

# Climate Emergency Update Report

**Regeneration and Local Services**



# Introduction



Durham County Council declared a Climate Emergency in Feb 2019 in response to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report, 'Global Warming of 1.5°C', Oct 2018. This report said that unless emergency action is taken global warming will likely reach 3°C with disastrous consequences.



As part of the declaration of a Climate Emergency, the council recognised that whilst lots of good work and progress on climate change has already been achieved, much more needs to be done.



The following targets and actions were agreed:  
Reduce the council's carbon emissions by 60% by 2030;  
Investigate further actions County Durham could pledge to make to become carbon neutral by 2050.



A climate emergency update report has been written highlighting a range of exciting measures to help achieve these targets. We now need to find out the views and ideas of our residents, community organisations, public and business sectors to inform a more detailed countywide action plan.

# What does the climate change update report include?

The full report summarised here is available on our website, it explores:



What the council needs to consider doing to achieve its targets.



What the county as a whole, working in partnership could do.



What measures may be necessary on a national level.

# What could the council consider doing?

## Heat

**Reduce our fossil fuel use for heating and the amount of heat that is lost from our buildings.**

- Carry out further energy efficiency refurbishments of council buildings.
- Replace boilers which burn oil with low carbon alternatives.
- Install more low carbon technologies that convert energy in the ground, water and air into useful heat.
- New buildings should aim to be very low or zero carbon and must consider the future phase out of fossil fuels in the design process.



# What could the council consider doing?

## Transport

**Reduce our need to travel, encourage sustainable travel options and reduce reliance on petrol and diesel vehicles.**

- Increase the use of electric vehicles by providing electric charging posts at council locations.
- Replace the council's vehicles such as cars, vans, bin lorries, street sweepers, Park and Ride buses with electric vehicles.
- Reduce staff travel through work practices such as flexible working and use of video conferencing etc.
- Changing our approach to delivering services to reduce our need to travel e.g. planting wildflowers to reduce how often we make trips to cut grass.
- Ensure our staff are informed about and encouraged to find better ways to travel to work and when at work, including walking, cycling, public transport, pool bikes, pool cars and car sharing.

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# What could the council consider doing?

## Electricity

**Minimise our demand and maximise renewable electricity generation.**

Moving away from fossil fuels to heat our buildings and power our vehicles will increase our electricity consumption which could be overcome by:

- Maximise the generation and storage of renewable electricity on council land and buildings
- Monitor energy use and educate staff to lower our use and demand.



# What could the council consider doing?

## Policies and practices

Review and update our policies and practices where necessary to ensure they embed a climate emergency ethos.



**What could County  
Durham as a whole  
consider doing?**



# What could County Durham as a whole consider doing?

- 1 Renewable Energy**  
Appropriately increase our use of County Durham's natural, renewable energy resources.
- 2 Buildings**  
Improve the energy efficiency of our buildings and increase our use of low carbon forms of heating.
- 3 Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure**  
Support low carbon travel practices and low carbon vehicles.
- 4 Land Use**  
Improve the potential of our land to capture carbon and lower the impact of the food we produce and eat.
- 5 Shipping**  
Minimise emissions from coastal activity.
- 6 Waste**  
Reduce levels of waste, increase re-use, recycling and composting.
- 7 Education and Awareness**  
We all need to be aware of what we can do to tackle climate change.

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- 1 Renewable Energy**

County Durham has a wealth of natural, renewable energy sources (e.g. wind, sunshine, water, and heat from the earth) which we could use to help reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.
- 2 Buildings**

Better insulation of our homes, businesses and community buildings is needed along with the replacement of coal, oil and gas heating with heat pumps. Countywide district heating schemes, which are more efficient as they supply heat to a group of buildings as opposed to individual properties, may also be developed further.
- 3 Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure**

We could help to make walking, cycling and public transport use part of County Durham's everyday travel culture through activities such as fast tracking the construction of Cycling Super Routes. We could help ensure the county is ready for the switch to electric vehicles by developing a countywide charging infrastructure network.
- 4 Land Use**

We could increase the rate of woodland planting, peatland restoration and wildflower meadow creation to help us capture and store the carbon that contributes to climate change. We could also support local and community food production.
- 5 Shipping**

Find ways to minimise the use of electricity and diesel associated with coastal activities off Durham's coast such as shipping, pleasure boating etc.
- 6 Waste**

In the event that resources become available the council could for example introduce a domestic food waste collection service. Communities can also play their part through for example expanding the network of community fridges which redistribute potential food waste across the county, supported via the Community Growing Group.
- 7 Education and Awareness**

We all need to work together to ensure that information about climate change, its impacts and what we can all do to help are communicated.

