review contingency plans to ensure they take account of climate change	Adult Social Care	ongoing
A08	Identify and understand critical and local infrastructure.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A09	Embed climate change in local flood risk management strategies.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A10	Work with local resilience forums to collect and share data on resource impacts of severe weather events.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A11	Include possible health impacts from weather events and future climate risks in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A12	Use local data on population and health to consider social vulnerability to climate change impacts.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A13	Include adaptation in health and wellbeing plans.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	September 2024
A14	Assess the range of social care assets and key routes used by staff at risk of flooding.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A15	Support commissioners to embed consideration of future climate change into the commissioning processes of care providers.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	December 2024
A16	Assess flood risk of residents (particularly vulnerable adults and children) who have care provided at home.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2024
A17	Ensure biodiversity net-gain proposals in new development are screened to ensure they are suitable under future climate scenarios.	Ecologist	Ongoing
A18	Use green infrastructure to provide shading and cooling for buildings or to protect walking and cycling route.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer/Ecologist	Ongoing
A19	Undertake a local climate change risk assessment for most vulnerable services (eg education and social care).	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	December 2024
A20	Integrate adaptation measures in statutory plans, strategies and functions.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2026
A21	Map longer-term decisions and investments across service areas to determine opportunities to build in resilience.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2026
A22	Embed contractual requirements for climate resilience or adaptation into key contracts and services.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2026
A23	Engage with infrastructure providers to understand impact on local authority infrastructure assets and develop plans to reduce risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2026
A24	Work across infrastructure providers and agencies to understand interdependent risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A25	Investigate requirement of the BREEAM adaptation credit in new build and refurbishments.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025

A26	Implement local responses to the Heatwave Plan for England.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A27	Identify the most vulnerable groups to climate change risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2024
A28	Identify critical at-risk businesses and infrastructure.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A29	Review Adaptation Reporting Power reports of local organisations to understand key infrastructure issues.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A30	Engage key partners such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, neighbouring authorities and Tees Valley Nature Partnership to develop adaptation actions for natural capital.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A31	Use green infrastructure and other nature-based solutions to provide resilience.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2025
A32	Strategy and action plan formally reviewed every three years, with an ongoing watching brief.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	March 2026

INFLUENCING

The Council is directly responsible for around 2-5% of the Borough's emissions. However, we have the ability to influence much more widely, through our supply chain and by engaging with residents and businesses in Darlington. We will be using our own experiences to feed into wider engagement work and will ensure that everyone has the tools they need to take their own actions.

Overall objective: The Council, residents and businesses are working together to reduce the whole Borough's emissions.

I01	Form a climate change working group with young people	Youth Participation	March 2025
I02	Quarterly meetings with YPWG	Youth Participation	Ongoing
I03	Work with Climate Change team to develop appropriate tools for sharing with vulnerable customers	Adult Social Care	ongoing
I04	Continue to support and encourage staff to consider reducing carbon footprint e.g electric cars take up, walking, cycling, personal and professional responsibilities (energy efficiency etc)	Adult Social Care	ongoing
I05	Promote Good "carbon-neutral" practice to local businesses – supporting awareness raising, promoting smarter working and resource efficiency and encouraging better understanding of carbon footprints	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing
I06	Promoting sustainable inward investment	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing
I07	To hold quarterly events about sustainability, recycling, climate change etc. at both Libraries	Library Service	Ongoing
I08	To work with the sustainability and climate change lead officer to develop a school climate change conference.	Library Service	December 2024

I09	Customers will be encouraged to join in with actions both on and off site	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
I10	Visitors will be encouraged to take photographs of trails and activities or to download resources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing
I11	Participants will be encouraged to recycle materials they do not wish to take home	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing

COMMUNICATIONS

Overall objective: Information on actions planned and progress made is disseminated

C01	Internal communications plan delivered	Communications Team	Ongoing
C02	External communications plan delivered	Communications Team	Ongoing

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