



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 24 September 2026

Telford & Wrekin Becoming Carbon Neutral and Climate Change Adaptation - Update Report

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Carolyn Healy - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability
Lead Director:	Katherine Kynaston - Director: Housing, Commercial & Customer Services
Service Area:	Communities, Customer & Commercial 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:	SMT – 25 August 2026 Business Briefing – 3 September 2026 Cabinet – 24 September 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Note the positive progress the Council has made towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and that, by the end of March 2026, the Council has reduced its carbon emissions by **69% compared with the 2018/19 baseline**.
- 1.2 Approve the proposed actions the Council intends to take to continue progress towards carbon neutrality, as set out in the updated Corporate Carbon Neutral Action Plan attached in **Appendix A**.

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- 1.3 Note the importance of climate adaptation and the additional work undertaken by the Council to develop a corporate climate change risk register, as set out in **Appendix B**.
- 1.4 Note 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.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To update Cabinet on the significant progress being made towards the Council's target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, including that the Council is now approximately **5% ahead of its current pathway to carbon neutrality** and on target to meet its commitment to reach **70% by 2027**, alongside the action being taken to address the current and future impacts of a changing climate.
- 2.2 To set out the wider financial, health, social and environmental benefits of the Council's climate action, including the estimated £1.19 million in avoided gas and electricity costs since 2018/19, lower household energy bills, warmer and more energy-efficient homes, improved air quality and wellbeing, greater access to low-carbon transport, and stronger resilience to rising energy costs and extreme weather.

3.0 Background

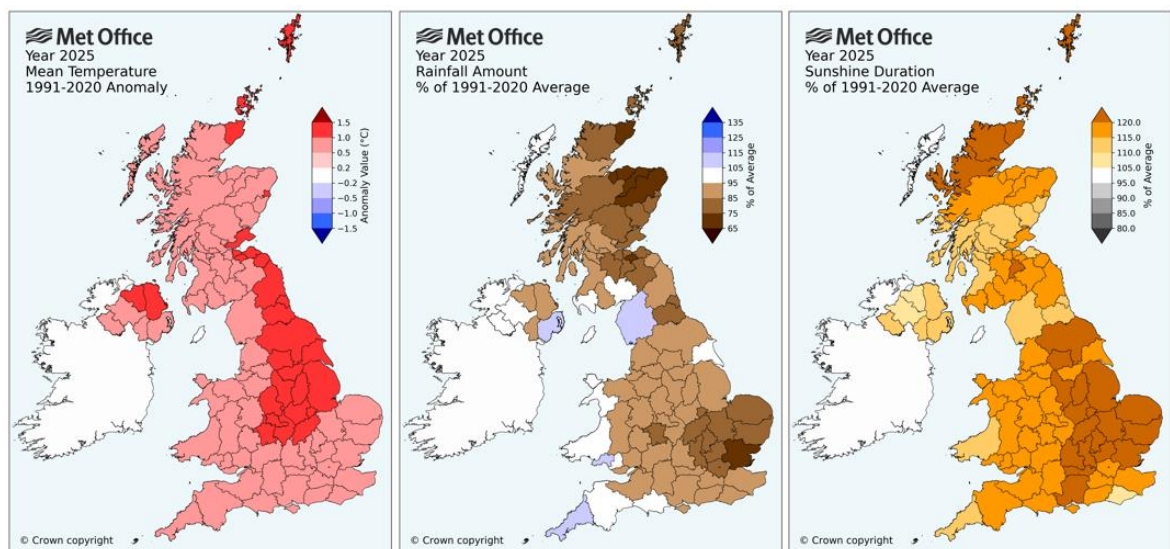
- 3.1 In 2019 Telford and Wrekin Council declared a Climate Emergency and set out an ambitious target to ensure its activities and operations are carbon neutral by 2030. This is known as **climate change mitigation**. The Council is delivering this through its 'Becoming Carbon Neutral Plan', reporting annually on progress to Cabinet. The Council also made a commitment to work with partners with the aim of achieving the same outcome across the Borough.
- 3.2 As a local authority, Telford & Wrekin Council must also ensure that its services are able to respond to the current and future predicted impacts of climate change. This is referred to as **climate change adaptation**. In 2024, the Council published its first Corporate Climate Change Risk Register to help address the impact of climate change on its own services. The Council is committed to reporting on its progress on climate change adaptation on an annual basis. The Council is also working with partners to help address the impacts of climate change across the whole borough.
- 3.3 During 2025/26, the UK experienced record-breaking climate impacts. The Met Office reported that 2025 was the warmest and sunniest year on record, with the warmest summer ever recorded and the driest spring in England since 1893. These conditions contributed to drought, water shortages, pressure on agriculture and increased risks to public health, while extreme rainfall and storms, including Storm Éowyn, caused disruption across the country.

