



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 19 October 2023

Telford & Wrekin Becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free - Update Report

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Carolyn Healy - Cabinet Member: Leisure, Climate Action, Green Spaces & Heritage	
Lead Director:	Felicity Mercer - Director: Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	
Service Area:	Communities, Customer & Commercial Services	
Report Author:	Ian Wykes - Team Leader - Climate Change & Sustainability	
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 384960	Email: Ian.Wykes@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards	
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision	
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable	
Report considered by:	SMT – 19 September 2023 Business Briefing – 28 September 2023 Cabinet – 19 October 2023	

1. Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet

- 1.1 Notes the progress the Council has made over the last 12 months in its journey to become carbon neutral by 2030 and that it has now reduced its carbon emissions by **60% from a 2018/19 baseline**;
- 1.2 Approves the refreshed Corporate Action Plan, (Appendix A) which sets out how the Council will continue to work to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's

operations and activities and influence carbon reduction Borough-wide;

- 1.3 Notes the progress the Council is making to remove single use plastics corporately and as part of that supporting the Telford and Wrekin Plastic Free Task Force to achieve borough wide accreditation; and
- 1.4 Notes that this report is in relation to the Council's response to the Climate Emergency Declaration and will be referred to Full Council for information as part of the 'Matters Determined by the Cabinet' report.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To update Cabinet on progress being made to meet the Council's target of becoming Carbon Zero by 2030 and progress with removing single use plastics from Council operations.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2019 Telford and Wrekin Council declared a Climate Change Emergency and set out an ambitious target to ensure its activities and operations are carbon neutral by 2030. The Council 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.
- 3.2 As previously agreed this report includes progress on both carbon reduction and plastic free and both are included in a single revised action plan (see Appendix A).
- 3.3 Although there have been no recent legislative changes, there are two ongoing influencing factors that have had, and will continue to have, a bearing on the focus of the Council's climate change work going forward.
 - Firstly, the last 12 months has seen a continued increase in fuel prices which have contributed to the current cost of living crisis. This is one of the biggest challenges facing Telford and its residents and organisations. More households will be entering fuel poverty and we will also see a big impact on local community groups and businesses.
 - Secondly, the general trend of climatic extremes has continued into 2023 with the hottest average global temperatures ever recorded in July. The following graph known as the "Reading stripes" as it was produced by Reading University graphically shows how temperatures globally have increased over time based on the average global temperature between 1971 and 2000.

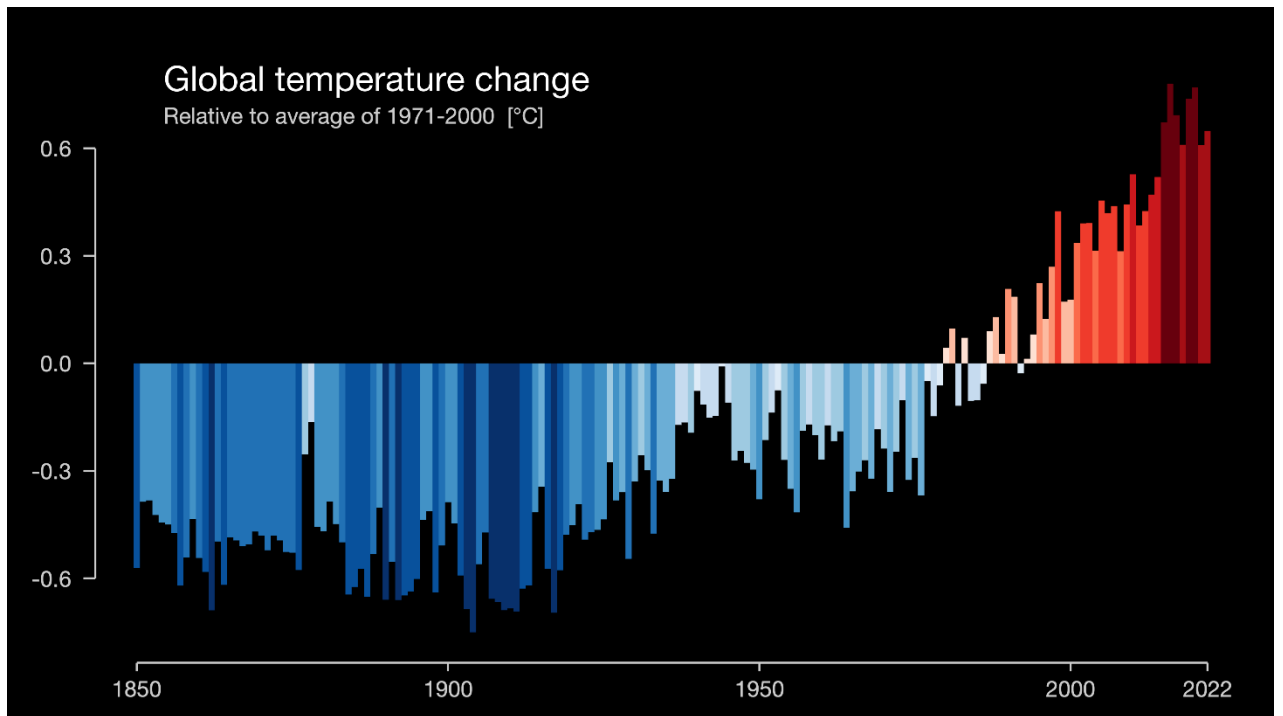
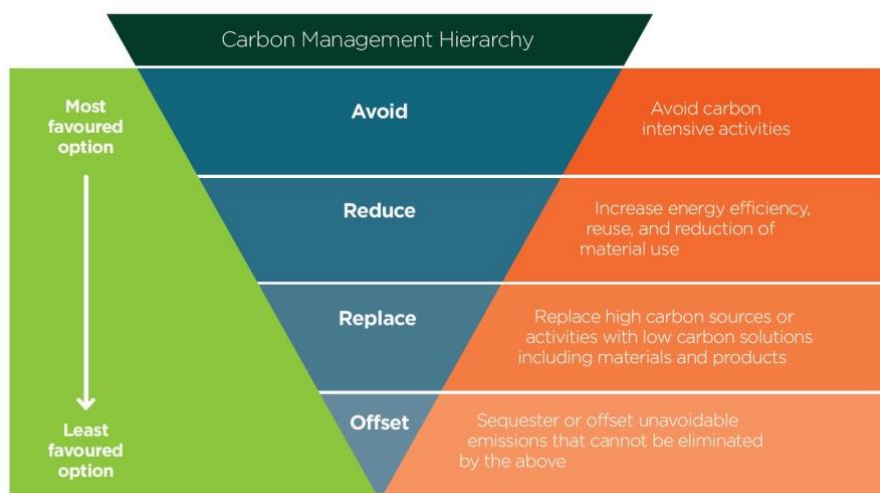


