

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET - 20 FEBRUARY 2020  
COUNCIL – 5 MARCH 2020**

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL  
BECOMING CARBON NEUTRAL ACTION PLAN**

**REPORT OF: PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE LEAD**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR H RHODES**

## **PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

### **1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

In 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published a report which advised that we must limit global warming to 1.5°C. Their review of over 6,000 sources of evidence found that, with a rise of 1.5°C, there would be risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth. It warned that we have only twelve years left within which to take serious action to avert this crisis and avoid the worst impacts.

Telford and its communities have been at the forefront of technological innovation from the first industrial revolution through to the fourth which is seeing rapid changes in clean technology, sustainable materials, transport and energy storage and generation pioneered in the Borough.

For decades Telford has carried the title Forest City – reflecting the wealth of greenspaces, landscape, forest and woodland which characterises the area and has been afforded protection and enhancement through Council policy and land management. The commitment to this was re-emphasised in January with the review of the Local Plan to be focussed on establishing a 'forest community' with climate change action central to the review.

**The Council has a track record of delivering carbon reductions and has already reduced its carbon footprint<sup>1</sup> by 44% from 14,173.1 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> (2005) to 7,956.0 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> (2018).**

Actions have included:

- **A switch to a 100% green tariff for Council buildings and street lighting;**
- **Installing only the second publically owned solar farm in the country** – the 4MW solar farm at Wheat Leasows generates enough electricity to power 800 homes generating 18.63 GWh of green electricity, a total carbon avoidance of over 9,000 tonnes, which has generated an income of £1.83m;
- **Affording protection to 200 Green Guarantee sites** – Council owned sites that provide valued local assets which also contribute to flood alleviation and act as 'green lungs' providing carbon sequestration;

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<sup>1</sup> A carbon footprint is a measure of the impacts of an activity on global warming by calculating the greenhouse gas emissions of these activities, usually stated as a 'CO<sub>2e</sub>', or carbon dioxide equivalent. This is done to show all key greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) expressed as a common unit, allowing easy comparison across organisations, industries and countries.

- The Council's waste management contract let in 2014 has seen residual waste reduced and reuse and recycling significantly increase. Residual waste (non-recyclable) is treated at Energy from Waste facilities rather than going to landfill. The new weekly food waste service, in operation since September 2019, has prevented 1838.22 tonnes of food waste to date from entering the residual stream. This is being recycled to create green energy for the National Grid and nutrient-rich fertiliser for use in agriculture. Residual waste has reduced by 1,768 tonnes when compared to the average of all the residual tonnage collected between September – December over the previous 3 years, this has delivered a gross CO<sub>2</sub> saving since the introduction of the food waste service of 918 tonnes. As a result **the borough's recycling target for 2019/20 is 54.66%, while the EU target is to recycle at least 50% by 2020.**
- **Converting over 20,000 traditional street lighting to LED lighting.** 96% of the conversion has been completed resulting in carbon reduction. The scheme has delivered savings of £420,000 per year since 2018/19 from the initial investment of £5.2 million.
- **Delivering LED lighting schemes across corporate buildings (Darby House, Wellington Civic Centre, Telford Ice Rink and Telford Tennis Centre) plus solar PV** at Telford Ice Rink – alone delivering energy savings of 439,072kWh (equivalent to cost savings of £57,079.36) and CO<sub>2</sub> reductions of 167.638 tonnes.
- Taking the lead in the implementation of **Plastic Free Telford Action Plan**
- Procured 7 **fully electric commercial vehicles** for use by Highways, Transport & Engineering Services, Public Protection and the Town Park. Which are capable of achieving 100 miles on a charge.

The Council recognises the adverse impact that Climate Change is having, both globally and locally, and the important role that local authorities can play in addressing this issue. On 25 July 2019, the Council approved a motion to declare a Climate Emergency making the following key commitments:

- o Make a commitment for the Council's operations and activities to be carbon neutral by 2030;
- o Collaborate and engage with residents, partners and businesses in Telford & Wrekin and at a regional and national level to achieve our aspiration for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030 – making sure we take communities with us, protect employment and without impoverishing our most deprived communities.