- 3.4 Met Office data shows that the summer of 2026 is provisionally the warmest on record with multiple heatwaves resulting in temperatures exceeding 38°C in parts of England. The prolonged hot and dry conditions have led to widespread drought across England and Wales, placing pressure on water resources, agriculture, ecosystems, infrastructure and public services. The Met office predict these conditions are now the “new normal”

“Our analysis shows a summer like the one we’ve just experienced is now around 130 times more likely because of climate change. In a climate unaffected by human emissions of greenhouse gases, a summer like this would be exceptionally unlikely, i.e. 1 in over 1,000 years. In our current climate, which is changing because of the effect of burning of fossil fuels, we should now expect this to be roughly a 1 in 9 year event.”¹

Dr Mark McCarthy Met Office

- 3.5 The Environment Agency reported that around 71% of England was in drought, with over 27 million people subject to water-use restrictions. The increased risk of wildfires, heat-related illness and disruption to transport and essential services highlights the growing impacts of climate change already being experienced across the UK
- 3.6 The following “climate anomaly” maps from the Met Office show the mean temperature, rainfall amount and sunshine duration in the UK in 2025 compared with a 1991-2020 reference point.



The data demonstrates that many areas of the UK experienced temperatures above the long-term average alongside significant variations in rainfall and sunshine. These changing climatic conditions are consistent with the wider

¹ [Summer 2026 provisionally hottest on record for the UK - Met Office](#)

evidence of climate change impacts and reinforce the need for continued action to reduce carbon emissions and strengthen resilience to climate-related risks.

3.7 Climate change continues to be one of the most significant challenges facing Telford and Wrekin, with the impacts of changing weather patterns affecting residents, communities, businesses and infrastructure. In recognition of these risks, addressing climate change remains one of the Council's five key priorities.

3.8 We have made strong progress in reducing the Council's emissions to date. However, as it moves towards its carbon neutral target, further reductions are becoming harder and more challenging to achieve. Continued actions remain important not only in reducing carbon emissions but also the wider social, economic and environmental co-benefits that are being delivered for our residents and communities including:

- The recent refurbishment of Wellington Leisure Centre has significantly enhanced the leisure offering while simultaneously reducing carbon emissions by 102 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent per year. In addition, energy costs have been cut by 35%, enabling savings to be reinvested into front line services.
- The installation of 63 electric vehicle charging points in Council car parks significantly improves access to charging for residents without off-street parking, supporting the transition to electric vehicles.
- Telford Energy Advice (TEA) demonstrates how climate action can also tackle fuel poverty, supporting work to address the rising cost of living and improve wellbeing. Since 2020, the programme has helped thousands of households through energy advice, home visits, insulation and heating improvements, crisis support and low-cost energy-saving measures. The resulting co-benefits include lower energy bills, warmer homes, improved health outcomes, increased resilience to rising energy costs and greater awareness of energy efficiency across the borough. These co-benefits show that the investment we are making provides long-term gains in health, cost of living and resilience.

3.9 There are also actions the Council is seeking to address that are affected by factors outside its control. For example, electrical grid connections remain a significant constraint on the expansion of renewable energy generation locally and nationally. The Council, working with partners, is continuing to lobby and work with Government and National Grid, and to actively engage to overcome barriers to delivery.

