



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 19th September 2024

Telford & Wrekin Becoming Carbon Neutral - update report

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Carolyn Healy - Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning and Sustainability.	
Lead Director:	Katherine Kynaston - Housing, Commercial and Customer Services	
Service Area:	Housing, Commercial and Customer Services	
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Wards Affected:	All Wards	
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision	
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable	
Report considered by:	SMT – 20 August 2024 Business Briefing – 5 September 2024 Cabinet – 19 September 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 **61% from a 2018/19 baseline**.
- 1.2 Notes the importance of climate adaptation and the additional work the Council has done to develop a corporate climate change risk register as set out in section 4.33.

- 1.3 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.

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2019 Telford and Wrekin Council declared a Climate 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 work with partners with the aim of achieving the same target across the Borough.
- 3.2 Climate change continues to be one of the most significant issues that affects Telford and Wrekin, its residents, communities, and businesses and remains one of the Council's five key priorities.
- 3.3 The measures we are taking to tackle climate change also bring wider benefits to our communities. The measures to reduce energy use in key buildings including at Newport, Oakengates and Wellington Leisure Centres will result in lower energy bills enabling the Authority to maintain investment into front line services.
- 3.4 This report also highlights the improvements the Council is making to cycling and walking routes in the Borough. Initiatives such as the Bike Hub support residents to make the switch from the use of their cars for some trips reducing emissions but also provide opportunities for leisure and resultant health benefits.
- 3.5 The investment we are making into housing whether through NuPlace, Warm and Well Telford and our various retrofit programmes will provide properties that are more affordable to heat supporting residents to address rising energy costs, tackling fuel poverty and health impacts of living in cold and damp properties.
- 3.6 There are also actions the Council is seeking to address that are affected by factors outside of its control. For example, electrical grid connections remain a huge constraint on the expansion of renewable energy generation. The Council, working with partners, is continuing to lobby and work with Government and National Grid to overcome barriers to delivery.
- 3.7 Globally and locally climate change continues to have an impact through increasing extremes of weather. February 2024 was the hottest February since records began in England and Wales¹. The following graph (Fig1), produced by the University of Reading, known as the "Reading Stripes", graphically shows how global temperatures have increased over time (based on the average global temperature between 1971 and 2000).

¹ <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2024/february-2024-warm-and-wet-for-the-uk#:~:text=The%20average%20temperature%20in%20England,record%20of%206.8%C2%B0C.>

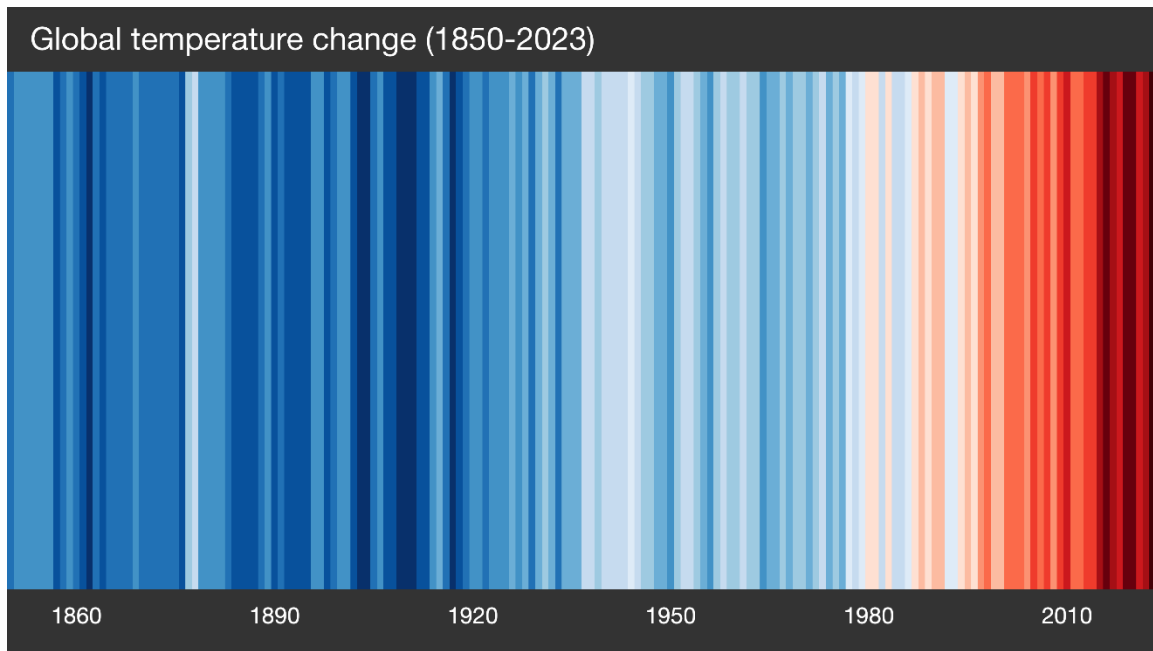


Figure 1 Reproduced under Creative Commons²

3.8 As previously agreed, the Council’s approach to decarbonisation follows the carbon management hierarchy as set out in the graphic below. In essence, activities that avoid or reduce carbon are prioritised over activities that offset emissions from the atmosphere.