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**What the government  
could consider doing?**

## **Heed**

the advice contained within the Committee on Climate Change's Net Zero report.

## **Produce**

a coherent, stable policy with financial incentives for renewable energy, energy efficiency measures and the re-introduction of grants.

## **Require**

developers to build to zero carbon standards.

## **Address**

disparities in the funding, provisioning and quality of public transport across the country.

## **Prioritise**

food, land use, nature, biodiversity and climate adaptation in policy decision-making.

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**But...**

**what could individuals  
consider doing?**

### ● **Use less energy for heating**

Turn down the thermostat by 1°C or more, put on more clothes rather than turning up the heat, stop draughts and ensure your home is insulated.

### ● **Use less energy for heating water**

Turn down the temperature of hot water, don't leave hot water taps running, take a shower rather than a bath.

### ● **Lighting**

Turn lights off, use natural light where possible, use energy efficient LED lighting.

### ● **Food**

Try to eat less meat if possible, buy local and organic food where possible, only buy what you need and compost all suitable waste.

### ● **Washing and drying clothes**

Wait until there is a full load before using the washing machine, use a lower temperature to wash clothes, use the economy programme; air-dry clothes to cut down on tumble drying.

### ● **Electrical appliances/gadgets**

Purchase AAA-rated equipment, turn off all equipment when not in use, turn off the chargers for mobile phones and laptops when not in use.

### ● **Rubbish**

Reduce, reuse and recycle as much as possible.

### ● **Travel**

Use a bus, train or bike; walk or cycle part or all of the way where possible, combine activities to reduce car journeys; car share, reduce the number of flights you take and consider buying an electric car.

### ● **Renewable energy**

Consider the suitability of your home for the installation of renewable sources of energy e.g. solar panels, air source heat pumps etc could be considered.

### ● **Gardens**

Reduce the frequency of lawn mowing and create wild areas in your garden.

### ● **Education**

Educate others on the steps that can be taken.

# Where would you place yourself and your household right now?

## Where would you like to be in the future?

### **Top of the ladder**

Could you move on to working with other people to do more in your community?

