Climate Change Report 2023/24

Introduction

In 2019, Darlington Borough Council passed a declaration committing the Council to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. In July 2023, Council reaffirmed the climate emergency and brought forward the date for the Council to be carbon neutral to 2040. This is in recognition of the need for urgency in tackling climate change.

As a result, we have recalculated our trajectory and are now working towards a 40% reduction in emissions, every five years.

A strategy and action plan are available on our website and regular reporting to Cabinet and Full Council is ongoing. An annual report is produced each summer to highlight our progress toward our target. Please see Appendix A below for a summary of progress on all actions.

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	t/CO ₂						
Streetlighting	3,487	759	596	515	458	412	418
Corporate Estate	7,564	5 <i>,</i> 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

Emissions for 2023/24

By the end of 2023/24, our carbon footprint is 6,190 tonnes CO2e (location based). Taking account of our zero-carbon electricity tariff (market based), our carbon footprint is 4,059 tonnes CO2e. Location-based emissions use average grid emissions and reflect the energy that we are using. Market-based emissions account for the zero-carbon tariff that we have chosen.



Solar Power Generation

We have increased the number of solar panels on the roof of the Town Hall and generation has increased significantly as a result.



Borough wide emissions

We monitor Borough emissions using government published figures. These are two-years in arrears, so the latest data relates to 2022. These show that Darlington's per capita emissions are on a par with both the north-east England.



Highlights

- Our carbon emissions for 2023/24 have gone down over half compared to our baseline emissions of 2010/11. This reflects increasing energy efficiency in our buildings and reduced emissions from our fleet vehicles.
- An ongoing trial using hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) in our refuse vehicles has reduced vehicle emissions by around 10%.
- We are taking part in a government-led trial, reporting on our climate change adaptation actions. This involves undertaking a risk assessment of all services, against the risks identified by the Climate Change Committee.
- The Housing Services Climate Change Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 9 January 2024.
- Around £3.3m of funding has been received across various schemes for retrofit projects on council homes. Funding was matched with approximately £2.4m from the Housing Revenue Account. Further funding has been obtained through the Tees Valley Combined Authority to work with private landlords. Declarations have been provided for the government scheme ECO4FLEX for 178 properties for ECO4FLEX.
- A seed swap station was successfully set up in the Crown Street Library, enabling residents to pick up seeds for free.
- The Business Growth Team is working with the Tees Valley Combined Authority to deliver funding and advice to businesses wishing to be more sustainable.

Next steps

- A trial for the installation of solar mats on our larger vehicles is about to start. This trial uses solar power for ancillary equipment such as the tail lift reducing fuel consumption and carbon emissions.
- A trial to add an energy saving additive to our heating system is expected to take place by this end of the 2024. This additive improves energy efficiency and performance of heating systems, which leads to lower carbon emissions.
- The use of pool covers as an energy saving project at the Dolphin Centre will start soon.
- Funding has also been secured and a contractor appointed to install solar panels at the Dolphin Centre.

The tables below show progress on actions to the end of 2024. Of the 109 actions reporting at the end of 2023/24, 91 are on track and 5 have been completed. The remainder are showing limited progress, for the most part due to capacity or resourcing issues or waiting for external assessments. It should also be noted that the action plan is an organic document and actions may need to be amended or removed due to changes in government policy or factors beyond our control.

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
E01	Continue to utilise sustainable road maintenance materials	Highway Asset Management	Ongoing	On track
E02	New build- Ensure that the prioritisation of carbon reduction is maintained throughout the design and build process.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	On track
E03	New build - Ensure new corporate buildings reflect and deliver the processes within the climate change strategy.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	On track
E04	New build - 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	On track
E05	New build - Require and analyse whole life costing during the building design process.	Capital Projects	Ongoing	Limited or no progress
E06	New build - Investigate the implementation of a set carbon intensity parameters for construction of new council buildings (e.g. KgCO2e/m2).	Capital Projects	Apr-24	Limited or no progress
E07	Global initiatives - Review how building fabric air tightness could be improved through sealing, draught stripping and closing off unused ventilation openings.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E08	Global initiatives - Consider introducing and improving loft insulation.	Corporate Landlord	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
E09	Global initiatives - Review hot water wastage.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E10	Global initiatives- Insulate all pipework, valves and fittings throughout.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E11	Global initiatives- Review opportunities for solar panels.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E12	Global initiatives- Review combined heat and power opportunity.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E13	Global initiatives- Review solar water heating.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On Track
E14	Global initiatives- Introduce draught lobbies to reduce unwanted air infiltration.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track