Figure 1 Reproduced under Creative Commons¹

3.4 The graphic below sets out the principles that the Council seeks to adhere to meet its sustainability and climate change ambitions. The Council’s approach to decarbonisation follows this carbon management hierarchy, where activities that avoid or reduce carbon are prioritised over activities that offset emissions from the atmosphere. A primary example of the Council adhering to this hierarchy is through the purchasing of 100% renewable energy for all Council buildings: therefore, avoiding emissions from carbon-intensive energy sources, such a coal-fired power station.



¹ <https://showyourstripes.info/>

4.0 Summary of main proposals

Carbon Neutral Action Plan:

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Decarbonisation Action Plan, 'Becoming Carbon Neutral', has been updated on a continuous basis. The most recent version of the Climate Change Action Plan 'Becoming Carbon Neutral' 2023-2024 can be found in Appendix A of this report.
- 4.2 The plan reflects the Councils' priorities for climate change under the new administration; to decarbonise the corporate estate, explore renewable energy feasibility, support communities in decarbonisation and build resilience against the impacts of climate change.
- 4.3 The action plan captures the interdisciplinary nature of climate change, and is divided into the following themes:
- Adaptation
 - Affordable Warmth
 - Biodiversity & Carbon Sequestration
 - Borough resources/Waste
 - Communications and Engagement
 - Corporate Catering
 - Corporate Estate
 - Performance and Monitoring
 - Highways and Transport
 - Investment in Business
 - Planning Policy
 - Plastic Free

Key headlines: Climate Change and Sustainability

- 4.4 Over the last 12 months, the Council has progressed a wide range of decarbonisation projects as illustrated by the following case studies which have been compiled by theme:

Corporate estate

- 4.5 The emissions produced to run Council buildings (heating, electricity-use etc) are a large contributor of the Council's annual greenhouse gas portfolio. As such, decarbonising the corporate estate remains a top priority for the Council.
- 4.6 Already, a range of energy efficiency and renewable energy projects across the corporate estate have been delivered/are in progress. This includes, but not limited to:

Completed projects:

- LED lighting has been installed at **Southwater One carpark**.
- Electric vehicle charging points, LED lighting and solar PV panels have also been installed at **Horsehay Golf Course**.
- LED lighting and solar PV panels has been installed in the industrial units at **Hortonwood 12** and **Newport Innovation Park PH2**
- LED lighting, Solar PV and upgrades to the thermal fabric is being carried out in both extensions of **Lawley and Ercall Wood Schools**.
- Replacement LED lighting has been installed at **Abraham Darby Leisure Centre**:

Projects in progress/to be started this year:

- **Oakengates Leisure Centre**: Installation of an air source heat pump, along with a thermal upgrade to the fitness suite and works carried out on the pool. This project is being funded in part by the climate change capital budget and external funding is being sought through the Salix Phase 3 Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund.
- **Wellington Leisure Centre**: A report is currently being commissioned to carry out an energy study for the building which will include thermal upgrades, air source heat pump technologies and decarbonisation measures. The study is due to be completed in October 2023, to be included in a Salix funding bid.

Housing

4.7 Significant work has been undertaken regarding energy efficiency and retrofit for local domestic housing:

- **10 off gas properties** (22 measures) have been retrofitted using funding from phase 1 of the 'Home Upgrade Grant' (HUG1).
- Following HUG1, the Council applied for the second round of HUG funding (HUG2) and has been awarded **£1,947000 to retrofit 100 off gas homes with the lowest EPC ratings**. We will be opening this funding opportunity up to private landlords who currently have compliant properties but need support to meet the higher 2025 requirements. Priority will be given to landlords providing properties at affordable rents.
- The 'Local Authority Delivery Scheme' (LAD) aims to raise the energy efficiency of low-income and low energy performance homes. In Telford, the LAD2 scheme has been used to retrofit 50 homes in Sutton Hill, with 77 energy efficiency measures, these included external wall insulation, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, double glazing and solar panels. This programme of works has improved the energy efficiency rating of properties

as well as reducing residents' heating bills by up to £640 a year and saving up to 600 kilograms of CO₂ emissions each year. Following the success of LAD2, the Council successfully applied for LAD3 funding and are currently delivering a number of measures to low energy performance / low-income homes.