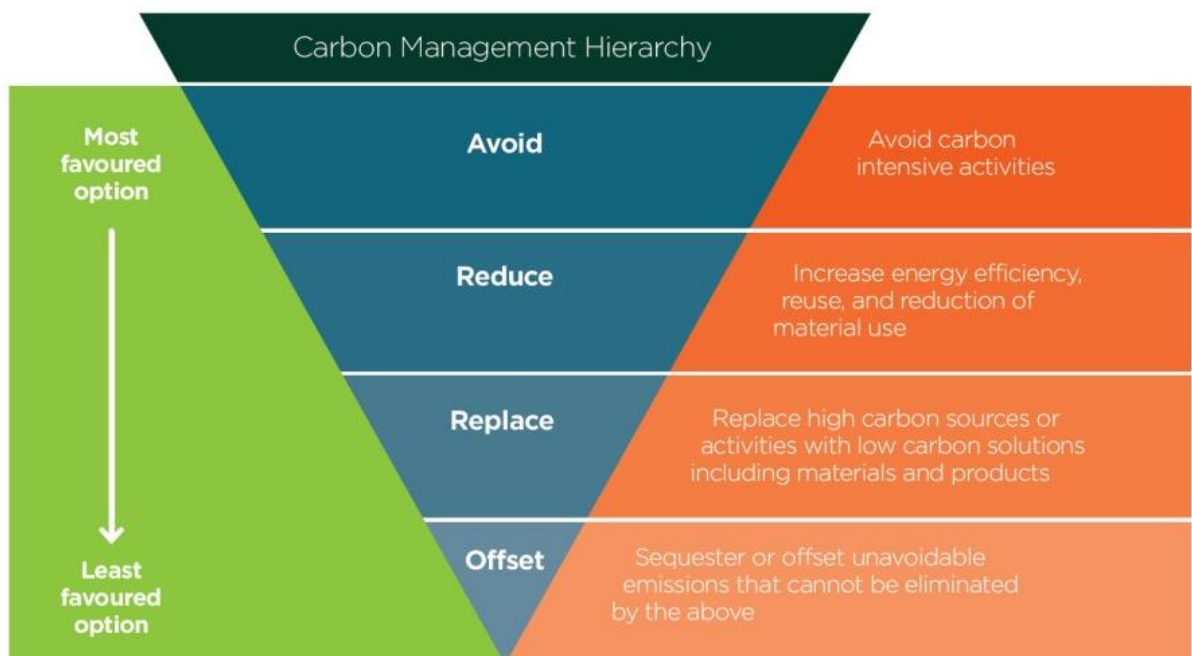


Figure 2: Carbon Management Hierarchy

4.0 Summary of main proposals

² <https://showyourstripes.info/>

Carbon Neutral Action Plan:

- 4.1 The Council's Corporate Decarbonisation Action Plan, 'Becoming Carbon Neutral,' was first published in 2020 and is refreshed annually. It reflects the Councils' priorities for climate change; to decarbonise the corporate estate, explore the feasibility of renewable energy generation, support communities in decarbonisation and build resilience to and against the impacts of climate change.
- 4.2 The 2023-2024 update of the Climate Change Action Plan can be found in Appendix A of this report.
- 4.3 The action plan is regularly reviewed and captures the interdisciplinary nature of climate change, and is divided into the following themes:
- Adaptation
 - Affordable Warmth
 - Biodiversity & Carbon Sequestration
 - Borough Resources/Waste
 - Corporate Catering
 - Corporate Estate
 - Highways and Transport
 - Investment in Business
 - Planning Policy
 - Plastic Free
 - Communications and Engagement
 - Performance and Monitoring

Key climate change actions in 2023/24

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

Corporate Estate

- 4.5 The Council is continuing to decarbonise its corporate estate. Previous schemes have included electric vehicle charging points, LED lighting and solar PV panels at Horsehay Golf Course; replacement LED lighting at Abraham Darby Leisure Centre; air source heat pump, thermal insulation, and new LED lighting at Newport Leisure Centre; and solar panels at Oakengates Leisure Centre.

In the last reporting year, the range of energy efficiency projects that have been delivered/are in progress include:

Horsehay Village Golf Course: Solar photovoltaic panels, electric vehicle charging points and battery storage were all installed on site. This will result in an energy saving of 65,140 kWh.



Figure 3 Horeshay Village solar panels and charging point.

Darby House: 70kVA connection and feeder pillar installed on site for third party operator Believ are to install an electric vehicle charging point on site.

Oakengates Leisure Centre: This project has been partly funded by the Climate Change Fund and via external funding the Salix Phase 3 Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund. The investment of £2.2 million at Oakengates Leisure Centre has included work to the gym and swimming pool to improve the experience for users and reduce energy consumption Part of the decarbonisation work has included the installation of heat pump technology, the pool liner and pool surround with resin compound, installing an energy efficient roof covering and new ceiling and insulation in the pool area. After 10 months of improvement works and a programme of carbon neutral work the site reopened on Monday 22 July on schedule and in time for the summer holiday. The works will upgrade the EPC of the building from a C status to a B status and will save an estimated 114,000 kWh of energy. This will also reduce our use of natural gas, resulting in a greener low carbon heating system.



