



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Audit Committee

Wednesday 29 January 2025

Telford and Wrekin Council Becoming Carbon Neutral Update

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Carolyn Healy - Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability
Lead Director:	Katherine Kynaston - Director: Housing, Commercial and Customer Services
Service Area:	Housing, Commercial & Customer Services
Report Author:	Ian Wykes - Team Leader - Climate Change & Sustainability
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	Cabinet - 19 September 2024 Environment Scrutiny Committee – 4 December 2024

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

- 1.1 To note and review the update on Telford and Wrekin Council becoming Carbon Neutral.

2.0 Purpose of Report

To allow Audit Committee the opportunity to

- 2.1 Note and review the Council's progress on becoming Carbon Neutral as set out in the report to Cabinet on 19th September 2024 (Appendix A) and accompanying Action Plan (Appendix B)

3.0 Background

3.1 Tackling climate change is one of five priorities set out in the current Council Plan. In July 2019, the Council declared a climate change emergency and made a commitment to reduce its carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. Through its support of a borough partnership the council is also playing a full part in helping the wider borough achieve the same target.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

4.1 In summary the Cabinet report can be broken down into three sections

- It provides an update of the work undertaken by the Council since the last report in October 2023.
- It sets out the progress the Council has made against the net zero target and the way we measure emissions.
- It includes an updated climate change action plan as set out in Appendix B

4.2 In 2023/24 the Council achieved an overall reduction of 61% in CO₂e emissions from a baseline of 2018/19. This is ahead of the 16% reduction based on a straight-line year on year reduction.

4.3 To support this target the Council undertook a wide range of activities across its functions. These activities provided both direct benefits to borough residents and provided a wide range of other indirect co-benefits through the investment of income and efficiency savings into frontline services.

4.4 Direct benefits have included.

- Further improvements to the Council's operational estate including the installation of energy efficiency measures.
- Providing direct grants to residents who are in fuel poverty and support to those residents who can self-fund to install renewable technologies to their own properties.
- Through NuPlace, building more energy efficiency homes
- Continuing to improve the walking and cycling routes in the borough
- Further delivery of Electric Vehicle charging points across the Borough
- Introducing a car club for staff to reduce the council's business mileage emissions.
- Continuing to generate renewable electricity from the Council's own solar farm at Wheat Leasows.
- Improving green spaces and nature reserves.

- Continuing to reduce waste and support reuse.

4.5 These actions are detailed in the Cabinet report.

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 2021¹ 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.
- 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

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

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 vulnerable² Many of the actions set out in the climate change plan have considerable co-benefits.

² [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)

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 Telford & Wrekin Becoming Carbon Neutral - update report - Cabinet Report 19th September 2024
- B Corporate Climate Change Action Plan 2023/24

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	03/01/2025	06/01/2025	EH
Finance	03/01/2025	08/01/2025	DR