- **£500,000 of the Climate Change Fund** has been allocated to future energy efficient/retrofit projects.
- A member of the housing team is working with the Retrofit Academy to upskill installers and energy advisors to local people and businesses.
- The Council has match funded with Marches Energy Agency to provide a full-time energy advice line for Telford residents. Since the beginning of TEA2, this service has:
 - Attended 21 advice events, reaching 938 householders.
 - 117 home visits delivered
 - 498 advice calls completed
 - 1227 households reached in total with energy advice (inc. phone, events, drop-in sessions/face-to-face appointments, email, etc.)
- The private sector housing team are commencing a project to target landlords letting properties below the minimum energy efficiency standards. Non-compliant landlords will be fined and made to improve the energy efficiency of the property.
- The Council's statement of intent was published in July 2022 to ensure a maximum number of eligible households can benefit from the **ECO4 Scheme**.
- The Council is exploring how to work with the **Great British Insulation Scheme** which will be available for all households, including the 'able to pay' households.

4.8 Significant work has been carried out by **NuPlace** (owned by the Council) regarding sustainable, energy efficient property development.

- All 46 plots in Southwater Way are now occupied and tenants are benefiting from solar P.V and EV charging points. Estimates suggest that solar panels fitted to an average 3-bedroom home at this development could save the household as much as £900 per year in energy bills (based on projected energy prices for 2022/23) and reduce the building's carbon footprint by more than 400kg of carbon emissions annually – the same amount of CO₂ that's emitted by driving 1,900 miles in a diesel car.
- Works at the Donnington site continue to be progressed. A study is ongoing with the contractor and 66 dwellings will receive solar panels and EV charging points as standard. Additionally, 18 dwellings will be built to meet **Future Home Standards** (including additional solar panel provision, air source heat pumps, battery storage and improvements to the building fabric/insulation).

- 4.9 Works at **Station Quarter** continue to be progressed. So far, all 189 dwellings to be delivered during phase 1 will achieve EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) “A” rating in terms of environmental impact and EPC “B” rating for energy efficiency.
- 4.10 In 2022/23 the Council provided **5,000 energy saving LED lightbulbs** to residents across the borough. They were distributed through 29 different community focused organisations, including Town and Parish Councils, as well as Telford Crisis Support and Wrekin Housing Trust. Distributing them this way ensured that those who needed the LED bulbs most to alleviate the cost-of-living crisis received them. The project was very well received by residents and as such, will be continued in winter 2023/24.

Transport

- 4.11 In May this year, the Council was awarded **£1,895,772** by **Active Travel England** to improve dedicated routes between Telford town centre and Oakengates. The government funded improvement scheme will see the creation of:
- New off-road cycle and walking routes
 - Improved highways crossing points
 - Enhanced wayfinding
 - And maintenance of the existing walking and cycling route from central Oakengates to Telford town centre to improve user experience and safety.



- 4.12 In addition to this funding, a further **£800,000** has been invested into the **Silkin Way** to continue to encourage more people to walk and cycle.
- 4.13 To support cycle activity in the community, the Bike Hub continues to operate, and a mobile bike hub has been purchased. This, along with the funding and allocated investment, shows a clear drive to increase the uptake of active travel users across the borough.

- 4.14 As well as active travel in March the Council was awarded £683,370 from the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV), On-Street Residential Chargepoint (ORCS) fund for the installation of 70 EV chargepoints across 21 Council car parks. The EV chargepoints will be installed over the next 12 to 18 months (2023/24). In addition, T&W has been awarded an indicative amount (£1,020,000) by OZEV from the Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) fund. We have joined the Midlands Connect Consortium, a partnership of 13 authorities to collaboratively work together to increase the number of EV chargepoints installed on-street. The next stage for the consortium is to submit a business case to OZEV. If successful we can expect to see the EV chargepoints installed on our streets from 2025 onwards.
- 4.15 Further steps have been taken to decarbonise the Council's fleet, with an additional six electric vehicles joining the Highways and Enforcement team. Transitioning to a low carbon fleet will not only improve the borough's emissions, but it will decrease the Council's scope 1 emissions.

Renewable energy generation

- 4.16 The Council continues to manage its own solar farm at Wheat Leasows. In 2022/23 the solar farm performed 18% better than predicted, generating 3,576 MWh of electricity, enough energy to power 1,233 homes per year (based on average annual household consumption of 2,900 kWh). Wheat Leasows is one of nine solar farms in the borough that have been consented. The council will continue to look at further renewable energy generation opportunities across the borough where appropriate.

Planning Policy

- 4.17 A Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted by Cabinet in July 2023. The guidance for developers SPD builds upon and complements the existing policies in the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan and national building regulations concerning climate change. It provides applicants with clear guidelines on how to incorporate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into their development proposals. The SPD also presents a range of opportunities and benefits that development can deliver, including improved community well-being, air quality, physical health, and access to locally grown produce.

Additionally, the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site (IBGWHS) SPD was also adopted in July 2023. The supplementary planning document aims to provide practical planning guidance to residents and businesses seeking to bring forward sustainable development within the world heritage site.