Over the last 6 months the Council has focussed on establishing a baseline position against its commitment to make Council operations carbon neutral. **This identifies the need for the Council to reduce its carbon footprint by a further 7,956.0 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> by 2030.**

Engagement with partners, new technologies, data, changing public attitudes, public funding and government regulation are amongst the many variables which will affect the development of the Action Plan so this cannot be set in stone and will evolve as opportunities arise. **Cabinet are therefore being asked to approve an initial Action Plan – Becoming Carbon Neutral – which will remain a live document, formally reviewed and rolled forward annually.**

**Using currently available data the Council has identified actions which will deliver a carbon reduction of 4,138 tCO<sub>2e</sub> – a huge step to our 2030 target - with a further suite of actions set out in the Plan to be developed over the next 12 months which will further close the gap.**

Amongst the actions in the Plan we are setting out to -

- Implement a **programme of low carbon retrofit schemes across our corporate buildings** including installation of solar PV at Newport Pool
- Procure a **multi partner electric vehicle framework** and deployment across car parks in Telford & Wrekin

- **Convert the remaining non LED highway and footway street lighting assets**
- Roll out food waste collections across Council buildings
- **Become one of the first Carbon Literate Councils in England**
- Commit to **enhance/restore over 70 Ha of heathland, grassland and wetland** across Council owned land
- **Scope the creation of a connected series of community forests – a key part of our ‘forest community’ commitment**
- Work with our major contractors to produce Carbon Reduction Action Plans covering their operations.

Over the next 12 months we will drive further carbon reductions through major development opportunities and strategy - including:

- **Promoting Station Quarter – the next phase of the regeneration of the Town Centre – as a Smart Quarter.** This development on brownfield land is important to the future success of the Town Centre, providing more local jobs and homes around a public transport hub. We will seek to minimise the carbon footprint, maximising digital connectivity and the creation of connected and accessible living, leisure and working space that seeks to set a standard for Town Centre development
- **Scoping the provision of a 100% renewable fast charging Electric Vehicle Forecourt**
- Exploring proposals for **delivering carbon reductions within the next phase of Nuplace** developments – the Council’s wholly owned housing company
- Exploring proposals to **deliver carbon reductions in the development and operation of Ni Park – our new flagship Agri Tech Innovation Park**
- Explore options to **further enhance sustainable transport provision in the borough**, working with partners to extend e-charging provision and considering options such as improving bus services, rail connectivity (including the potential for passenger rail services to the Ironbridge Gorge) and expanding walking/cycling provision
- **Placing tackling climate change including the need for mitigation and adaptation at the heart of policy development in the Local Plan review**
- **Publishing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy** which will set out measures to enhance and increase our landscape and woodland resource as well as increase carbon sequestration locally – locking in carbon that would otherwise contribute to climate change.

We have also just received confirmation that we have been successful in securing funding from the Government’s Heat Delivery Network Unit to carry out a **feasibility study into the development of a large-scale district heating network**. Heat networks are one of the most cost-effective ways of reducing carbon emissions from heating and their efficiency and carbon-saving potential increases as they grow and connect to each other. **The study will determine the potential to expand our existing Energy Centre in Southwater, which currently provides heat and power to Telford Ice Rink and Southwater One, to other buildings in Telford Town Centre – including Station Quarter** – working collaboratively with public and private sector partners. Subject to the business case, the connection of further buildings has the potential to lead to lower fuel consumption, reduced carbon emissions and reduced energy costs.

Telford & Wrekin is already experiencing a range of climate impacts, including heat waves and flooding, in the future these are expected to become more frequent and severe. The Action Plan has identified some actions to reduce vulnerability to climate change impacts. Over the next 12 months we will develop these further through:

- improving our knowledge and understanding of how the Council is affected by extreme weather events in terms of providing its services and its financial impact;
- identifying those most at risk from extreme weather events and develop mitigating actions
- reviewing our Local Climate Impact Profile (LCLIP) to help understand the impacts on residents and businesses

**Addressing climate change is a shared challenge that the Council alone cannot achieve, the report sets out plans to establish a Climate Change Partnership to work with the Council to fulfil our aspiration for the Borough to become carbon neutral and maximise engagement of all our communities.**

**The Sustainable Telford & Wrekin website, launched on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 provides more information about Climate Change, the Council's Plan to tackle Climate Change and will provide a platform for ideas, suggestions and case studies of what partners and communities can and are doing to reduce their carbon footprint.**

We are also proposing to work with our partners on a number of events that celebrate and promote action both within the Council and the Borough. Plans include Earth Day in April, a climate change theme at Carnival 2020 and the potential for a new business innovation event-to showcase how Telford companies are already at the forefront of this agenda and to share best practice.