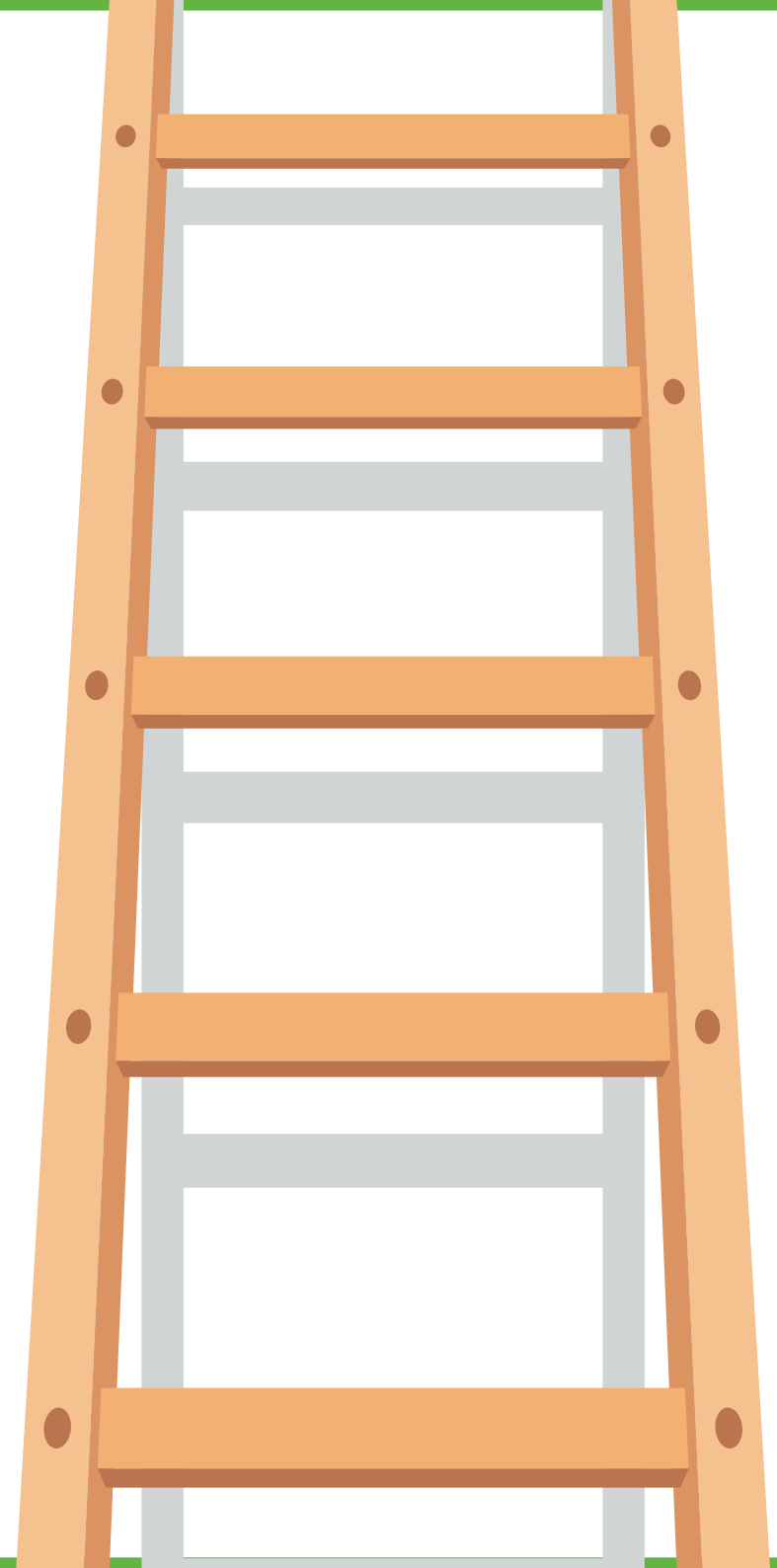
### **Middle of the ladder**

Becoming more proactive in your approach.  
Encouraging members of your household and friends.

### **Bottom of the ladder**

Taking the first step and starting to make a contribution.

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**and...**

**what could people  
working together  
consider doing?**



- **Community buildings**

Reduce energy use in community buildings.

- **Community travel**

Develop a community travel / car sharing scheme.

- **Neighbourhood Planning**

Identify land within your communities Neighbourhood Plans that could be suitable for renewable energy schemes and use higher levels of energy efficiency / renewable energy installation for new development in your area through your design policies.

- **Renewable energy**

Consider starting a community renewable energy scheme which will have benefits both to climate change and to the community in terms of financial payback.

- **Emergency response**

Have a community action plan and volunteer group in place to respond to future impacts of climate change such as flood incidents.

- **Share**

Share resources, learning and best practice in responding to the climate emergency at a community level.

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# Where would you place yourself and your group right now?

## Where would you like your group to be in the future?

### **Top of the ladder**

Could you move on to working with other community groups and increasing your reach?