Climate change and sustainability will be a key consideration of the ongoing Local Plan Review.

Biodiversity

4.18 Biodiversity can support efforts to reduce the negative impacts of climate change. Protecting and enhancing Council-owned green spaces and nature reserves covers both climate adaptation and mitigation measures. Over the last 12 months, the Environment and Neighbourhood team have been very proactive. Some example activities include:

- Continuing to support local wildlife through the installation of **bat boxes, bug hotels and bird boxes.**
- Identifying grasslands, islands, and verges across the borough that the Council could **mow less for biodiversity gain** and carbon capture.
- De-silting three pools in the last 12 months, removing decades of accumulated sediment and leaf matter. The pools now hold deeper, cooler water that is better able to mitigate the warmer temperatures associated with climate change that can lead to algae blooms, depleted oxygen levels and fish kills. This is an example of a **climate adaptation** measure.

4.19 The development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in partnership with Shropshire Council is progressing. Work to map stakeholders and opportunities is ongoing. The construction of the LNRS document forms the next phase of the project.

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land. It makes sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development. From November 2023, Biodiversity Net Gain for development is becoming mandatory. Telford and Wrekin Council will therefore be responsible for approving/rejecting biodiversity net gain plans before a development can start.

4.20 Additionally, the Council was awarded a record **six Green Flags** for the borough's parks and green spaces.



- 4.21 The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations along with the Arbor Day Foundation have recognised Telford as a 'Tree City of the World'.

The Tree City of the World Programme celebrates towns and cities across the world that are committed to recognise trees as critical green infrastructure for its residents. Telford is one of 168 towns or cities across the world to receive this accolade this year.

To earn the status, Telford demonstrated its commitment by meeting programme standards: establish responsibility for the care of trees, set rules to govern the management of forests and trees, maintain an updated inventory or assessment of local tree resources, allocate resources for a tree management plan, and hold an annual celebration of trees to educate residents.



Community support

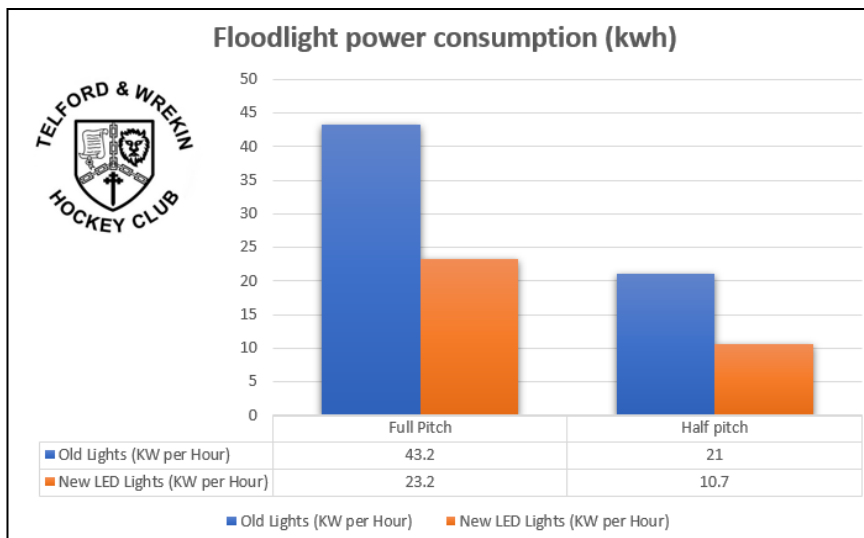
- 4.22 A second round of the Climate Change Fund was launched in June 2022. Through the fund, the Council wanted to encourage organisations in the borough to take action to reduce their carbon footprint and support a 'green recovery' at a local level.
- 4.23 28 successful applicants were awarded funding, totalling **£217,872.64**. Some of the successful applicants included:

- **Edmond Bowling Club:** Edmond Bowling Club were awarded funding to upgrade their existing floodlights to better, energy efficient lighting with lower running costs. It was estimated that the installation of the energy efficient lighting would reduce the wattage usage by two thirds whilst providing improved lighting for users.

- Communities Academies Trust:** The Climate Change Fund has contributed to the Trust's recent installation of solar PV installations at 4 of schools in Telford; Telford Park, Telford Langley, Telford Priory and Grange Park. The Solar PV installations combined will deliver over 330,00 kWh per annum, saving the trust £100k on its electricity bill and reducing the carbon footprint by 64 TCo2e. The Installations were completed in May and their monitoring has shown that on average, they are providing 40% of the total electrical requirement for these 4 schools. This far exceeds their initial expectations and is a promising start to meet the expected full-year projections. The below two images show the PV installations at Telford Park and Grange Park Schools.



- St. Georges Sports & Social Club:** The Climate Change Fund allowed St. Georges Sports & Social Club to replace their outdated and inefficient floodlighting. The new LEDs use 46% less energy per hour at 23.2 kW/h, as shown by the graph below. They are also brighter, being 397 LUX compared with the 125-241 LUX of the old lights. Energy efficiency has further been improved as they have installed smart controls so they can be turned on and off remotely, with the option of half pitch only lighting when needed.