The Council's Becoming Carbon Neutral Action Plan is published 12 months ahead of the Government's revised timetable for its Strategy and seeks to achieve carbon neutrality 20 years ahead of the national 2050 target. The Authority will look to maximise all opportunities to access funding, embed climate change into major investment plans and lobby Government for further support to deliver the Action Plan.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Cabinet:**

**1. Approves the Council's Becoming Carbon Neutral Action Plan 2019/20 set out in Appendix 1 outlining how the Council will work to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's operations and activities and influence carbon reduction Borough-wide;**

**2. Recognises that the rapidly changing context requires an annual update of the Action Plan reviewing the context, data and evidence; monitoring of progress and inclusion of new actions to further reduce the Council's carbon footprint;**

**3. Delegates authority to the Programme Executive Lead (and any Council Officer authorised in writing by the Programme Executive Lead) in consultation with the Executive Director: Housing, Communities & Customer Services and Cabinet Lead for Parks, Greenspaces and Natural Environment to amend and/or make additions to the Action Plan in the interests of achieving the objectives of mitigating and adapting to Climate Change both in respect of the Council's own operations and activities Borough-wide.**

**3. Approves the establishment of a Borough Climate Change Partnership as set out in Section 4.3 to work with the Council to develop and implement a Borough-wide Action Plan to meet the Council's aspiration for Borough-wide carbon neutrality by 2030, recognising that this cannot be delivered without the active participation and shared responsibility from all sectors of the community.**

4. Delegates authority to the Programme Executive Lead (and any Council Officer authorised in writing by the Programme Executive Lead) in consultation with the Cabinet Lead for Parks, Greenspaces and Natural Environment to implement arrangements for the operation of the Partnership.

5. Notes that this report in relation to the Council’s response to the Climate Emergency Declaration will be referred to Full Council for information as part of the ‘Matters Determined by the Cabinet’ report.

### **3 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	This initiative will contribute to the following community priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing the best start in life for children and young people;</li> <li>• Keep neighbourhoods safe, clean and well connected;</li> <li>• Support communities and those most in need and work to give residents access to suitable housing;</li> <li>• Improving health and wellbeing across Telford and Wrekin;</li> <li>• Protect and champion our environment, culture and heritage.</li> </ul>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	Addressing climate change will have a wide ranging impact. The Council has made a commitment to collaborate and engage with residents, partners and businesses in Telford & Wrekin and at a regional and national level to achieve our aspiration for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030 – making sure we take communities with us, protect employment and without impoverishing our most deprived communities.
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE</b>	The Council has made a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality in relation to its services and operations by December 2030.	
<b>FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	The Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 details the actions that will be put in place to support the reduction of carbon emissions from Council operations and activities.  While the majority of actions and ongoing costs can be met from within existing resources, some investment is required. Funding of £100k has been approved and is available in 20/21. This will be used to provide resources to further develop the Action Plan and identify associated costs.

		<p>The proposed service and financial planning strategy allocates £2m pa to a contingency in both 2021/22 and 2022/23 to fund additional capital priorities such as reducing the Council's carbon footprint and partnering with government and others on other climate change projects and any additional pressures that arise. This funding will be allocated to specific schemes through Financial Management reports to Cabinet and full Council or through future Service &amp; Financial Planning strategy reports. There is the potential for savings to be made by the Council as a result of some of these actions although it would not be possible to quantify the extent of them at the current time. (AEM 28/01/2020)</p>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	<p>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 and this will be a consideration when the Council's Local Plan is reviewed. 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 and its Action Plan together with the proposed community partnership is an appropriate approach. Implementation of the Plan may give rise to specific legal issues which will be picked up going forward (IR-03.12.19)</p>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</b>	Yes	<p>The Climate Emergency declaration was resolved with all party support at Full Council in July 2019 due to extreme concern about the impact of Climate Change and the urgent need for action. This report provides Members with an update on the Council's response to the declaration with the development of the Action Plan. Therefore, the actions set out in this report are designed to have a positive effect on the environment and climate. In the future all reports produced on behalf of the Council will set out the environmental and climate implications of the recommendations or advice being put forward.</p> <p>The content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to reduce emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> within the Council and enable reductions across the Borough. The Action Plan in Appendix 1 includes the carbon reduction values of the actions where it is possible to calculate these at this time.</p>