Public Attitudes Towards Climate Change and Renewable Technologies

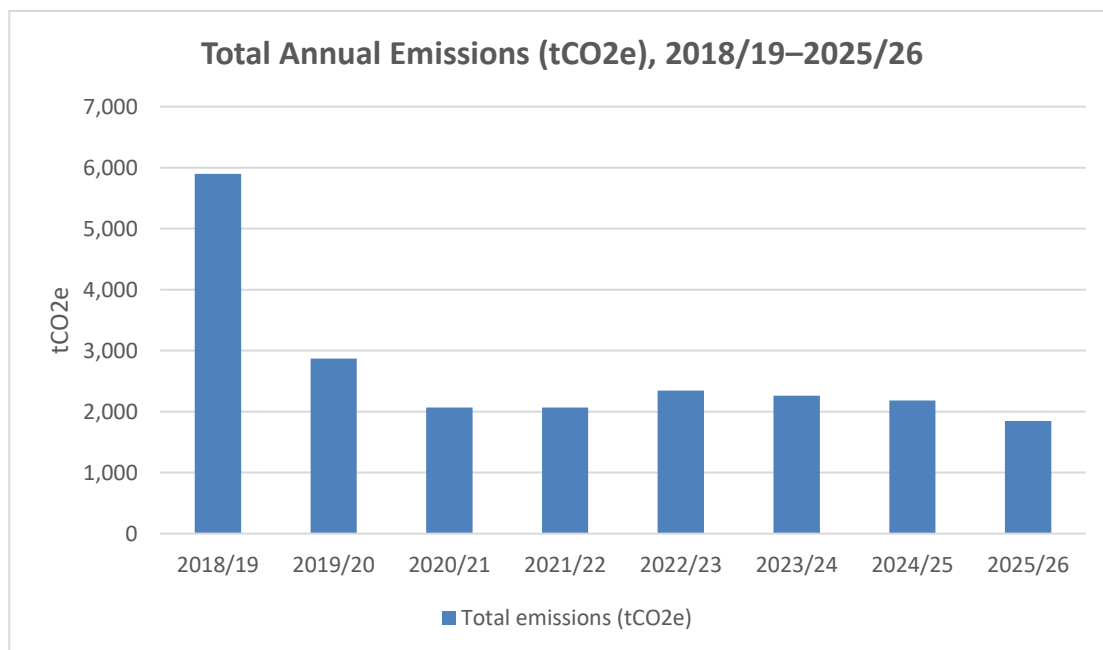
3.10 In line with the Council's Residents Survey, previously reported on, recent national surveys² show continued strong public support for climate action. In Spring 2026,

² Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) Public Attitudes Tracker: Spring 2026, published on 2 July 2026.

78% of UK adults reported being concerned about climate change and 89% were aware of the UK's Net Zero target. Support for renewable energy remains high at 81%, with solar energy receiving the greatest support. Public willingness to act also remains strong, with 84% of adults reporting they have made lifestyle changes to reduce their environmental impact. These findings are in line with the Council's Residents Survey and suggest that climate change remains an important issue for the public and reinforce the importance of the Council's continued work to reduce emissions, increase resilience and support sustainable communities.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The Council continues to make strong progress towards its ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. In 2025/26, total reported emissions, excluding the use of renewable energy certificates or offsets, were **1,848 tCO₂e**, compared with **5,896 tCO₂e** in the 2018/19 baseline year. This represents an overall reduction of **69%** as shown in the graph below³.



On this basis the Council is approximately **5% ahead of its current pathway to carbon neutrality and on target to meet its commitment to reach 70% by 2027.**

- 4.2 This continued progress is based on sustained investment in energy efficiency, changes to service delivery, and active management of energy and travel demand. However, the current position also highlights that further reductions will become more challenging, particularly where emissions are linked to core service delivery and operational assets. Unlike many organisations, the Council has not directly relied on sequestration or offsetting to achieve its emissions reductions to date,

³ The reduction in 2020-21 and 2021-22 in part is related to the lockdown due to the Covid Pandemic

instead focussing on driving down carbon emissions without harming service delivery. However, it is recognised that residual carbon will need to be partially offset by renewable energy generation and sequestration through habitat management.