- **Save Our Shropshire CIO:** Save Our Shropshire CIO received funding to deliver free carbon literacy training to residents across the borough to educate them on how they can reduce emissions and bills in their households. The course is designed to keep people engaged and provide them with clear solutions without overwhelming them with masses of information. So far, they have delivered 15 different training sessions across the borough, with additional venues and sessions also planned. In addition to the booked venues, they also attended other local events to promote the talks and the aims of TWC's Climate Change Fund grant funding. These included the 'Spring into St Georges Day' in the Town Park and 'Earth Day' in Telford Town Centre.



- **Shropshire Good Food Partnership (SGFP):** SGFP were awarded their Climate Change Fund grant to establish a presence in Telford & Wrekin with the recruitment and induction of two Coordinators to focus on "Food Economy" and "Grow Local" projects in Telford & Wrekin. They have developed connections in the borough with key stakeholders and Council teams, with two local Councillors invited to join their Advisory Group.

Ten local food business have joined the first Shropshire Good Food Trail, which runs from 24th June – 9th July and showcases local businesses that grow, make, sell, or serve good food.

As part of their "Grow Local" project they are:

- Mapping the community gardens and orchards in the area to share as an online resource.
- Grow Local Planning meeting held on April 20th, bringing together 10+ local growing community advocates from across the borough.

Telford & Wrekin Becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free - update report

- Visiting sites, discussing how to support them to get more people growing food locally and accessing fresh, seasonal produce. Producing case studies.
- Support groups to access new land e.g., Dawley Allotment committee.
- Public engagement through participation in events e.g., stall at Oakengates Coronation event and Transition Telford seed swap.
- Promotion of national Good to Grow day and what was going on locally e.g., Legomery Community Garden.
- Developing plan for mobile apple pressing kit and series of events for harvest season with apple pressing at different sites across the Borough to support as many groups as possible to boost their outreach.



SGFP have also started recruiting Food Business Climate Champions, making the following progress:

- Pride In Our High Street - enterprise questions have been sent to around 50 businesses whom they have supported with an introduction to SGFP.
- Cool Shropshire & Telford has sent out an introduction to the SGFP Coordinators via their newsletter.
- Case studies of 12 local enterprises are underway to document climate change related strategies and share good practice. The majority have been met, with interviews conducted and draft documents under preparation.

- **Park Lane Community Centre:** The community centre in Woodside is one grant beneficiary which was struggling with rising energy costs, leading to concerns about the future of the charity.

A representative from Park Lane Community Centre said:

“I’m absolutely thrilled we’re getting this money from the Council’s Climate Change Fund. We’re going to replace all our lighting with energy-efficient LEDs which we estimate will reduce our emissions by 1.76 tonnes CO₂e and save us more than £1k per year in fuel bills.



As a charity, we have been struggling with the cost of energy, and although we have managed to cope to date, we have serious concerns about viability going forwards. Our centre is used by hundreds of people on a daily and weekly basis attending the groups that take place here, from Knit & Knatter to Making Changes Youth Club.

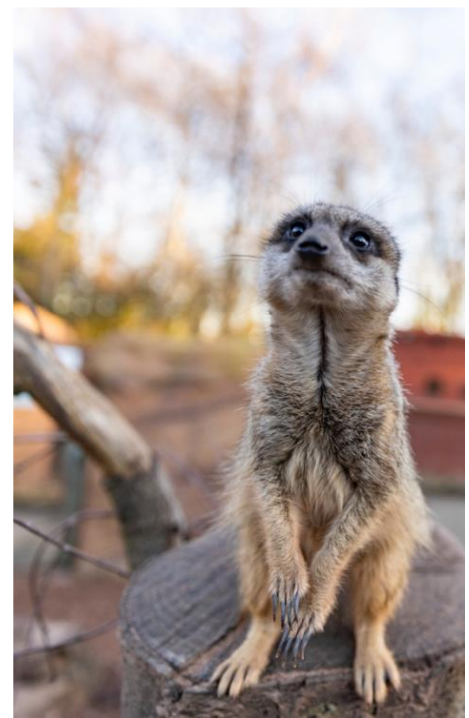
*Our community relies on our venue, so this funding is a game changer- **it means we won’t have to close our doors and all these hugely valuable activities can carry on.***

- **Telford Exotic Zoo:** was another local organisation to receive a grant. The zoo, which is home to nearly 60 species animals, ranging from crocodiles to cockroaches, otters, lemurs, and armadillos, plans to use the funding to become more energy efficient by installing solar panels.

The Zoo’s owner explained:

“We need to use electricity 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to replicate a range of specialised climates around the world so that we can ensure the health and wellbeing of our animals.

*“Reducing our energy consumption is simply not an option, so **we wanted to find a more sustainable solution**, both financially and ecologically. The Council’s grant is helping us begin on our path to switch to solar power and, ultimately, 100% self-generated energy.*



“We’ve estimated that the first phase of our plans will allow us to reduce our footprint by a massive eight tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum.

“It will also really help us with fuel bills, which have rocketed from £1000 a month to £5000, meaning we can keep our prices affordable, so that everyone can continue visiting us to meet the animals and learn about conservation.”

- 4.24 Telford & Wrekin Council launched the **West Midlands’ first Community Municipal Investment** (CMI) with Abundance Investment in May 2022. A total of £339,000 was raised to invest in projects in Telford. This included providing the funding for the second round of the Climate Change Fund and for providing two electric minibuses for the Arthog Outdoor Education Centre. At the time of the first scheduled repayment investors were asked if they wished to forgo their interest payment and as part of a donation waiver scheme. Money forgone was used to fund woodland bulb planting across various woodlands in the borough.