Figure 4 Recently installed Air Source Heat Pump at Oakengates Leisure Centre.

Wellington Leisure Centre: A bid was submitted for Salix Public Sector Decarbonisation Grant (PSDS) Phase 3c grant in October 2023. In April 2024, the Council was awarded £1.1 million for a range of energy efficiency measures including upgrading thermal fabric and the installation of an air source heat pump which will save an estimated 70 tCO_{2e} per annum. Works are due to commence in Autumn 2024.



Figure 5 Wellington Civic and Leisure Centre

Newport Swimming Pool & Fitness Centre: A successful bid to the Swimming Pool Support Fund (SPSF) Phase II has secured £41,800 of grant funding to install pool covers and replace fluorescent lighting with LED lighting. Both measures will increase energy efficiency on site, resulting in estimated annual cost savings of £11,500 for the pool cover and £1,300 for LED lighting. Works to Start Autumn 2024.

Telford Theatre The proposed redevelopment of Telford Theatre in Oakengates is being designed with a ‘fabric first’ approach. The intention during the final stage of design is to develop a building envelope that performs above the minimum thermal transfer and air permeability values stipulated within Building Regulations. In addition, heating and ventilation systems will incorporate renewable technologies such as air source heat pumps, and current roof plans incorporate a significant array of photovoltaic panels. This will all result in a theatre with a significantly lower operational carbon requirement than the existing building which is now over 60 years old.



Figure 6 Proposed new Telford Theatre

Property Investment Portfolio

- 4.6 Works to improve the efficiency of the Council's Property Investment Portfolio has continued. In previous years this has included LED lighting installed at Southwater One carpark and LED lighting and solar PV panels installed in the industrial units at Hortonwood 12 and Newport Innovation Park PH2.

This year, the new Orchard Park development has had solar photo voltaic (PV) panels installed.



Figure 7 Orchard Park

Affordable Warmth and Housing

- 4.7 The Council has previously delivered a wide range of projects to support people in fuel poverty including 10 off gas properties (22 measures) retrofitted using funding from phase 1 of the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG1) and the Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD2) scheme was used to retrofit 50 homes in Sutton Hill, with 77 energy efficiency measures, including external wall insulation, loft insulation, cavity wall insulation, double glazing and solar panels. This programme of works 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 CO₂e emissions each year.

Additional work this year has included:

- The council using its own climate change funding to provide low cost, high impact measures for households that do not qualify for central government funding but are still classed as fuel poor. Through our **Warm and Well Telford** grant we are providing partial glazing, external doors and heating controls for eligible properties. We have, so far, had 50 property sign ups.
- **Over the next 12 months** the Council and partners will be delivering the next phase of the **Home Upgrade Grant** aimed at low energy efficient off gas properties. We currently have 25 properties in the application process.
- The Council has further used its ability to shape Government rules around households qualifying for ECO4 to maximise those able to access funding for heating systems. **With 258 referrals made we have attracted a total install value of over £500k with savings in excess of £88k.**
- Over the next two years in partnership with the Marches Energy Agency the Council is supporting the **Future Ready Homes initiative**. This is aimed at the self-funded market. The project will help **2,500 householders** navigate the complex world of retrofit and providing support throughout installation of works to ensure residents are getting the correct advice and quality from contractors. By working with local businesses, the project will also provide training opportunities to develop much needed local retrofit skills.
- **The Retrofit Skills Home project** complements Future Ready Homes providing residents with an opportunity to view measures in a 'show home' with regular open days, webinars, video tours and case studies. The project will involve college students, apprentices and specialist contractors all working together to refurbish and retrofit two properties learning the skills crucial for the future. Retrofit assessors, thermographers, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and many more will benefit from vital 'real world' experience on site.
- Since the adoption of the strategy, we have maximised all opportunities to apply for Central Government funding to retrofit the worst energy performing homes with over £1.6m invested in the last 12 months delivering 254 measures, over £45k of savings and delivering a total carbon saving of 107 tonnes of CO₂e.

- 4.8 **NuPlace**, the Council's wholly owned housing company continues to deliver affordable and sustainable, energy efficient properties for private rent. NuPlace has already ensured all 46 homes at Southwater Way benefit from solar PV and EV charging points, saving residents money and reducing their emissions.

This year at Donnington Wood Way, 30 of NuPlace's 66 homes, benefitting from EV charging and PV panels, have been handed over and occupied, including 7 built to Future Homes Standards. The team will continue to monitor energy usage at Future Homes plots to understand how these dwellings perform now occupied.



Figure 8 NuPlace housing.

- 4.9 Construction of 189 new homes at Station Quarter, in the Town Centre, are due to start on site this Summer with all set to achieve EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) "A" rating in terms of environmental impact and EPC "B" rating for energy efficiency. This will be delivered through thermal upgrades to building fabric, adopted heating systems and PV panels.