- 4.3 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
Electricity - transmission & distribution losses

Corporate Estate (Scope 1 & 2)

- 4.4 Emissions associated with the Council's corporate estate, including gas and electricity use across buildings and street lighting, continue to represent the largest proportion of remaining emissions. In 2025/26, emissions from gas use reduced significantly to **1,239 tCO₂e**, compared with **1,561 tCO₂e** in 2024/25. This reduction is in part attributable to the closure of the Theatre, as well as reduced gas demand at the Energy Centre and lower consumption at Wellington Leisure Centre following improvement works.
- 4.5 While this represents a positive step, there is likely to remain potential for increasing energy demand as a result of wider pressures. These include growing demand across Council services, greater use of electrically powered heating, transport and equipment, and increasing energy requirements linked to external factors. These factors reinforce the need for continued focus on long-term heat decarbonisation, energy efficiency and demand management measures across the estate.

Matthew Webb Swimming and Fitness Centre

The new leisure centre currently under construction in Dawley will be the Council's first building built to be powered entirely by renewable energy, including an air source heat pump and solar panels. The centre, which will include a 25-metre swimming pool, will be used by the adjacent Telford Langley School and provide a significant increase in community swimming and leisure use for residents.

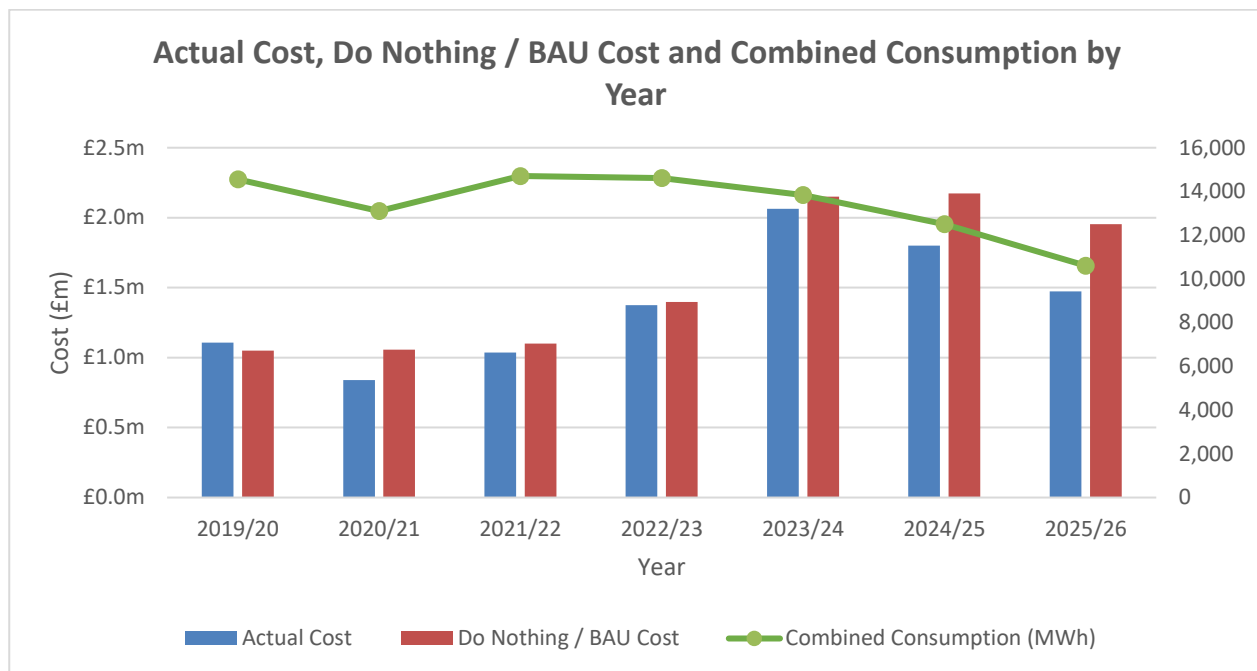


- 4.6 Electricity consumption has continued to reduce across the Council's operations. Building electricity consumption reduced to **3.77 million kWh**, from 3.95 million kWh in 2024/25. Street lighting consumption reduced slightly to **4.15 million kWh**, from 4.17 million kWh in 2024/25. Reductions in building electricity use have been driven by ongoing efficiency improvements and reduced usage at key sites, including ICT services and leisure centres.

Cost of doing nothing

- 4.7 The following graph compares the Council's actual expenditure on gas and electricity (blue bars) with the estimated cost that would have been incurred had energy consumption remained at 2018/19 levels (red bars). The green line shows total energy use in MWh. The sharp cost increase in 2022/23 and 2023/24 reflects high energy prices rather than increased consumption. Since 2018/19, the Council's investment in energy reduction measures has avoided an estimated **£1.19m** in gas and electricity costs compared with the business-as-usual scenario. The reduction in 2020/21 was due to lockdown as a result of the Covid pandemic.

