



# Borough of Telford and Wrekin

## Audit Committee

Tuesday 24 January 2023

### Telford and Wrekin Council Becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free Update

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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Carolyn Healy - Cabinet Member: Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural and Historic Environment and Cultural Services
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Felicity Mercer - Director: Communities, Customer & Commercial Services
<b>Service Area:</b>	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services
<b>Report Author:</b>	Ian Wykes - Team Leader: Climate Change & Sustainability
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Not Key Decision
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report considered by:</b>	Cabinet - 22 September 2022 Environment Scrutiny - 22 November 2022

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#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

That the Audit Committee

- 1.1 Note and review the update on Telford and Wrekin Council Becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free

#### 2.0 Purpose of Report

To allow Audit Committee the opportunity to

- 2.1 Note and review the Council's progress on becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic free as set out in the report to Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2022 (See Appendix A)

### 3.0 Background

- 3.1 Tackling climate change is one of five priorities set out in the current Council Plan. In July 2019 the council declared a climate change emergency and made a commitment to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. Through its support of a borough partnership the council is also playing a full part in helping the wider borough achieve the same target.
- 3.2 The Council has also made a commitment to remove single-use plastics from the Council's operations and activities, replacing them with sustainable alternatives, by the end of 2023.
- 3.3 Previously reporting on these two areas had been undertaken separately. However, the report to Cabinet in September 2022 (Appendix A) provided an update on the progress being made to meet both targets and we will continue to report on both as one delivery plan moving forward.

### 4.0 Summary of main proposals

In summary the Cabinet report

- 4.1 Set out that from a baseline of 2018/19 the council achieved a reduction of 57% overall in CO2e emissions.
- 4.2 Highlighted a range of activities undertaken in 2021/22 to help achieve this. This included various initiatives such as the opening of Wellington Bus station the first off grid bust station nationally and Newport swimming pool now being heated by an air source heat pump. As well as well as practical delivery projects awareness raising has also been an important element of our work. For example, we held the first Climate Change Youth Summit with over a hundred year 9, 10 and 12 pupils form across our secondary schools helping to shape our climate change work going forward. We held plastic free July to raise awareness of how residents and staff could eliminate their use of single use plastic.
- 4.3 Included the following recommendations

To build on the progress made to date and to ensure that the Council's carbon mitigation work fully contributes to wider issues of extreme weather and fuel poverty the following areas of work are seen as a priority:

- **To keep the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan and Plastic Free Action Plan under constant review** and to work across the authority to identify new initiatives.
- **To continue to monitor progress on a quarterly basis** to ensure progress is being made and to identify challenges more quickly to ensure the successful delivery of projects

- **To work with service areas to develop adaptation plans** or to ensure that the impacts of climate change are fully reflected in business continuity plans
- To ensure that any actions to address climate change also continue to play a full part in helping Telford's residents, community groups and businesses **address the impact of unprecedented recent increase fuel prices and fuel poverty.**
- **Developing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** on climate change in support of the revised Local Plan.
- **Extend our range of advice and support to staff** – including a new Climate Change training module on Ollie and carbon literacy training to support service provision and operations.
- **Lobbying.** We cannot succeed alone and require more legislation and greater funding support from Government in order to push forward with this agenda in the way that is needed. Working together with other members of UK 100 will help us do this.

## 5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative option would be to do nothing and not deliver on the council's climate change commitments. However, this could lead to serious reputational risks for the council as a community leader.

Not addressing issues such as energy efficiency of buildings or development of renewable energy generation opportunities would also lead to significant cost implications through increase in fuel bills and loss of income. Doing nothing would also lead to a negative impact on the health and social / economic wellbeing of Telford and Wrekin businesses, communities, and residents.