Figure 9 Artist's impression of Station Quarter

- 4.10 Due to the success of the initiative in 2023, the Council decided to continue providing energy saving lightbulbs to residents across the borough to help reduce energy costs amidst the cost-of-living crisis. To date, the Council has provided **9000 energy saving LED lightbulbs**, distributing them via community organisations, Town and Parish Councils and housing trusts.

Transport

- 4.11 Work continues to improve walking and cycling routes in the Borough with the commencement of a £1.9m project between Telford Central and Oakengates starting on site in July 2024. This follows a bid to government for funding in 2023. In addition, further investment is being made into the Silkin Way to continue to encourage more people to walk and cycle, with further crossing points being installed on the route this year.
- 4.12 The Bike Hub owned and operated by the Council continues to deliver a growing programme of events and education activities to support cycle activity across our communities. Our bike fleet has recently grown with the addition of a fleet of adapted bikes which allow users with a variety of different needs to participate in activities. These bikes are to be used for planned events and for hire.



Figure 10 Telford Bike Hub

- 4.13 Previously, the Council installed two EV charging points at Southwater multi-storey car park, two at Granville House and one each at the following industrial units throughout the borough: Heath Hill, Madeley, Hadley Park and Ironbridge for Council vans and contractor use.

More recently, the Council was awarded £683,370 from On-street Residential Charge Point scheme (ORCS) managed by Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) for the installation of 70 dual fast EV charge points in Council car parks to support residential charge points. The Council has now appointed an EV charge point operator who will deliver the ORCS funded charge points but will also fully fund additional EV charge points in all Council car parks. Potentially a further 41 dual EV charge points could be installed. Overall, this project could see an additional 111 EV charge points (222 sockets) installed over the next 18-24 months.

- 4.14 The Council has also been awarded an indicative amount of £1,020,000 from Local EV Infrastructure fund (LEVI). The Council has joined Midlands Connect Consortium with other Local Authorities to pool grant funding in order to maximise the number of on-street charge points. The Council is currently waiting for confirmation of the grant award and the consortium hopes to go to procurement stage this autumn followed by the appointment of an EV charge point operator in the new year subject to the funding being available. It is anticipated the first on-street EV charge points would be installed from 2025 and then rolled out over a four-year period to 2029.

- 4.15 The Council has an ongoing programme of replacement of fleet vehicles with electric alternatives. To date, the Council now has 15 electric vehicles in its fleet including highway vans, library delivery vehicle, and two electric minibuses for Arthog funded through the Council's municipal investment fund Abundance. Work

continues on the utilisation and make-up of the Council's vehicle fleet, which in turn supports a reduction in the Council's overall emissions.

- 4.16 In July 2024 the Council began a car club pilot working in conjunction with Enterprise Car Hire; the pilot is trialling the use of 'pool cars' that are managed and maintained by Enterprise Car hire and available for use by teams across the council. This innovative offer will provide staff with an alternative to using their own cars that will reduce CO₂ emissions as well as associated cost of business travel. The trial will inform the way forward that could see additional cars added as well as electric and hybrid options.

Renewable Energy Generation

- 4.17 The Council-owned Wheat Leasows solar farm continues to generate renewable energy. In 2023/24 the solar farm produced 3244 MWh of electricity, enough energy to power 1118 homes per year (based on average annual household consumption of 2,900 kWh). With the solar farm continuing to bring benefit across communities through the sale of the energy generated back to the grid, which is then invested back into front line services, the Council is exploring the feasibility of potential new solar generation including upgrading the existing solar farm.

Planning Policy

- 4.18 Climate change and sustainability is a key consideration in the review of the Local Plan. The Local Plan has a vital role to play setting policies that ensure buildings are more efficient to run, are built from sustainable materials and practices, that carbon reductions are secured through the development process and ensuring our natural resources are protected.
- 4.19 In July 2023, the Council adopted the Climate Change Guidance for New Developers Supplementary Planning Document. The document is used by applicants and the Council to shape 'climate ready' development across the borough. This includes climate guidance on site location, building design, green infrastructure, renewable energy and how to make businesses more sustainable.
- 4.20 A 14-week consultation of the draft Local Plan Review launched in October 2023 and included new policies to support the Council's ambition to drive climate change action. They aim to secure better quality development which mitigates and adapts to the challenge of climate change, for example, providing homes and communities which are more sustainable, safe from flooding and poor air quality, are more affordable to live in and are healthier.
- 4.21 The Council supports innovation in this area with existing policies designed to reflect the constant change and progression in this field and evidenced by the approval of a number of applications for renewable energy generation. The Government have recently set out a more robust approach to renewable energy in the consultation version of the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2024). This approach will be reflected in the new plan which is due to come to Cabinet in the coming months.

Biodiversity

4.22 Protecting and enhancing Council-owned green spaces and nature reserves supports both climate adaptation and mitigation measures. Over the last 12 months, the Council have been very proactive including:

- Working to increase the number of locations we identify and maintain as wildflower areas. This includes 38 areas across 23 sites in the borough.
- Embarking on a meadow cut project to oversee native perennial wildflowers in suitable areas including verges, roundabouts, parks and open space.