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Fleet (Scope 1 – Transport)

- 4.8 Fleet emissions increased in 2025/26, reflecting ongoing operational pressures and service requirements. Fuel consumption increased to **140,918 litres**, resulting in emissions of **355.7 tCO₂e**, compared with **331.8 tCO₂e** in 2024/25. This increase is partly linked to continued demand for operational vehicles across services and the use of the Enterprise Club Car Scheme, which staff can use instead of their own vehicles. This is resulting in a steeper reduction in business mileage than increase in fleet mileage, as set out below.
- 4.9 The Council already owns **17 battery electric vehicles (BEVs)**, representing approximately **14% of the current fleet**. Plans are in place to look at further electrification of the fleet and installation of charging points at office locations to support this.

Electric Buses

The Council is in the process of taking delivery of two Alexander Dennis Enviro100EV electric buses, following a successful trial in 2025. The buses will help reduce emissions, improve air quality and lower operating costs. As fully electric vehicles, they produce zero tailpipe emissions, eliminating exhaust emissions of harmful nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter (PM), and are expected to be up to 70% cheaper to operate than equivalent diesel buses.



The Enviro100EV consumes just 0.54 kWh per kilometre and will complement the existing electric vehicle used on the Council's home-to-school transport service. By reducing reliance on fossil fuels and supporting cleaner, more efficient transport, these buses will contribute to the Council's carbon reduction objectives while delivering long-term financial and environmental benefits.

Business Mileage (Scope 3)

4.10 Business mileage emissions have continued to reduce, indicating ongoing changes in working practices, travel behaviour and the way staff access vehicles for work-related journeys. Total mileage reduced to **943,468 miles**, resulting in emissions of **253.9 tCO₂e**, compared with **288.1 tCO₂e** in 2024/25. This reduction is likely to be driven by:

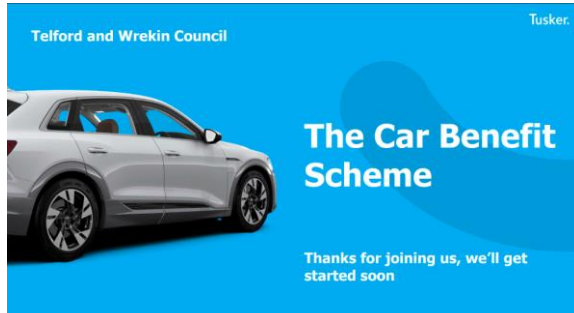
- continued use of alternative travel options, including the Enterprise Club Car Scheme, which completes around 5,000 trips per month with 282 employees signed up;
- changes in working patterns; and
- increased awareness and management of travel demand.