Catering services

- 4.25 Vegetarian meals continue to be offered by school catering services run by the Council, 'Let's Dine'. Vegan meals are also available on request. Offering low-carbon, meat-free alternatives at schools not only lowers the carbon footprint of the catering service but provides pupils with a wider choice of healthy meal options.



4.26 An excellent example of a grow-your-own school initiative (supported by the Council) is the community garden at Hollinswood Primary School. Here, the school encourages their pupils to learn about food and how it is grown (by running an in-house gardening club), and the produce grown is used by the school chef. We have been featured as one of 21 Councils (out of 200 assessed) leading on action regarding food and climate change in a report by charity Sustain “Every Mouthful Counts”.²



² <https://www.sustainweb.org/reports/every-mouthful-counts-2022/>

Communications and engagement

- 4.27 We are continuing to work with our **Climate Champions** volunteer group to increase community engagement to the climate crisis. The group was launched in 2020 and currently consists of **28 volunteers** (residents). The group have previously got involved in activities such as: behaviour change pilot schemes and nature-based activities. Future activities will include litter picking, carbon awareness training and communication and engagement activities.
- 4.28 The **Sustainable Telford and Wrekin** website continues to be a hub for Council-community communications regarding climate change. The platform has become a key recourse to the Council’s communication portfolio; it is used to share Council and community climate news, projects, and funding opportunities as well as providing knowledge and resources about climate change.

The figure below depicts the number of ‘hits’ (visits to the site) the website has received since its launch in 2020. Between 2021/22 and 2022/23 there has been a **134% increase in visits to the site**. This shows a positive trend in public engagement to the site. Over the next year, the website will continue to be updated to showcase current, exciting climate news and resources to residents interested in local climate action.

Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Sustainable TW ‘hits’	572	7,248	7,946	18,604

- 4.29 **Plastic Free July** – linking in with the national campaign we highlighted the environmental impacts of plastic pollution and encouraged local residents and organisations to be part of the solution by ‘stepping away from single-use’ and signing the plastic free pledge. We ran a series of communications on social media throughout the month including case studies from local organisations who signed up as plastic free and members of the Plastic Free Taskforce.

Partnership working

- 4.30 Although the primary focus of this report relates to the Councils’ own activities, it should also be noted that considerable progress has been made towards partnership working.
- 4.31 Since 2020, the Council has been the primary facilitator and secretariat of the **Borough Climate Change Partnership**. Previously, the partnership consisted of the board and six thematic sub-groups. This structure was instrumental in developing the borough climate action plan and in December 2022 it was proposed that the partnership undergo a restructure to move forward the objectives within the plan.

4.32 Four new sub-groups were established:

- Telford Sustainability and Energy Cluster (TSEC)
- Integrated Care System (ICS)
- Communities (combining the once separate 'Communities' and 'Town and Parish climate change working group' groups)
- Shropshire Good Food Partnership (SGFP)

4.33 To celebrate the partnership's new structure and opportunities, the Council will be hosting the first ever Climate Change Borough Partnership Conference in October 2023. This event will bring partnership members (and external partners) together to learn, network and discuss their role as a partnership member.

Business Support

4.34 **Marches Energy Grant:** In collaboration with Shropshire and Herefordshire Councils, the Council has been successful in a bid to the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership for £1.5million to provide capital funding towards the Marches Energy Grant (MEG). The Council is also committing £190k of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for 60 funded energy assessments which will act as a gateway to the grant funding. The scheme will offer free advice, energy assessments and grants for energy efficiency and renewable energy measures to SMEs from all sectors in Telford & Wrekin. The funding is also available to support community buildings. As well as the grant funding, the project will also run related networking and webinar events for SMEs and other organisations.

4.35 Invest Telford, the Council's business support team, is continuing to support local businesses in their mission to become more sustainable and navigate the impact of the energy crisis.

4.36 **Pride in Our High Street:** To date 71 eco grants with a total value of £101,167 have been offered to businesses to help support sustainability measures.

4.37 **Cool Shropshire and Telford:** (CST) In a joint initiative with Shropshire Council, the Council has provided funding to E4environment to develop an online platform and follow up support regarding energy efficiency and improvements to environmental performance. 48 businesses have registered, and additional funding was secured through BEIS to continue the project into 2023/24.

4.38 To complement the CST platform as part of the support offered in response to the Cost of Living Crisis, the Invest Telford business support team provided fully funded 121 specialist support. Companies were given dedicated time with environmental consultants so that identified actions could be put in place.

4.39 The Council has been working closely with major manufacturers in Telford to establish a **Telford Sustainability and Energy Cluster (TSEC)**. An inaugural meeting was hosted by Denso in May 2023. The cluster will help foster collaboration, drive sustainable practices and address challenges among Telford businesses that will create a positive environmental, social and economic impact.

“TSEC is an opportunity for us to connect to other businesses and for us to work together on common issues and solutions that will not only help us grow and thrive but will benefit Telford and the wider community.”

Chris Lindsay, DENSO Sustainability and Energy Manager.



- 4.40 The **Business Energy & Efficiency Programme** closed in June. 99 businesses benefited from an energy assessment and 41 of these received over £300k as a grant to help with efficiency savings.

Richard Harris, Aurora Sports Performance Managing Director, said:

“The £5,500 Business Energy Efficiency Programme funding was particularly useful. It enabled us to replace the old fluorescent lighting and panel heaters with new, modern equipment such as LED lights and heat pump systems.