PRINCIPLE 1: REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
E15	Global initiatives- Review building lighting strategies with particular focus to luminaires, control systems and daylighting provision. Install occupancy sensor controls to lighting in all rooms, wc's and corridors. Setting time delays to minimum practical levels.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E16	Corporate Buildings - 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	Dec-24	Not due to be reported
E17	Town Hall - Consider introducing or improving wall insulation (internal lining) to solid single skin structures.	Corporate Landlord	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
E18	Town Hall- Consider replacing or improving glazing (single glazed integral windows).	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E19	Town Hall- Consider introducing or improving insulation of flat roofs.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E20	Dolphin Centre - Consider variable speed drives for fans, pumps, and compressors.	Corporate Landlord	Mar-24	Progress made but likely to miss target
E21	Dolphin Centre - Review BMS installation and submetering monitoring.	Corporate Landlord	Mar-24	Progress made but likely to miss target
E22	Dolphin Centre - Consider fitting secondary glazing and under glaze sky lights where appropriate.	Corporate Landlord	Ongoing	On track
E23	Dolphin Centre - Consider how the pool complex air tightness can be improved and sealed better.	Corporate Landlord	Mar-24	Progress made but likely to miss target
E24	Dolphin Centre - 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	On track
E25	Dolphin Centre - Consider replacing any legacy sodium-based lighting with LED.	Corporate Landlord	Mar-24	Progress made but likely to miss target
E27	Deliver on Housing Services Climate Change Strategy	Housing Services	Ongoing	On track
E28	Dolphin Centre- Review use of pool covers.	Leisure Services	Mar-24	On Track
E29	Dolphin centre - investigate solar panel options	Leisure Services	Sep-24	On Track
E30	Dolphin centre - New Windows for front of house - plans to be in place Sept 2024	Leisure Services	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
E31	Dolphin Centre - triple glazed windows around pool hall	Leisure Services	Jan-24	On Track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
E32	M&E phase 3 works	Leisure Services	Jul-25	Not due to be reported
E33	Hippodrome - Introduce expandable entrance collars to connect the rear of the delivery vehicles to loading areas to reduce heat losses.	Corporate Landlord	Mar-24	Progress made but likely to miss target
E33	New CHP plant	Leisure Services	Jul-25	Not due to be reported
E34	Variable speed fan for AHU1	Leisure Services	Jul-25	Not due to be reported
E35	Enforce private rented and non-domestic Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards regulations.	Private Sector Housing	ongoing	On track
E36	Develop pipeline of projects ready for future funding streams	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Dec-24	Not due to be reported
E37	Developing the net zero business sector.	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing	On track
E38	Planning- Include a request in planning applications for expected carbon impact of developments.	Development Management	Sep-24	Not due to be reported
E39	Council maintained school premises - ensure all maintenance, upgrades and refurbishment consider environmentally friendly options and adhere to the new guidance	Skills and Employability	Ongoing	On track
E40	Reduce paper across both site, digitalising historical information and promoting this with staff.	Library Service	Ongoing	On track
E41	To evaluate how efficient the heating system is at Cockerton and explore the option of more efficient fans.	Library Service	Sep-24	On track
E42	Food & beverage will be locally sourced where possible.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E43	No single use plastic will be used. Food and drink packaging will be from sustainable materials.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E44	Leftover packaged food will be offered to the local food bank	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E45	Left over fresh food will be offered to the Too Good to Go scheme	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E46	Waste packaging to landfill will be reduced through recycling & composting	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E47	Where possible retail stock will be locally sourced	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E48	Toys & other items sold will not be made from plastic unless it has been recycled first	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
E49	Events will recycle and reuse material as much as possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E50	Hire equipment will be from local companies to reduce road mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E51	Event retail, food & beverage will be from sustainable sources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E52	Exhibitions will recycle and reuse material as much as possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E53	Hire equipment will be from local companies to reduce road mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E54	When hiring in exhibitions the mode of transport and distance travelled will be taken into consideration	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E55	Retail sold will be from sustainable sources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E56	Single use presentation materials such as foamboard will be avoided.	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E57	For collections management, a clean hand policy will be introduced to reduce amount of single use gloves	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E58	Nitrile gloves and acid free paper will be recycled when they can no longer be used	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E59	Climate control methods such as dehumidifiers will only be used when essential	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E60	Digital marketing rather than paper will be used wherever possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E61	Local photographers, videographers and drone operators will be used for professional footage to reduce mileage	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E62	All internal advertising screens, donation points etc will be switched off during closing hours	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E63	Colouring sheets or trails will not be printed unless for a specific purpose or need	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E64	Materials for workshops will be sourced locally where possible	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E65	The sustainability of materials used in formal and informal workshops/activities will be considered	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
E66	Delivery of the Social Housing Decarbonisation (wave 2) project by March 2025	Housing Services	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
E67	All Council Homes to achieve EPC band C by 2030	Housing Services	Apr-25	Not due to be reported