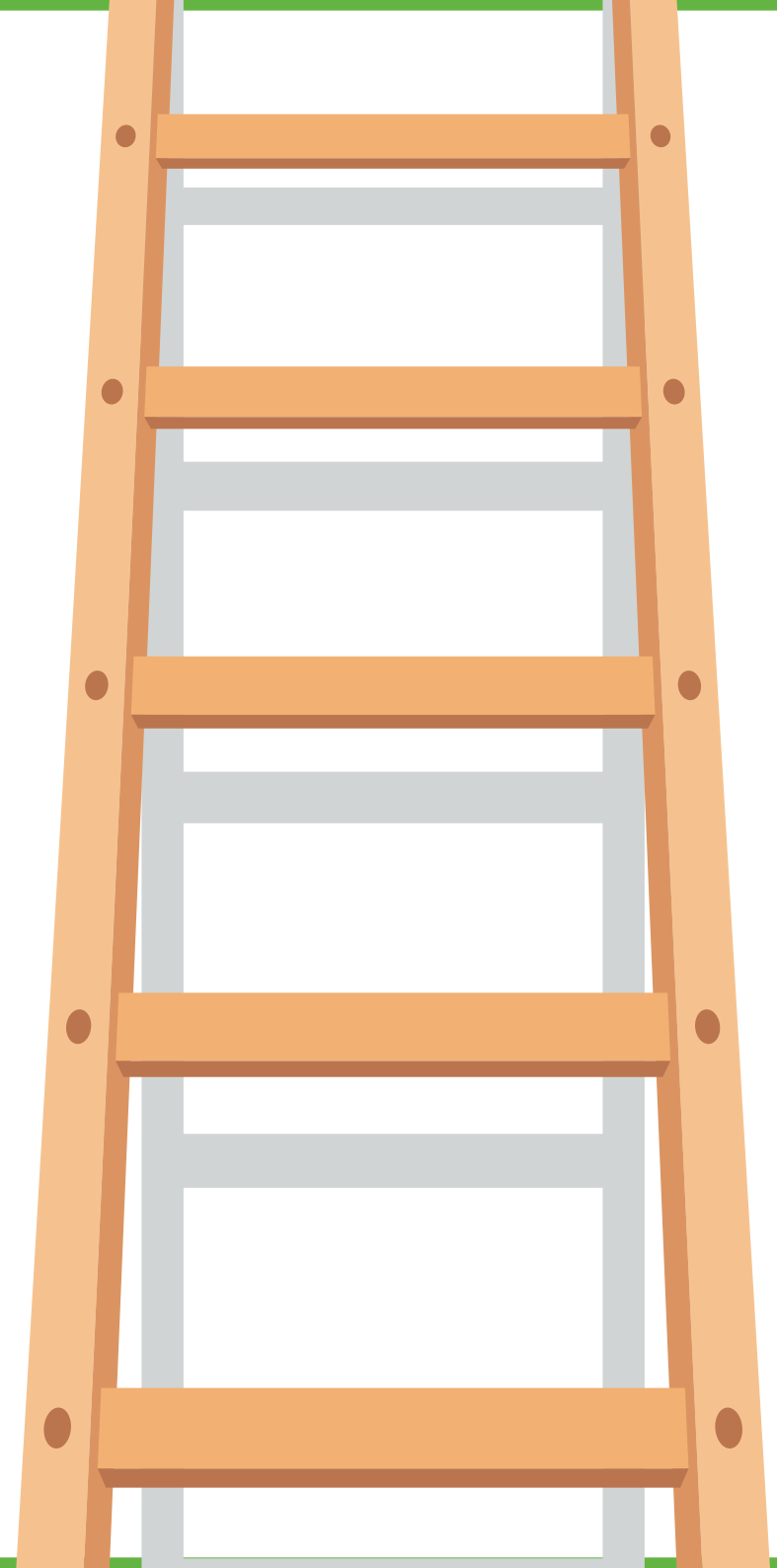
### **Middle of the ladder**

Growing your groups approach. Increasing your activities and numbers.

### **Bottom of the ladder**

Taking the first step and starting to make a contribution as a group.

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**What we need you to  
do right now...**

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# **We can all play our part in limiting climate change and adapting to its impacts whether we are:**

- **At a national Government level**
- **Collectively as County Durham**
- **Collectively as part of an organisation**
- **People coming together within communities**
- **Individuals and households**

One way that you can help right now is by taking part in this consultation.

**Complete the survey and tell us how we can all best address and respond to the climate emergency.**

# Next steps...

**Please complete our survey.**

**Thursday 19th September 2019 - Thursday 31st October 2019**

Your feedback will help us to inform the development of a more detailed climate emergency action plan. This action plan will also take the costs and climate benefits of actions into account.

Thank you for taking part!

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# and finally...

We are currently creating a vision for 2035 which would see County Durham as a place where:

- there are more and better jobs.
- people live long and independent lives.
- our communities are well connected and supportive of each other.

This vision will be built on an extensive public consultation after people were asked what they would like to see in a new vision for County Durham.

People told us that climate change was one of the most important issues facing society today and there was a lot that could be done locally to respond to this threat.

Climate change, the need to mitigate against its effects and a commitment to a low carbon future for Durham, we envisage will be a theme that underpins the vision through our ambitions such as:

**We will support a low carbon economy, encouraging the use of low carbon technologies and renewable energy sources.**

