

**CABINET  
3 MARCH 2020**

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**CLIMATE CHANGE CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP – UPDATE**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Alan Marshall  
Economy Portfolio**

**Responsible Director - Ian Williams  
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the work of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group, established by Council and chaired by Councillor Gerald Lee to identify ways to reduce Carbon emissions and achieve a carbon neutral status for Darlington Borough Council.

**Summary**

2. At the meeting of Council on 18 July 2019, the Council passed a resolution (as amended) to declare a 'Climate Emergency'.
3. Since 18 July the following has taken place:-
  - (a) a Seminar in September 2018;
  - (b) the creation of a Cross Park Working Group;
  - (c) a Government bid submission for a District Heating System feasibility work;
  - (d) officers volunteering to be a Climate Change Champion;
  - (e) the appointment of the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer.

**Recommendation**

4. It is recommended that Cabinet note the update of the Climate Change Cross Party Working Group.

**Reason**

5. The recommendation is supported to enable Council to achieve a net carbon neutral status for Darlington Borough Council.

**Ian Williams  
Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services**

## Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no implications for crime and disorder in connection with this report.
Health and Well Being	Working towards net carbon emissions has a positive impact on health and well being for all.
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	The work of the Members working group will have a positive impact on carbon reduction and climate change.
Diversity	Equality and diversity is not relevant to the proposal in this report.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	No groups are affected by the proposals in this report
Budget and Policy Framework	This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Reduction in CO2 emissions and improvements in air quality support a place to live and thrive
Efficiency	This report will not deliver any efficiency savings

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

6. At the meeting of Council on 18 July 2019, the Council passed a resolution (as amended) to declare a 'Climate Emergency'.
7. To remind Members the following details the Motion that was passed:

*Council therefore resolves to:*

*Declare a 'Climate Emergency';*

- a) Sign up to a science-based carbon reduction target that is consistent with achieving the Paris Agreement of no more than 1.5°C global temperature increase;*
- b) Work with nurseries, schools and colleges to include age appropriate learning about climate change while calling for the national curriculum to be reformed to include "the ecological crisis as an educational priority";*
- c) Work to make Darlington Borough Council carbon neutral by 2050 and call on central government to provide funding and powers to make this possible;*

- d) Work with other organisations and governments within the UK and internationally to determine and implement best practice methods to limit Global Warming to less than 1.5°C;*
  - e) Work with partners to run a conversation with residents, Trade Unions, public sector organisations, businesses and the third sector on developing a plan with the actions and milestones required to reach this target;*
  - f) Set up a cross-party working group to develop an action plan and milestones to achieve carbon neutral status;*
  - g) Report the progress to Full Council every 6 months;*
8. The motion passed on 18 July 2019 marks a continuation of ongoing work to increase the energy efficiency of the Council and reduce its carbon footprint.
9. Actions already completed include:
- (a) Switching to a zero carbon electricity tariff;
  - (b) Installation of new LED streetlighting;
  - (c) LED lighting in office buildings;
  - (d) Nine electric vehicles have been included in the Council fleet.
10. An updated analysis is currently being carried out to establish the impact of these initiatives. This will be reported to Cabinet in a future paper.
11. However, notwithstanding the above initiatives, the Council is embarking upon a challenging journey to ensure it meets the objective of Darling Council being carbon neutral by 2050.
12. Since the Council Meeting of 18 July 2019, the following are the main areas of work undertaken.

### **Climate Change Seminar**

13. In September we held a climate change seminar which was well attended by Members and officers. Speakers included representatives from Government, Association for Public Service Excellence – Energy and the Tees Valley Combined Authority.

### **Cross Party Working Group**

14. In response to the motion a cross party reference group was set up under the chairmanship of Councillor Lee, other representatives include Councillors Curry, Howarth, Tait and Snedker, with substitutes nominated if required.
15. At the time of writing four meetings had been held (with a further one scheduled for Monday 17 February). Notes of the meetings are attached at **APPENDIX 1**.

16. It is early days for the group and much of the business has been fact finding. The group has had a presentation from Planning and Building Control Officers on how legislation and regulations can impact on house building specifications.
17. The Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services attended a meeting and provided an overview in respect of local authority housing in respect of funding and current building standards.
18. Councillor Snedker carried out a presentation on the benefits of a 20mph speed limit for the urban area.
19. The Council's Senior Arboricultural Officer attended a meeting to provide an update to Members in respect of tree coverage in the Borough and tree planting schemes.
20. Durham County Council's Low Carbon Economy Team Leader attended a meeting to explain Durham's approach to achieving its carbon target.

### **District Heating System**

21. A bid has been submitted to Government for grant funding to carry out a Techno-economic Feasibility Study. This follows an Energy Mapping and Masterplanning report which was fully funded by Government and identified potential for a District Heating System in the Borough.
22. The Techno-economic feasibility work covers technical and economic activities in relation to, heat demand, heat supply, heat and power distribution, cash flow modelling, risk, analysis of project economics with a strong focus on energy balance and cost economics, and finally an assessment of the 'do nothing' case.
23. If the results are positive the next stage would be detailed project development.

### **Climate Change Champions**

24. Several staff have volunteered to be Climate Change Champions for their work areas. The detailed role of these champions will be discussed at the next Working Group and a meeting will be held with the champions to explain/discuss the roles.

### **Climate Change Officer**

25. A sustainability and climate change lead officer has now started in post and will support the role of the group in preparing an Action Plan to meet the Council's climate change ambitions.
26. The Officer is making contact with relevant teams across the Council, gathering information and understanding what data is available.
27. A baseline for 2010/11 will allow us to report what good work has been undertaken since the original carbon reduction plan was produced, with ongoing annual reporting monitoring progress going forward.
28. We anticipate that a draft plan will be ready for Cabinet to agree during the new financial year.