Figure 11 Wildflowers.

- Working with insect charity Buglife for the ‘B-line’ project to address the decline in pollinating insects by significantly increasing the amount of connected wildflower rich habitat for pollinators and people within Telford, Shropshire. The project also involves work with local communities through events, education and citizen science to increase knowledge and understanding of UK pollinator species and habitats and empower people to take action for wildlife.
 - Meadow cut areas have been incorporated into all the Green Flag Parks to establish a balance between providing a space for nature and recreation.
 - Additional nest boxes are being installed in Hartshill park and bat boxes are being installed in Dawley Hamlets Local Nature Reserve
 - A new community orchard has been planted in Wellington.
 - Site surveys have been undertaken by expert volunteers to identify the impacts of new management techniques put in place to support critical species. This has seen the red-listed Dingy Skipper butterfly recorded at Granville Country Park as well as numerous sightings at Rough Park LNR, where it hasn’t been recorded since 2009.
- 4.23 The development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) in partnership with Shropshire Council is progressing and a LNRS Coordinator is now in post. A steering group of nine members including the Environment Agency and

Shropshire Wildlife Trust is now in place to support and guide the development of the LNRS. The timeline for development is below:

- *Spring 2024* - initial mapping and awareness raising; now completed.
- *Summer 2024* - focused engagement events; first public events attended, and a number of targeted events delivered through the summer.
- *Late autumn 2024* - public consultation with some underway and further events being developed.
- *Spring 2025* – Strategy adopted.

4.24 Dothill and Shawbirch Local Nature Reserve join Telford Town Park, Bowring Park, Apley Woods Local Nature Reserve, Hartshill Park, Dale End Park and Dawley Park which all retained their Green Flag status again this year. The prestigious accreditation is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces and is testament to the hard work and dedication of the Council staff, volunteers and 'Friends Of' groups that care for these spaces for everyone to enjoy.



Figure 12 Dothill Nature Reserve

Borough Resources/Waste

- 4.25 In 2023/24, there was an investment of £25,000 into community environmental projects. This included funding WARMHUB to run a series of cookery workshops teaching people basic skills which includes advice on minimising food waste and good food management. Overall, over 60 tonnes of waste have been rescued and reused as a result.
- 4.26 For 2024/25, a further £10,000 has been agreed to support and expand reuse opportunities. Ongoing promotion of these initiatives and education on food minimisation is delivered jointly with Veolia.
- 4.27 Reintroducing food recycling within Council buildings is currently being investigated between the Waste team and Building Services. For schools, the Waste team have sent out information via the Services for Schools team to advise they can offer a collection service to recycle food waste.

Catering Services

- 4.28 **'Let's Dine'**, the Council's school catering service, continues to offer vegetarian meals daily as part of the main menu offer and vegan meals are provided 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, we have also looked at our meat recipes and reduced the meat content replacing with other protein alternatives to ensure food standard compliance.
- 4.29 Catering services have revised all their plastic products to see if there are more environmentally sustainable products that could be used. We have worked closely with the action groups in schools and have removed 98% of single use plastic. Our latest switch was replacing small single use plastic pots to reusable recycled plastic, this will also reduce the spend by £8k per year.
- 4.30 Where possible, we are committed to partnering with local suppliers who share our standards for high quality foods, as well as our commitments to sustainability and addressing climate change. Local suppliers already used include Rowlands Fresh Produce and Wenlock Spring.
- 4.31 We are working towards more energy efficient kitchens, helping to educate, train, and remind catering staff of the Council's commitment to tackle climate change by encouraging more energy efficient behaviours. Three vans are currently hired to deliver food to nurseries and the option of switching to three EV or hybrid vans is currently being investigated, as is the issue of onsite vehicle charging.



Figure 13 Energy Smart: Kitchens: Promotional poster.

Supporting Community Projects

- 4.32 To date, the Council has awarded more than £348k to a number of community projects through the Council's Climate Change Fund. Most recently this has included:

Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council who commissioned the installation of rooftop mounted solar panels on Randlay Community Centre. The 78 panels will produce an estimated 30 MWh of electricity per annum and satisfy 56% of their annual electricity consumption.

Not only will these solar panels save 5.8 tonnes of CO₂eper annum (the same as planting 266 trees a year), but they also represent a significant financial saving to the Parish Council. Savings they can use to continue and enrich their work in the local community. The system has also been designed to accommodate potential future battery storage, which would further increase savings and the amount of renewably generated energy they can use on site.