		It is also likely that many of the actions resulting from the Action Plan will have a positive effect on biodiversity as well as a being a benefit to improved adaptability to extreme weather.
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	<p>Risks: The Council is aware of current and predicated impacts of climate change. Some changes to the climate are already inescapable due to past emissions of greenhouse gases. Average temperatures having risen by around 1°C over the last century. We are seeing a trend towards warmer winters and hotter summers and there is emerging evidence of changing rainfall patterns.</p> <p>The top six areas of climate change related risks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Flooding risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure</li> <li>- Risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures</li> <li>- Risk of shortages in the public water supply, and for agriculture, energy generation and industry</li> <li>- Risks to natural capital, including terrestrial, soils and biodiversity</li> <li>- Risks to domestic food production and trade</li> <li>- New and emerging pests and diseases, and invasive and non-native species, affecting people, plants and animals</li> </ul> <p>The Council cannot address these issues alone and alongside putting in place actions to limit further CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the Council will seek to work with partners, government and residents to develop the Action Plan and establish a strategy to mitigate and support residents, businesses, partners and the natural environment adapt to the future climate.</p> <p>Community Engagement: Local businesses, organisations and residents are major stakeholders and need to be engaged effectively in the development and delivery of this agenda. In addition, this engagement will provide an opportunity for the Council to gather more ideas and suggestions to develop its plans and learn from innovative solutions that other partners and organisations have already developed and implemented.</p>
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	Borough-wide impact

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **4. INFORMATION**

#### **4.1 Background**

##### **4.1.1 Climate Change Science**

Human activity has already caused irreversible climate change and its impacts are being felt around the world. Global temperatures have increased by 1°C from pre-industrial times. The past decade has seen record breaking storms, forest fires, droughts, coral bleaching, heat waves and floods around the world with just 1°C of global warming.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is a United Nations body, founded in 1988, which evaluates climate change science. The IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, issued in October 2018 stated that in order to remain within a 1.5°C increase, governments would have to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030. This would be in order to avoid widespread drought, food scarcity, heat related deaths and loss of biodiversity including insects and vital food crop pollinators.

##### **4.1.2 Climate Emergency**

Since the IPCC report, a Climate Emergency movement has emerged. On 1 May 2019, the Labour party moved a non-binding motion in the House of Commons to declare ‘an Environment and Climate Emergency’, which was passed by MPs across the floor. Subsequently 64% of Local Authorities have declared a Climate Emergency to date. The most commonly set date for Councils’ operations and activities to be carbon neutral is 2030. The UK Government has set a target for the UK to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

There is no single definition of what declaring a climate emergency means. The majority are defining a ‘climate emergency’ as reflecting a commitment to becoming carbon neutral (given the results of the IPCC report) by 2030 to stop global temperatures rising above 1.5°C.

##### **4.1.3 Climate Emergency Motion**

The Council recognises that Climate Change is having a significant impact on the environment world-wide and is directly affecting our own community. The climate is predicted to change through warmer wetter winters and hotter, drier summers with the number of extreme weather events is also expected to increase. Already over the last ten years Telford and Wrekin has experienced a wide range of extreme weather events including flooding, heatwaves, heavy snow and storms all of which have impacted on the health and wellbeing and livelihoods of local people.

The Council also recognises its leadership role – setting a positive example addressing the impact of our own operations and services, providing information and advice to the public and encouraging our staff to take action and engaging with partners and the community to tackle climate change across the Borough.