PRINCIPLE 2: REDUCE DEMAND FOR FOSSIL FUELS

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
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	On track
F02	Staff travel- Include questions in staff survey to establish travel habits pre, during and post lockdown.	Transport Planning	Ongoing	Limited or no progress
F03	Staff travel- Include questions in staff survey regarding current and potential cycling incentives schemes.	Transport Planning	Ongoing	Limited or no progress
F04	Staff travel- 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	Limited or no progress
F05	Staff travel- Investigate setting up a car club for travel to, from and during work.	Transport Planning	Ongoing	Limited or no progress
F06	Staff travel - Following survey; support Active Travel Hub in Darlington, delivered by Sustrans through TVCA contract.	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
F07	Active Travel - Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
F08	Rollout of additional Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs)	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
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	On track
F10	Council fleet- Identify infrastructure needs for fleet transition.	Waste & Transport Services	Ongoing	On Track
F11	Council fleet- Identify sources of funding for fleet transition.	Waste & Transport Services	Ongoing	On Track
F12	Continue to encourage taxi drivers to switch to electric by offering reduced licence fee as part of taxi policy	Licensing	ongoing	On Track
F14	New build- Incorporate low carbon heating system considerations into developments.	Development Management	Ongoing	On track
F15	Sustainable travel options will be promoted to visitors	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
F16	Sustainable travel options will be promoted to schools	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track

PRINCIPLE 3: CONTRIBUTE TO A GREENER GRID

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
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	On track
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	On track
G03	Public Transport - CRSTS infrastructure schemes	Transport Planning	Ongoing	On track
G03	Revisit heat network feasibility	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported

PRINCIPLE 4: SEQUESTER CARBON

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
S01	Explore opportunities for enhancing roadside verges and open space.	Countryside Services	ongoing	On Track
S02	Plant 20,000 new trees.	Countryside Services	Mar-24	Completed
S03	Food waste collection - Implement food waste collection service	Waste & Transport Services	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
S04	Council in joint project to develop a carbon neutral waste to energy plant	Waste & Transport Services	Mar-28	Not due to be reported
S05	Develop plan for offsetting emissions, including how it would be funded.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported

GOVERNANCE

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
Go01	All cabinet reports, scrutiny reports, plans and policies will include a climate change impact assessment.	Democratic Services	Mar-24	Limited Progress

PROCUREMENT

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
P01	Work with procurement to reduce our supply chain emissions and influence suppliers' climate change practices	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Dec-24	Not due to be reported

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
P02	Review the current criteria and encourage school transport drivers to switch off engines when stationary and move to electric vehicles.	Procurement	Ongoing	On track

FINANCING

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
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	On track
Fi02	Investigate the practicality of issuing bonds.	Finance	Dec-24	
Fi03	Explore risk/scrutiny of using financing from specialist climate/carbon reduction schemes offering interest free loans (i.e. Salix Finance, etc.)	Finance	Ongoing	On track
FiO4	Investigate a system to ring-fence (all or proportion of) savings achieved as a direct result of council climate change policies which can be used to support further investment.	Finance	Mar-24	Completed
Fi05	Use of S106 to fund transport & infrastructure linked to climate change objectives.	Finance	Dec-24	Not due to be reported
Fi07	Explore legal and practicality of building in environmental goals into relevant procurement and if not achieved supplier to pay a climate rebate which can be retained to fund future climate change actions.	Procurement	Mar-30	Not due to be reported
Fi07	Explore legal/statutory powers to add a climate levy to schemes/projects.	Legal	Mar-30	Not due to be reported