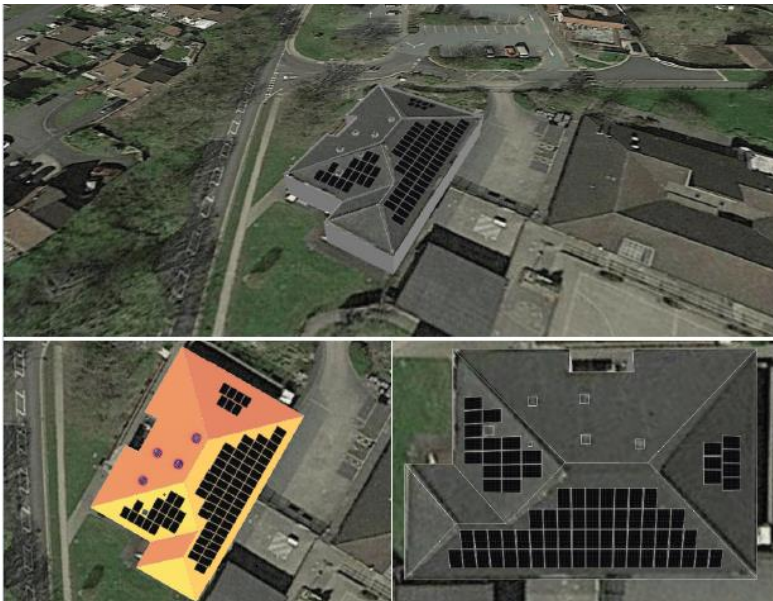


Fig 14 Randlay Community Centre Fig

Fabweld Steel Products Ltd were awarded their grant from the Climate Change Fund to install two high speed, publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points. FSP have invested £500,000 in a huge solar project across the whole of the factory roof which has halved their energy costs even though the business has grown by 20 per cent. These charging points are connected to their existing 180 kWp photovoltaics system, meaning electric vehicles can be charged with onsite renewable electricity.



Figure 15: Councillor Carolyn Healy joins FSP's managing director Wayne Carter (left) and chairman, Richard Hilton for the official unveiling of the new EV charging points available for the local community.

Dawley Town Hall CIC replaced an array of inefficient lighting both internally and externally. This essential upgrade to their lighting has resulted in lower electricity bills, with savings reinvested into the community.

Carbon Emissions 2023/24

4.33 **We continue to monitor our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions in line with the Local Government Association reporting** guidance. To do this, Telford and Wrekin Council have undertaken 'in-house' greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting, using the LGA GHG accounting tool for guidance.

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

A summary of the key emission headlines for the 2023/24 reporting year is shown in figure 4 below:

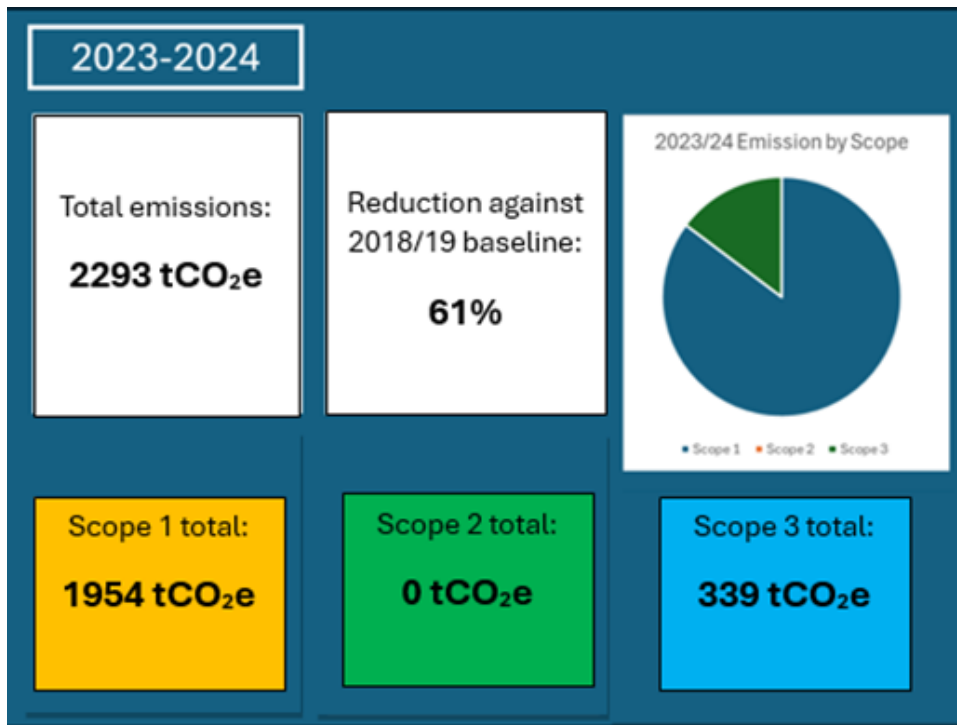


Figure 16: Key corporate emission headlines for the 2023/24 reporting year.

