

**CABINET
7 JANUARY 2025**

CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS

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

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

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Cabinet on progress towards the Council's net zero target.

Summary

2. As agreed in the Climate Emergency Declaration, this report is the six-month interim report. The emissions data we gather is available annually, so there is no update on current emissions.
3. A climate change seminar for the Council's members was held on 19 September 2024.
4. The Darlington Eco Fair was held in June 2024. More than 5,000 people passed through the marquee.
5. The Highway Asset Management team annual maintenance programme for 2023/24 demonstrated a total reduction of over 348 tonnes in CO2 emissions.
6. In December, the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer submitted our report to Defra as part of a trial project for local authorities to report to the Secretary of State under the Climate Change Act's Adaptation Reporting Power.
7. Councillor McEwan, Portfolio Holder for the climate change work, has met with all the Assistant Directors to receive feedback and progress on actions.
8. Following these meetings, we have reviewed some of the delivery dates of actions, to allow for resources (staff and financial) to be managed.
9. The Housing Service is bidding for Wave 3 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, through the Tees Valley Combined Authority. Should that bid be successful, Wave 3 will see a further 1600 of our homes below EPC C by 2028.
10. The Head of Environmental Services and Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer have worked together to commission a piece of work to calculate the carbon

sequestration potential of council land. We are the first local authority in the UK to do this work in this way. The report has been received and shows a positive result. However, it does not override the need to continue to decarbonise our buildings and service delivery.

Recommendation

11. It is recommended that Cabinet acknowledges the report.

Reasons

12. The recommendations are supported by the 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

Council Plan	<p>This report reflects the Council Plan Core Principle in Tackling Climate Change.</p> <p>In turn, actions that we take for climate change impact on our Council priorities. For example, as we improve our council stock, we improve the quality of life for our residents, leading to better health outcomes, which in turns means fewer days of school (or work), improved educational attainment and better work opportunities.</p>
Addressing inequalities	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
Tackling 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.
Efficient and effective use of resources	Our approach to reducing emissions will mean that resources are used more efficiently.
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.
S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no expected impact on Crime and Disorder in Darlington.
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 recommend a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	No.
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

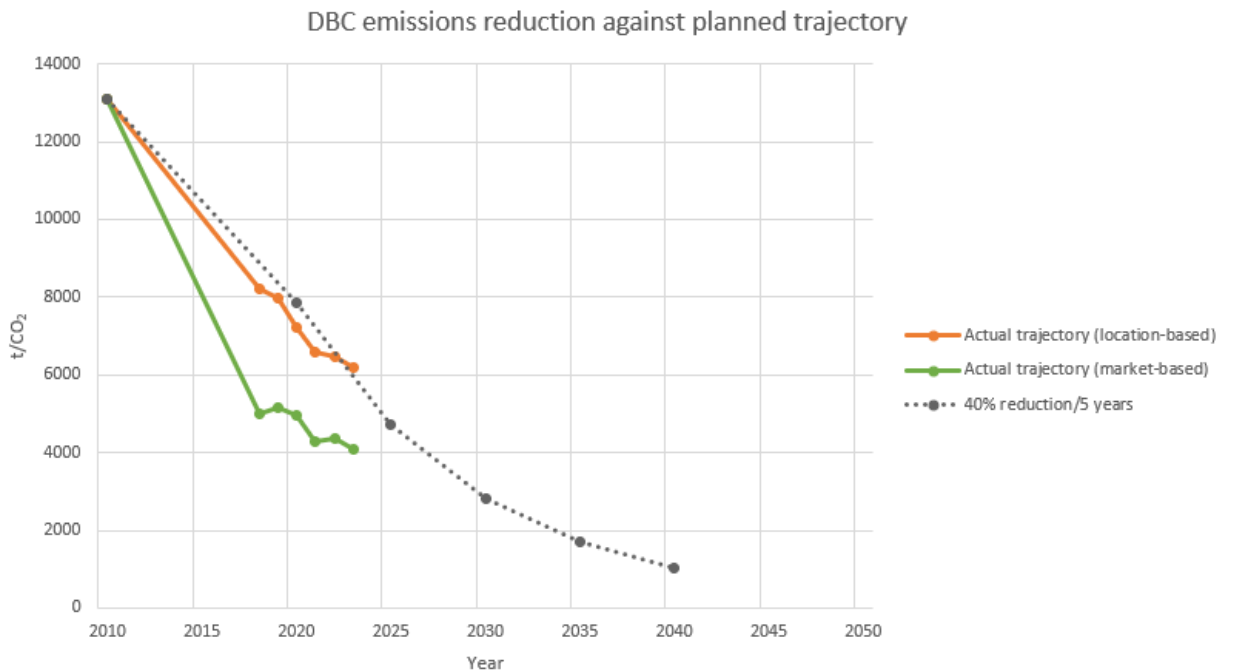
13. As agreed in the Climate Emergency Declaration, this report is the six-month interim report. The emissions data we gather is available annually, so there is no update on current emissions.
14. At the end of March 2024, our emissions were as follows:

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	t/CO ₂	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	418
Corporate Estate	7,564	5,928	5,907	5,014	4,864	4,709	4,579
Business Travel	2,050	1,509	1,482	1,426	1,270	1,328	1,192
Total estimated working from home emissions/tCO ₂ e during lockdown				125			
Total	13,101	8,196	7,985	7,080	6,592	6,449	6,190

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

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation	Generation
	kWh*	kWh	kWh	kWh	kWh	kWh
Total	1,008	7,846	8,597	9,015	9,028	12,720

16. Trajectory:



17. 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. 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.

18. A climate change seminar for the Council members was held on 19 September 2024. The seminar was attended by the Head of Local Energy from the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and Phil Brennan from the Association for Public Sector Excellence (APSE). Members also heard updates from three of the teams with the greatest impact on our carbon neutral target.

19. The Darlington Eco Fair was held in June 2024. More than 5,000 people passed through the marquee, participating in hands-on crafts, science demonstrations, and interactive theatre shows, while also exploring various eco-friendly products and services.

20. The Highway Asset Management team recently shared a report on total CO₂ reductions achieved through their annual maintenance programme. The report highlights a total reduction of over 348 tonnes in CO₂ emissions during the reporting year 2023-24 (23% more than the last reporting year 2022-23). The Highway Asset Management team's use of low carbon materials and adopting sustainable practices during their maintenance program has resulted in carbon savings as well as financial savings.
21. In December, the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer submitted our report to Defra as part of a trial project for local authorities to report to the Secretary of State under the Climate Change Act's Adaptation Reporting Power. We are awaiting any feedback from the Department and any report on whether these reports will become mandatory in future. If they do, we expect them to be on the same five-year cycle as the government's climate change risk assessments.

Climate change action plan

22. Councillor McEwan, Portfolio Holder for the climate change work, has met with all the Assistant Directors to receive feedback and progress on actions.
23. Following these meetings we have reviewed some of the delivery dates of actions, to allow for resources (staff and financial) to be managed. The mid-year status of projects is below:

Climate Action Points Status Q3 2024 (Total 101)



24. Highlights include that the Housing Service is currently delivering Wave 2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, due to be delivered by June 2025 and is bidding for Wave 3, through the Tees Valley Combined Authority. Should that bid be successful, Wave 3 will see a further 1600 of our homes below EPC C by 2028.
25. The Head of Environmental Services and Sustainability and Climate Change Lead Officer have worked together to commission a piece of work to calculate the carbon sequestration potential of council land. We are the first local authority in the UK to do this work in this way.

26. The report has been received and shows a positive result. There is still more work to be done to ensure that tree cover data is correct. Also, the data for soil sequestration needs to be redone in two years to get an accurate result. However, we cannot be complacent and must continue with our efforts to reduce carbon emissions as far as possible.

Communications

27. We continue to include a dedicated page in each issue of One Darlington.
28. Our social media messaging across Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn from April to November 2024 reached more than 400,000.

Financial Implications

29. Work continues to identify savings from projects across the Council for inclusion in the reserve fund set aside for investment in future climate projects.

Legal Implications

30. There are no legal implications, but with increasing public pressure to act on the threat of climate change, we must demonstrate how we will deliver on the motion commitments and protect the Council from future legal challenge.

HR Implications

31. The report does not affect the terms and conditions of any staff or change their duties.

Estates & Property Advice

32. The report does not affect the Council's land holdings or involve a lease, or license or any transfer or purchase of land.

Procurement Advice

33. The report does not involve any purchase over £100k.

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 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.