ADAPTATION

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
A01	Monitor impact of climate change on rivers and potential water safety issues	Community Resilience	ongoing	On Track
A02	Maintain links with voluntary and community sectors to ensure continued service delivery with changing weather patterns	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
A03	Adjust rotas if changing climate affects staff ability to safely work	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
A04	Consider flexible hours for staff during extreme weather periods	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
A05	Ensure staff recognise and deal with signs of heat exhaustion/heat stroke	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
A06	Review ability to deal with increased numbers of vulnerable people through risk management.	Adult Social Care	ongoing	Completed
A07	Review contingency plans to ensure they take account of climate change	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
A08	Identify and understand critical and local infrastructure.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A09	Embed climate change in local flood risk management strategies.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A10	Work with local resilience forums to collect and share data on resource impacts of severe weather events.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A11	Include possible health impacts from weather events and future climate risks in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A12	Use local data on population and health to consider social vulnerability to climate change impacts.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A13	Include adaptation in health and wellbeing plans.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-24	Completed
A14	Assess the range of social care assets and key routes used by staff at risk of flooding.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A15	Support commissioners to embed consideration of future climate change into the commissioning processes of care providers.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Dec-24	Not due to be reported
A16	Assess flood risk of residents (particularly vulnerable adults and children) who have care provided at home.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-24	Completed
A17	Ensure biodiversity net-gain proposals in new development are screened to ensure they are suitable under future climate scenarios.	Ecologist	Ongoing	On track
A18	Use green infrastructure to providing shading and cooling for buildings or to protect walking and cycling routes.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer/Ecologist	Ongoing	On track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
A19	Undertake a local climate change risk assessment for most vulnerable services (eg education and social care).	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Dec-24	Not due to be reported
A20	Integrate adaptation measures in statutory plans, strategies and functions.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A21	Map longer-term decisions and investments across service areas to determine opportunities to build in resilience.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A22	Embed contractual requirements for climate resilience or adaptation into key contracts and services.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A23	Engage with infrastructure providers to understand impact on local authority infrastructure assets and develop plans to reduce risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A24	Work across infrastructure providers and agencies to understand interdependent risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A25	Investigate requirement of the BREEAM adaptation credit in new build and refurbishments.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A26	Implement local responses to the Heatwave Plan for England.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A27	Identify the most vulnerable groups to climate change risks.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Jun-24	Not due to be reported
A28	Identify critical at-risk businesses and infrastructure.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A29	Review Adaptation Reporting Power reports of local organisations to understand key infrastructure issues.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
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	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A31	Use green infrastructure and other nature- based solutions to provide resilience.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
A32	Strategy and action plan formally reviewed every three years, with an ongoing watching brief.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
A34	Use the ADEPT guidance to determine next steps needed to reach 'maturing adaptation' level.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
A35	Identify key contacts in other organisations and to understand shared priorities for climate resilience in key statutory areas.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A36	Collaborative working through local government networks and other key partners to increase efforts to embed adaptation.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A37	Promote sign up to the Environment Agency's flood warning service.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A38	Promote water, energy efficiency and flood resistance and resilience measures.	Sustainability & Climate Change Lead Officer	Ongoing	On track
A39	Raise awareness of relevant climate risks with local businesses	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing	On track
A40	Review local biodiversity action plans and species action plans to develop actions for particular species vulnerable to future climate	Ecologist	Ongoing	On track

INFLUENCING

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
101	Form a climate change working group with young people	Youth Participation	Mar-26	Not due to be reported
102	Use existing meetings with young people to look at climate change actions	Youth Participation	Mar-25	Not due to be reported
103	Work with Climate Change team to develop appropriate tools for sharing with vulnerable customers	Adult Social Care	ongoing	Progress made but likely to miss target
104	Continue to support and encourage staff to consider reducing carbon footprint e.g electric cars take up, walking, cycling, personal and professional responsibilites (energy efficiency etc)	Adult Social Care	ongoing	On track
105	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	On track
106	Promoting sustainable inward investment	Business Growth & Investment	Ongoing	On track

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
107	To hold quarterly events about sustainability, recycling, climate change etc. at both Libraries	Library Service	Ongoing	On track
108	To work with the sustainability and climate change lead officer to develop a school climate change conference.	Library Service	Dec-24	On track
109	Customers will be encouraged to join in with actions both on and off site	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
110	Visitors will be encouraged to take photographs of trails and activites or to download resources	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track
111	Participants will be encouraged to recycle materials they do not wish to take home	Hopetown Darlington	Ongoing	On track

COMMUNICATIONS

Ref	Actions	Owner	Timescale	Status
C01	Internal communications plan delivered	Communications Team	Ongoing	On track
C02	External communications plan delivered	Communications Team	Ongoing	On track