

Climate Change Report 2021/22

Introduction

Since the Council's climate emergency declaration in July 2019, a climate change strategy and action plan have been approved by Cabinet. Regular reporting to Cabinet and Full Council via Cabinet Members is ongoing, but a report will be produced each year to highlight progress towards our target.

Emissions for 2020/21

	2010/11	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂	t/CO ₂
Streetlighting	3,487	759	596	515	458
Corporate Estate	7,564	5,928	5,907	5,014	4,864
Business Travel	2,050	1,509	1,482	1,426	1,270
Total	13,101	8,196	7,985	6,955	6,592

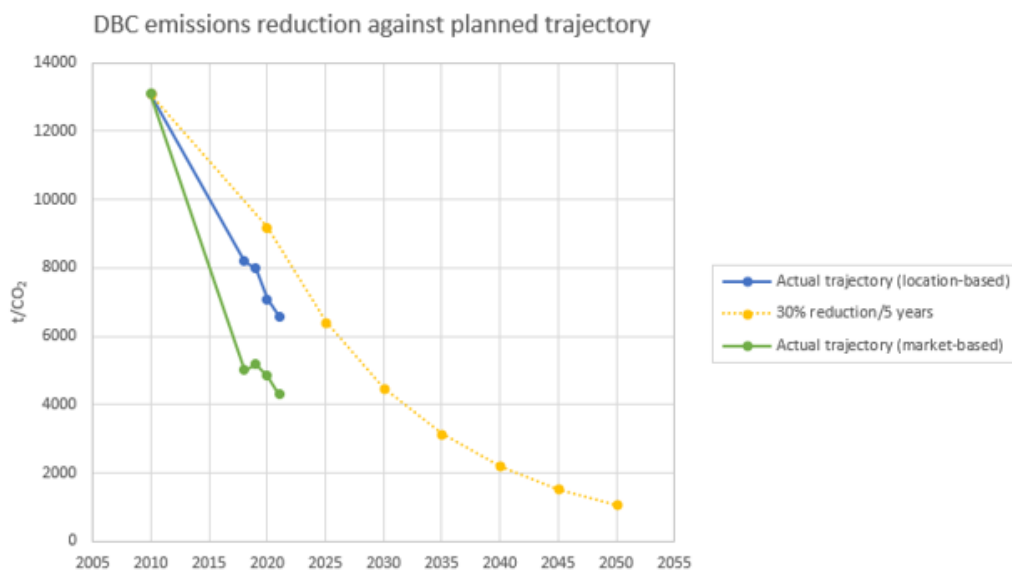
Total estimated working from home emissions/tCO₂e

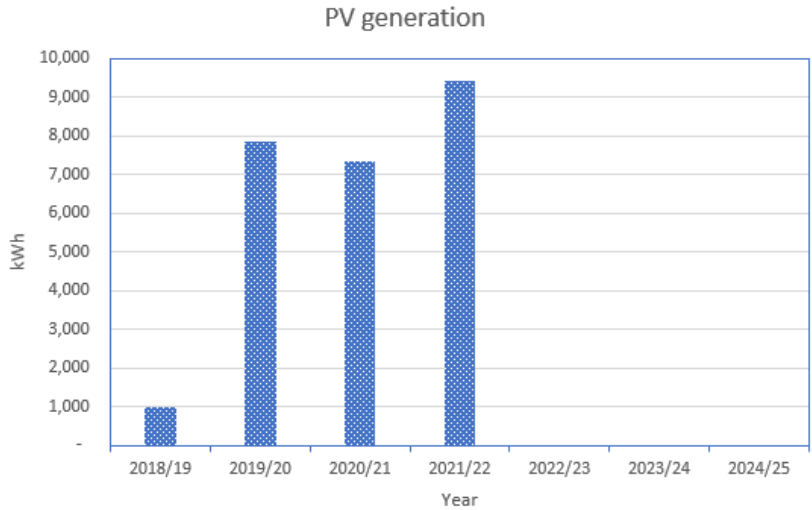
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By the end of 2021/22 our carbon footprint is 6,592 tonnes CO₂e (location based).

Taking account of our zero-carbon electricity tariff (market based), our carbon footprint is 4,300 tonnes CO₂e.

In October 2021, Cabinet approved a trajectory of 30% reduction in carbon emission every 5 years.





In 2021/22, 9,440 kWh of electricity was generated by our solar panels. The increase is, in part, due to the additional capacity that has been added to the Town Hall roof. Generation can never be guaranteed as it is so weather dependent.

Homeworking emissions

The first lockdown in March 2020 saw most staff working from home. For 2020/21 we were able to make an estimate of emissions from home working. During the past year, more people have returned to the office, and as we move to blended working, the calculation for home working emissions becomes much more difficult, so we have chosen not to include it this year.

Highlights

During the year, a Climate Change Officer was appointed, doubling the capacity of the team.

A set of milestones has been developed that will enable us to report on the actions in our action plan more clearly. We are still working on the best way to demonstrate progress and will be working with our Performance Team to take this forward.

Following successful grant applications, work has begun to improve both the corporate estate and on energy efficiency measures to almost 900 properties across Darlington.

We were asked by the Department Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to take part in their heat network zoning pilot project. Heat network zones were announced in the government’s Energy White Paper, Heat & Buildings Strategy and Net Zero Strategy. They are areas where heat networks are the lowest cost low carbon energy source for the end user. We are one of 28 pilots across the country and are helping to test the government’s approach.

We have developed an online zero waste map, for residents to easily see where they can, for example, get items repaired, clothing altered, refill household cleaning products, drop items off for recycling.

Engagement

We continue to include items in One Darlington and communicate via social media posts and news items.

A blog page has been added to the Sustainable Darlington page and we have been ensuring we add useful information to those pages.

We have now added a Young Sustainability Champions page, which will be written and led by our young people.

We are improving the way we engage with staff, through both our Climate Champions and a revamped intranet presence. This will complement and continue the learning that all staff have completed through our mandatory climate change training.

We continue to work with local, regional and national partners including our neighbouring authorities, the Tees Valley Combined Authority, the Tees Valley Nature Partnership, Tees University, Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

We are developing an information pack for parish councils so that they can give their own presentations on climate change and what can be done locally. This will be available on our website soon.

What comes next?

We are exploring how we can improve our data gathering, particularly around waste disposal and our supply chain. We have partnered with a consultant to help us identify where the carbon emissions sit within our supply chain.

We will review our Strategy this year, to take account of work being carried out across the Council. This will include the housing and climate change strategy that is currently in development.

We will continue to work collaboratively with partners, looking for all opportunities for exciting and innovative ways of meeting the challenges facing us.

We will step up our engagement with residents, businesses and schools to ensure that we are all equipped to play our part in tackling climate change.