4.11 The downward trend in business mileage emissions is positive and shows that changes in travel behaviour can deliver measurable carbon savings. Continued focus on travel planning, remote working where appropriate, and low-carbon travel options will support further reductions.

Tusker Salary Sacrifice Car Scheme

Telford & Wrekin Council employees can access the Tusker Salary Sacrifice Car Scheme through the employee benefits platform. The scheme offers a range of **battery electric (BEV) and hybrid vehicles**, with no conventional petrol or diesel vehicles available,

helping staff make lower-emission travel choices. The scheme is proving popular, with **68 employees currently participating**, including **47 electric vehicles and 21 hybrids**, supporting the Council's commitment to cleaner and more sustainable transport.



Borough wide work

4.12 The Council continues to work with partners to progress the climate change agenda through the Climate Change Borough Partnership. Four partnerships act as subgroups to the overall partnership.

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

Telford Sustainability and Energy Cluster

The Telford Sustainability and Energy Cluster continues to provide an important forum for major employers in Telford to come together, share learning and explore common challenges around sustainability and energy. At an event in February, participants heard from a range of speakers on environmental sustainability and the role of social value through procurement, including a presentation from the Council's procurement team.



- 4.13 During 2025/26, the Council continued to support a wide range of community-based climate and sustainability activity across the borough. This included ongoing work through the Communities Climate Forum and the annual Climate Change and Adaptation Conference, which brought together community groups, town and parish councils, voluntary organisations, public sector partners and businesses to share good practice, strengthen collaboration and identify practical opportunities to build local resilience. Engagement during the year highlighted shared priorities around improving communications, supporting the decarbonisation of community buildings and helping communities prepare for the impacts of extreme weather.
- 4.14 Specific activity included support for local environmental and reuse projects through Envirogrant and Veolia's Added Social Value Fund, continued promotion of waste minimisation and recycling messages, and engagement with partners such as Marches Energy Agency to promote Telford Energy Advice and Future Ready Homes through community events and partnership meetings. The Council also continued to support community adaptation by working with partners to promote local flood action, signpost funding opportunities and encourage town and parish councils and community organisations to consider practical emergency and resilience planning measures.
- 4.15 Other support was provided through the Councillors' Pride Fund. In February 2026, a grant was awarded to Dawley Youth Club to support a recycling project. The project will involve partners including Veolia, Severn Trent and local schools. Funding will be used to purchase PPE, litter pickers, publicity materials, bin bags and a recycling station. The initiative will be piloted through the youth club and, if successful, will be incorporated annually into Great Dawley's wider community environmental activity.

Plastic Free

- 4.16 The Council continues to take practical steps to reduce the use of single-use plastics across its operations. Services are asked to identify and implement a range of measures to replace disposable plastic items with more sustainable alternatives. A recent example is the Virtual Schools team, which has introduced reusable storage crates for its activities and transitioned to reusable craft materials, reducing the use of items such as plastic glitter and foam-based products.
- 4.17 The Council also continues to promote awareness and behavioural change through communications and engagement activities throughout the year. As part of this year's annual performance monitoring process, all Heads of Service were challenged to identify at least one new single-use plastic item or practice that can be removed from their operations over the next 12 months. To support this exercise, guidance and examples of good practice were provided to help services identify suitable opportunities. The outcomes of this work will be used to inform the Carbon Neutral Action Plan, ensuring that the Council continues to identify and

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deliver practical measures to reduce plastic waste and support its wider environmental objectives.