With energy prices rising and set to continue for some time, this couldn't have come at a better time and will provide substantial savings in our running costs. We are also considering installing solar panels with battery storage, which can help any business reduce its costs.”

The Council is continuing to support local businesses in their mission to become more sustainable.

Borough Plastic Free Status Update

- 4.41 The Council is working collaboratively with a range of local organisations including schools, universities, businesses, community groups and Town and Parish

Councils to reduce the amount of single use plastics in the borough. Collectively Telford & Wrekin Plastic Free Taskforce are working to achieve plastic free community status for the borough by 2024 - which is accredited by Surfers Against Sewage

- 4.42 The Council plays a lead role in co-ordinating the Taskforce. This includes the creation of a part time post to help drive this agenda, as well as administering meetings throughout the year and organising awareness raising campaigns and events to help spread the word and get more people involved.
- 4.43 In order to achieve accreditation, the Council needs 70% of the borough to be accredited (as smaller communities in their own right). So far Newport, Madeley and Wellington have achieved this. Oakengates, Great Dawley, Hollinswood & Randlay and Hadley & Leegomery and the Gorge have also signed up and are currently working to achieve their accreditation. There are several more areas also in discussion and working to get involved, meaning we are on track to achieve borough accreditation within the next 12 months.

Corporate Plastic Free Update

- 4.44 Corporately, the Council has made a commitment to remove as many single-use plastics from its operations and activities as possible, replacing them with sustainable alternatives.
- 4.45 Whilst progress in delivering this was for a time impacted by Covid, for example as there was greater use of disposable plastic items, we have taken steps to cut down single-use plastic.
- 4.46 The Council has made steps to cut down on single-use plastic by:
- Adopted more **sustainable cleaning practices**:
 - All the new vacuum cleaners purchased are made in the UK out of recycled plastic.
 - All new mop buckets purchased are made from recycled plastic.
 - From September 2023, the Council are trialling cleaning 'sachets' in two school sites. Instead of purchasing bottles of pre-made cleaning liquids, sachets (100% biodegradable & phosphate free) containing cleaning chemicals are dispensed into reusable cleaning bottles. Using cleaning sachets means there is no plastic waste going to landfill. If the trial is successful, the sachets will be implemented across other Council sites (Southwater, Darby House and Granville).

 - Adopted more **sustainable catering practices**:

- Vegetarian meals and meat free days continue to be offered by school catering services run by the council, 'Let's Dine'. Vegan meals are also available on request.
- The catering service works across its schools, engaging children in the importance of healthy eating, encouraging 'grow-your-own' and sustainability lifestyle habits. Offering low-carbon, meat-free alternatives at schools not only lowers the carbon footprint of the catering service but provides pupils with a wider choice of healthy meal options.
- An excellent example of a grow-your-own school initiative (supported by the council) is the community garden at Hollinswood Primary School. Here, the school encourages their pupils to learn about food and how it is grown (by running an in-house gardening club), and the produce grown is used by the school chef.
- Encouraging the **reduction of single-use plastic at Council-run events**.
 - The Council now insists that all vendors review their use of plastic for drinks and catering and provides information about alternative options such as canned water and compostable catering boxes.

4.47 However, there is still more the Council can do. The key areas of focus moving forward include:

- Reviewing the use of products that contribute to micro plastic pollution in all our operations.
- Reviewing single-use plastic used in our care sector.
- Exploring how Fleet Services and staff can help reduce vehicle tyre plastic pollution.

4.48 The Council cross-working group will be reinstated to review the current plan and look at what else can be added moving forward to continue removing single-use plastics from our operations.

Carbon Emissions 2022/23

4.49 The sources of carbon emissions are typically categorized as falling within one of three scopes. As defined by the Carbon Trust, these are:

- **Scope 1** direct emissions from owned or controlled sources – such as direct use of fossil fuels, gas, oil (petrol/ diesel) etc.
- **Scope 2** indirect emissions from the purchase and use of electricity, steam, heating, and cooling. By using the energy, an organisation is indirectly responsible for the release of these greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Scope 3** all other indirect emissions that occur in the upstream and downstream activities of an organisation. For example, the emissions

produced though waste generated by the Council’s operations or by the goods and services procured by the Council.

4.50 The Local Government Association (LGA) has produced a reporting guidance and specification³ for local authorities as to the Scope 3 emissions that should be considered. These are summarised in the table below, some of which the Council already reports on. There is currently no national mandatory guidance as to how local authorities should report its carbon emissions, but as new data becomes available, we will continue our journey towards including more Scope 3 emissions. For example, emissions related to water supply & treatment, and transmission & distribution losses have now been included and backdated to our 2018/19 baseline.