## 6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 Committee Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk for the UK's third Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3), published in June 2021<sup>1</sup> sets out the priority climate change risks for the UK. In summary, risks in the report include:

- The impacts of climate change on the natural environment.
- An increase in the range, quantities and consequences of pests, pathogens and invasive species.
- The risk of climate change impacts, especially more frequent flooding and coastal erosion, causing damage to infrastructure services.
- A reduction in public water supplies due to increasing periods of water scarcity.
- The impact of extreme temperatures, high winds and lightning on the transport network.
- The impact of increasing high temperatures on people's health and wellbeing.
- Increased severity and frequency of flooding.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCRA-Evidence-Report-England-Summary-Final.pdf>

- Disruption to the delivery of health and social care services due to a greater frequency of extreme weather.
- Damage to cultural heritage assets as a result of temperature, precipitation, groundwater and landscape changes.
- Impacts internationally that may affect the UK, such as risks to food availability, safety and security, risks to international law and governance from climate change that will affect the UK, international trade routes, public health.

Therefore, there are significant risks as outlined should the Council fail to mitigate climate change and ensure that residents, businesses and the natural environment are able to adapt to the future climate.

### **7.0 Council Priorities**

7.1 The councils' work on climate change and sustainability is a direct response to the council's priority "Our natural environment is protected, and the Council has a leading role in addressing the climate emergency". However, as a cross cutting agenda it also has a significant contribution towards all other council priorities including:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy.
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live
- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

### **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 An approved allocation of £4m was included in the capital programme to support Climate Change initiatives; spend in previous years totalled £0.2m which leaves £3.8m available in 2022/23 and future years. This is being allocated to schemes in the Action Plan and appropriate finance support is being provided. Finance will also provide support in relation to any bids for external funding as required.

The Community Municipal Investment was launched in May 2022 and provides an opportunity for individuals to lend money to the Council which will be used to fund projects across Telford & Wrekin to help tackle the climate emergency. This is a new borrowing source for the Council (permitted in the approved Treasury Strategy), which is an alternative to loans from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and is specifically aimed to support the Council's Climate Change Agenda. The cost of borrowing to the Council, including fees, was comparable with PWLB rates at the time of entering the arrangement.

## **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

### **9.1 Legal**

The Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended) establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by 100% by 2050 when compared with the 1990 baseline. At a local level, Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to include in their local plans, policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority's area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change. In the management of its activities, provision of its services and performance of its functions, local councils are in a position to play a vital role in meeting the challenges posed by climate change. The Council has wide scope to decide how best to address these challenges.

Full legal support was provided for the implementation and launch of the Community Municipal Bonds scheme.

Implementation of the proposals in this report may give rise to specific legal issues upon which specific legal advice will be provided as necessary

### **9.2 HR**

This report does not raise any specific implications for HR.

## **10.0 Ward Implications**

10.1 This report has a borough wide impact

## **11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

11.1 Climate change will continue to have a significant impact on the health of Telford and Wrekin's residents as well as on their social and economic wellbeing. For example, July 2022 saw the highest temperatures on record. Heatwaves can lead to very serious health implications particularly for the most vulnerable<sup>2</sup> Many of the actions set out in the climate change plan have considerable co-benefits. The Climate Change Fund supports businesses and community groups with energy efficiency measures which should help address recent rises in fuel prices.

## **12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

12.1 The Council's Climate Change Action Plan takes account of the legal requirement to pay due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Key to this is consideration of people's specific needs based on their protected characteristics.

People who share protected characteristics of age, race, ethnicity and disability are often disproportionately affected by climate change and its consequences.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)30434-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30434-3/fulltext)

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This is true locally and internationally. Extreme weather events, for example heat waves most detrimentally affect older residents and those with pre-existing respiratory and cardiovascular conditions.

The success of our climate change activity relies on active participation by the whole community. Steps are taken to make sure that events are inclusive and the differing needs of individuals are considered so that they can access activities and contribute effectively.

### 13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

13.1 This report sets out the key areas as to how Telford and Wrekin Council is helping address climate change and environmental implications.

### 14.0 Background Papers

- 1 UK Climate Risk – Evidence for the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment – Summary for England: <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCRA-Evidence-Report-England-Summary-Final.pdf>

### 15.0 Appendices

- 1 [Telford and Wrekin Council Becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free Update – Cabinet Report 22 September 2022](#)

### 16.0 Report Sign Off

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Finance	04/01/23	05/01/23	DR/ PH
Legal	04/01/23	05/01/23	RP