Adaptation

- 4.18 During 2025/26, the Council continued to strengthen its approach to climate change adaptation, building on the Corporate Climate Change Risk Register adopted in 2024. The risk register will be continually reviewed and updated to reflect current and predicted climate hazards, including warmer wetter winters, hotter drier summers, heatwaves, wild fires, flooding and storms, and remains an important tool for identifying service risks, maintaining business continuity and supporting more resilient decision-making. Adaptation was reported to Environment Scrutiny during the year and is now being considered alongside wider business continuity planning, helping ensure that services are better prepared for extreme weather and future climate impacts. The Council will continue to work with partners, town and parish councils, and community organisations to support local emergency planning, strengthen community resilience, and identify practical measures and facilities that can support residents during emergencies, including extreme heat, flooding and other severe weather

Arthog Outdoor Education

Arthog provides outdoor education and adventurous learning opportunities for children and young people, helping to build confidence, resilience, teamwork and an understanding of the natural environment. During a period of extreme hot weather, the programme was adapted to reduce heat-related risks. Full-day activities were split into two shorter sessions, with young people returning to the centre at lunchtime so they could rest in the shade during the hottest part of the day. This reduced overall exposure to direct sun and helped lower the risk of heat-related illness, including heat stroke and dehydration. Water-based activities also used where appropriate to help keep participants cool and support safe participation during high temperatures



Next steps

- 4.19 The Council will continue to implement the actions contained within the Corporate Carbon Neutral Action Plan and monitor progress against its interim and long-term carbon reduction targets. Recognising that future emissions reductions are likely to become increasingly challenging, work is underway to review the next phase of

the Council's carbon reduction programme. This includes consideration of opportunities to further reduce emissions associated with the Council's estate and operations and will help inform the development of a longer-term carbon reduction pathway.

- 4.20 The Council is also working with community partners to explore opportunities through the Community Energy Fund. This work aims to identify opportunities to support community-based energy projects and wider climate resilience initiatives, which could help strengthen local sustainability, energy security and adaptation to climate change.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The alternative option would be to take no further action, which would result in the Council failing to deliver on its climate change commitments. This approach carries significant reputational risk, particularly given the Council's role as a community leader. Neglecting issues such as building energy efficiency and renewable energy development would lead to increased fuel costs and missed income opportunities and to make savings that allow for further investment in front line services. It would also negatively affect the health, wellbeing, and economic resilience of businesses, communities, and residents across Telford & Wrekin.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 Delivery of future carbon reduction projects may be affected by external factors outside the Council's direct control, including national energy policy, the availability of external funding, supply chain constraints, technological developments and delays to electricity grid connections. Such factors could impact the pace at which further emissions reductions can be achieved.
- 6.2 Risks associated with specific projects are monitored through the Council's existing governance, project management and risk management arrangements and will continue to be reviewed as the Council develops future carbon reduction and climate adaptation initiatives.
- 6.3 Climate change also presents an ongoing corporate risk to the Council's operations, assets and service delivery. More frequent and severe weather events, including heatwaves, flooding, storms and drought, may increase operating costs, disrupt services and place additional pressures on infrastructure and vulnerable residents. The Corporate Climate Change Risk Register has been developed to support the identification and management of these risks.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 The Council's 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 will be 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. Financial implications are considered as part of the Risk Register.

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 able 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 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 is expected to continue having a significant impact on the health, social, and economic wellbeing of residents in Telford and Wrekin. For example, the summer of 2025 and 2026 were the warmest on record, with prolonged heatwaves posing serious health risks, particularly to vulnerable groups such as older adults, children, and those with existing health conditions.

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- 11.2 Many of the actions outlined in the Council's Climate Change Plan offer substantial health co-benefits, including improved air quality, increased access to green spaces, and better housing energy efficiency. These measures not only support climate resilience but also contribute to healthier, more equitable communities. The impact of climate change is also considered in the Council's Health and Well Being Strategy 2023-2027

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 The Council's Climate Change Action Plan and Adaptation Risk Register take 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.
- 12.2 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, such as heatwaves, 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, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 This report sets out how Telford and Wrekin Council is addressing the current and future impacts of climate change and is therefore a key mechanism to support the Council's climate change work.

14.0 Appendices

- A Telford and Wrekin Council Carbon Neutral Action Plan
B Telford and Wrekin Strategic Climate Change Adaptation Risk Register

15.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	03/08/2026	17/08/2026	KK
Legal	03/08/2026	20/08/2026	EH
Finance	03/08/2026	18/08/2026	ER