Staff Business Travel	We already report on this using claimed staff business mileage data.
Staff Commuting	This will be included following an updated staff travel survey.
Working From Home	This will be investigated following an updated staff travel survey.
Transmission & Distribution Losses	We have now been able to include Scope 3 emissions related to transmission and distribution losses from electricity consumption. This is made possible by the fact we have greater access to our Corporate Estate consumption data, as well as our Street Lighting data. This addition only affects the period before the West Mercia Energy Green Deal, that being the whole of 2018/19, and April – August of 2019/20.
Water	We have been able to gather water consumption data related to our Corporate Estate from utility bills from 2018/19 to present. This has allowed us to expand upon the Scope 3 emissions we report on, as we continue to gather more data on our Scope 3 activities.
Material Use	We will continue to work with our procurement team to gather the raw data needed to accurately report on our material use. Following LGA guidance, this encompasses a wide range of items including food and drink; electrical items; plastic materials; paper and cardboard; and construction materials.
Waste From Own Operations	We will continue to investigate this to ensure there is a strong base of information to report on in future. The LGA guidance includes various sources of waste that Councils can include from their own operations. For example, glass; food and drink waste; commercial and industrial waste; waste

³ <https://www.local.gov.uk/climate-change-reporting-guidance-local-authorities#introduction>

	electrical and electronic equipment; metals; plastics; paper and cardboard; insulation; and clothing.
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4.51 We have continued to monitor emissions from the following activities, as well as expanding scope 3 reporting to include emissions related to water supply and treatment and transmission and distribution losses for electricity usage as explained above.

Scope 1: Corporate estate – gas usage
Fleet vehicles – fuel usage

Scope 2: Corporate estate - electricity usage
Street lighting – electricity usage

Scope 3: Business mileage
Water supply & treatment
Electricity - transmission & distribution losses

4.52 Moving to renewable green energy as part of the West Mercia Energy (WME) Green Deal means the Council’s emissions from electricity have been hugely reduced. Electricity usage in our buildings has also fallen by 7% compared to the 2018/19 baseline. The overall long-term reduction in consumption is due to interventions like more efficient appliances such as LED light. However, we will naturally see an increase in electricity usage moving forward due to the electrification measures we are using to replace gas – things like air source heat pumps for example. Both greenhouse gas emissions and gas usage in our corporate estate has fallen by 4% compared to 2021/22 despite Granville House moving into our corporate estate from the Council’s Property Investment Portfolio (PIP). We are starting to look at decarbonising our buildings like we did with Newport Leisure Centre back in 2022 as illustrated above (4.5ff).

4.53 Electricity usage in our buildings has also fallen by 7% compared to the 2018/19 baseline but has risen by 7% compared to 2021/22. The overall long-term reduction in consumption is due to interventions such as more efficient appliances, such as LED lighting. Recent increases in electricity use can in part be explained through the introduction of electrification measures used to replace gas, such as air source heat pumps - all of which are powered by 100% renewable electricity as part of the West Mercia Energy (WME) Green Deal.

4.54 For the 2022/23 reporting year, the corporate fleet emissions have been calculated based directly on litres of petrol and diesel used via fuel card data. Previously these emissions were calculated using recorded mileage data, but we now have more detailed information from fuel cards.

4.55 Overall, comparing the 2022/23 reporting period to the recalibrated 2018/19 baseline data, we can see that **the Council has reduced its emissions by 60%.**

In the context of our path to becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030, **our emissions are currently 24% lower than our 36% reduction target for 2022/23**

Next steps

4.56 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 under constant review** and to work across the authority to identify new initiatives. In particular to focus on those areas of the authority's activities such as its built estate and business mileage that contribute the most emissions.
- **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. The assignment of actions to specific officers will be continued to **embed accountability** into the plan.
- To build upon our current **greenhouse gas accounting** methodology (explore Scope 3) and create **decarbonisation pathways** to effectively track progress to net zero.
- To conduct studies to explore potential sites for **corporate renewable energy generation**.
- To develop an **adaptation plan** that builds resilience of Council services against the impacts of climate change. Partnership working will be adopted to achieve this.
- To ensure that any actions to address climate change continue to play a full part in helping Telford's residents, community groups and businesses **address the impact of unprecedented recent increases in fuel prices and fuel poverty**.
- Continue to raise awareness of climate change to staff initially through senior management teams to support better-informed decision making that incorporates climate change and its impacts.
- To ensure climate change and sustainable-lifestyle themes are addressed and subsequent policies created in the upcoming **Local Plan review**.
- Continue to share the positive climate work happening within the Council and across the community by strengthening our existing communication channels.
- Continue to work with our **Climate Change Champions**.
- **Lobbying**. We cannot succeed alone and require more legislation and greater funding support from Government to push forward with this agenda in the way that is needed. The Council is now a member of UK 100, a network of UK locally elected leader who have pledged to address climate change. We will work through the network to lobby government as well as lobbying directly.

5 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.
- 5.2 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 Key Risks

- 6.1 Committee Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk for the UK's third Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3), published in June 2021⁴ 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.
 - 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.

⁴ <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCRA-Evidence-Report-England-Summary-Final.pdf>

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 £1.25m which leaves £2.75m available in 2023/24. This is being allocated to schemes in the Action Plan which are detailed in this report and appropriate finance support is being provided. Finance will also provide support in relation to any bids for external funding as required.

8.2 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 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.

9.2 The Council has the legal power to undertake the activities set out in the report. Implementation of the proposals in this report may give rise to specific legal issues upon which specific legal advice will be provided as necessary.

9.3 There are no specific human resource implications arising from this report.

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 vulnerable⁵ 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. 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.

⁵ [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)

14.0 Background Papers

- 1 [Telford and Wrekin Council Becoming Carbon Neutral and Plastic Free Update- report to Cabinet 22 November 2022](#)

15.0 Appendices

- A Corporate Climate Change Action Plan 2023/24

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	05/09/2023	06/09/2023	RP
Finance	05/09/2023	12/09/2023	DR