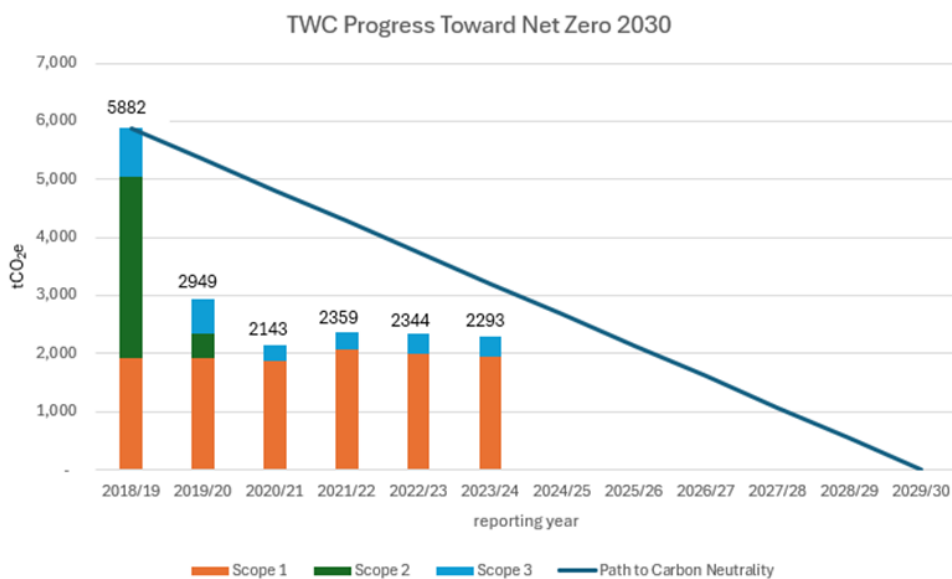


Figure 17 Descent path showing progress to date.

4.34 Overall, comparing the 2023/24 reporting period to the 2018/19 baseline data, we can see that **the Council has reduced its emissions by 61%**. In the context of our path to becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030, **our emission reductions are currently 16% ahead of target.**

4.35 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. The Council's electricity consumption is made up of electricity used in our buildings and the boroughs streetlighting. This has also reduced, with overall

electricity consumption in 2023/24 seeing a 21% reduction compared to 2018/19. This is down to a 32% decrease in streetlighting related consumption following the replacement of streetlighting with LEDs borough wide. Electricity usage in our buildings has also fallen by 6% compared to the 2018/19 baseline.

Both greenhouse gas emissions and **gas usage in our corporate estate has fallen by 6% compared to 2022/23** due to increased building efficiencies and decarbonisation interventions.

Emissions related to **water supply and treatment have fallen by 68% compared to 2018/19, and by 17% compared to 2022/23**. This is in part due to national decarbonisation of water supply and treatment, as well as a reduction in consumption within the Council's corporate estate.

The Council's **transport related emissions in 2023/24 have increased compared to 2022/23**. Business mileage has increased by 1%. However, measures to address this is actively being explored. This includes the recent launch of a car club for business travel as referred to above.

- 4.36 To ensure the Council continues its journey to become carbon neutral by 2030, work has been undertaken to develop a high-level carbon descent pathway identifying measures and projects the Council can implement to reach **a 70% reduction in emissions by 2026/27**. Potential projects are currently being prioritised based on several factors including capital cost; revenue and carbon savings; and eligibility for available funding such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 4. These projects are included in the updated Action Plan.

Climate Change Adaptation:

- 4.37 In addition to projects that focus on climate mitigation, the Council has recognised the importance of **climate adaptation** in ensuring Councils services are maintained and are not impacted by the effects of climate change.
- 4.38 To adapt to the impacts of climate change, risks must be identified. As such, working with the Environment Scrutiny Committee the Climate Change and Civil Resilience Teams have established a **Corporate Climate Change Risk Register**. This highlights the risks that climate change poses to all Council's services. It has been a critical exercise in acknowledging *how* climate change will impact the Council and *what* needs to be addressed to mitigate this. The Risk Register was adopted by Cabinet in May 2024 and will be updated annually. Progress on Climate Adaptation will be reported on separately.

Climate Change Borough Partnership

- 4.39 Although the primary focus of this report is the Councils' own activities, we continue to work with our partners to progress the climate change agenda through the Climate Change Borough Partnership. Four partnerships act as subgroups to the overall partnership and meet regularly to develop and deliver opportunities for collective climate action. The subgroups are:

- Communities Climate Forum³
- Telford Sustainability and Energy Cluster (TSEC).
- The Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System Climate Change Board
- Shropshire Good Food Partnership.

4.40 To celebrate the partnership's new structure and opportunities, the Council hosted the **first Climate Change Borough Partnership Conference** in October 2023. This event brought together partnership members and external partners to learn, network and discuss the future of the partnership moving forward. Rob Hopkins, author, podcaster, and climate activist, attended as the guest speaker and was warmly received by the partnership. Following the success of the inaugural conference, another conference is set to be held on 18th October 2024.



Figure 18 Climate Change Conference

Plastic Free Taskforce:

4.41 The Council continues to work 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 used across the borough. Collectively **Telford & Wrekin Plastic Free Taskforce** are working to achieve plastic free community status for the borough - which is accredited by Surfers Against Sewage.

4.42 To achieve accreditation we need 70% of local communities to be signed up to this. A lot has already been achieved, with Newport, Wellington and Madeley all receiving accreditation (amounting to 30% coverage). However, many more areas

³ The **Communities Climate Forum** was established in 2024 and is made up of Community Groups, Town and Parish Councils and Climate Change Champions. It meets on an 8 weekly basis and is currently undertaking a visioning exercise as well as sharing best practice to help support community activity.

like Oakengates, Dawley, The Gorge, Hadley & Leegomery and Lawley & Overdale are also working to do the same and there is a plan in place to drive this forward. Partner organisations are now working to get more local community groups and businesses involved in the campaign.

- 4.43 For our part, the Council plays a lead role in co-ordinating the Taskforce. This includes administering meetings throughout the year, organising awareness raising campaigns and events to help spread the word and helping partner organisations work towards achieving their accreditations.
- 4.44 So far this year, we have run campaigns to coincide with the Great British Spring Clean and Plastic Free July, highlighting the environmental impacts of plastic pollution and encouraging local residents and organisations to make sustainable swaps. For example – during Plastic Free July we launched a four-week challenge to encourage local residents to do their bit to reduce single use plastics from their households.
- 4.45 We are also working on a lobbying letter on behalf of the Taskforce, to be sent to manufacturers that continue to use single use plastics in their packaging and operations. Manufacturers play a pivotal role in shaping our plastic consumption and we need them all to take responsibility for minimising their environmental footprint. The taskforce will be setting examples of what is being done locally and asking manufacturers about their plans for transitioning towards more sustainable materials and implementing policies that prioritise the environment.
- 4.46 To support the work of the Council and all our partnership working, the **Sustainable Telford and Wrekin** website continues to be a hub for Council-community communications regarding climate change. It provides information on community climate news, projects, and funding opportunities as well as providing knowledge and resources about climate change.

Business Support

- 4.47 The Council has a good track record in successfully delivering a wide range of initiatives to support businesses to become more environmentally sustainable. This has included the Business Energy and Efficiency Programme (BEEP). BEEP funded energy assessments for 99 businesses and 41 of these received over £300k as a grant to help with efficiency savings. In 2023 in collaboration with Shropshire and Herefordshire Councils, the Council was successful in a bid to the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership for £1.5million to provide capital funding towards the Marches Energy Grant (MEG).
- 4.48 To support MEG the Council also committed £190k of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for 60 funded energy assessments which acted as a gateway to the grant funding. The scheme offers 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 also ran related networking and webinar events for SMEs and other organisations. The target for the whole of the

programme for Telford is 525 tCO₂e. So far 35tCO₂e have been identified and the intervention rates are being increased to support take up.

- 4.49 Up to £100,000 in match funded grant is also available to eligible businesses implementing energy efficiency measures through the pilot Business Energy Advice Service fund.
- 4.50 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. This has previously included both the Pride in Our High Street and Cool Shropshire and Telford initiatives. The team has subsequently run a series of webinars in February 2024 for businesses on:
- Developing Carbon Reduction Plans
 - Carbon Footprinting
 - Supply Chain Sustainability.
- 4.51 The Council continues to support the **Telford Sustainability and Energy Cluster (TSEC)**. The cluster continues to help foster business collaboration, drive sustainable practices, and address common challenges among Telford businesses that will create a positive environmental, social and economic impact. Activity has included a visit in February 2024 for members to the Tysley Energy Park in Solihull
- 4.52 TSEC members along with all Telford businesses were given the opportunity to attend a TSEC summit on 6 March at Telford College where the Council connected local businesses with local suppliers in support of their sustainability and net zero journey. Local businesses and suppliers, gathered to explore innovative solutions for reducing carbon emissions, saving energy, and investing in sustainable technologies.

4.53 In June 2024, Lyreco offered fellow TSEC members the opportunity to have a tour of the National Distribution Centre and to take a tour of their PV system. Several local companies took the opportunity to see their 13,680 solar panels installed on their National Distribution Centre in Telford. 3000MWh of green electricity is now generated on average annually.



Figure 19 Jake Dean Jones (Quality, Safety, Sustainability and Supply Chain Coordinator at Lyreco) conducting a tour of Lyreco's' eco garden in Telford.

Next steps

4.54 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.
- **To continue to monitor progress on a quarterly basis** to ensure change is being made and to identify and address challenges 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 continue **greenhouse gas accounting** and comparison against the **decarbonisation pathway** to effectively track progress to net zero.
- To continue to explore potential sites for **corporate renewable energy generation**.

- 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 increases in fuel prices and fuel poverty.**
- To continue to **raise awareness of climate change to staff** to support better-informed decision making that incorporates climate change and its impacts.
- To continue to **share the positive climate work happening within the Council and across the community** by strengthening our existing communication channels.
- To continue to **work with our partners across the Borough** to support wider climate change actions.

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 The Climate Change Committee's *Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk for the UK* (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.
 - more frequent and severity of 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.
 - 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, trade routes and 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 conditions.

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 The initiatives outlined in the report are funded from a combination of Council funding, and external grant funding. Finance will provide ongoing support in relation to any bids for external funding as required. Scheme expenditure is monitored on a regular basis.

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 legal advice will be provided as and when 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.

14.0 Appendices

A Corporate Climate Change Action Plan 2023/24

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	06/08/2024	15/08/2024	EH
Finance	06/08/2024	13/08/2024	DR

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)