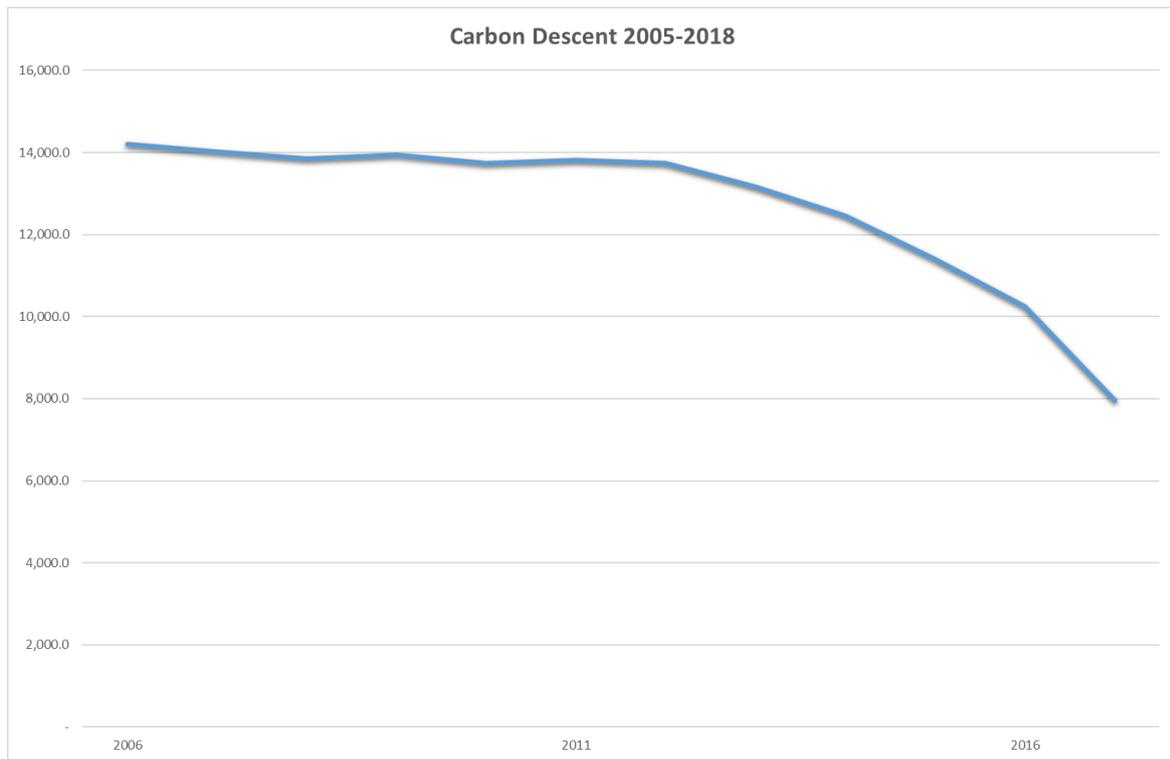
In the light of this, a motion calling for the Council to declare a Climate Emergency was approved at Full Council on 25 July 2019. This was a combined motion alongside the Plastic Free Campaign. The motion included the following specific commitments relating to Climate Change:

- Make a commitment for the Council’s operations and activities to be carbon neutral<sup>2</sup> by 2030;
- Collaborate and engage with residents, partners and businesses in Telford & Wrekin and at a regional and national level to achieve our aspiration for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2030 – making sure we take communities with us, protect employment and without impoverishing our most deprived communities;
- Measure our current carbon footprint as a baseline to enable us to report on progress;
- Set up a partnership to develop an action plan to move this declaration to delivery.

## 4.2 Carbon Neutral Council

### 4.2.1 What we are already doing

The Council has a long standing commitment to and history of, tackling climate change. Over the last decade, the Council has made progress reducing carbon emissions from its operations and activities, as well as the Borough. Through initiatives illustrated in Appendix 1 the Council has already successfully reduced its carbon footprint by 44% from 14,173.1 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> (2005) to 7,956.0 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> (2018), as depicted in the graph below.



### 4.2.2 Carbon Reduction Baseline

Despite this achievement to reach the 2030 target, the Council will have to go further and reduce its emissions by a further 7,956.0 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>.

<sup>2</sup> Carbon Neutral – carbon emissions caused by the organisation either directly or indirectly will need to be reduced until they are close as possible to zero. Any remaining emissions need to be compensated through ‘off-setting’. This could be done by doing something to absorb the equivalent amount of carbon emissions from the atmosphere for example by planting trees. Other ways could be to generate a surplus of renewable energy.

In order to establish the Council's baseline, the Council has monitored emissions from each area of its activities including buildings where we can control usage (this excludes schools and the property investment portfolio at this stage) through the most widely-used international accounting tool, the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol. Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of purchased electricity, steam, heating and cooling consumed by the organisation. Scope 3 includes all other indirect emissions that occur e.g. in relation to contracted services.

The scopes assist in defining the sources of pollutants and targeting action.

The research to establish the baseline has enabled the Council to identify the following:

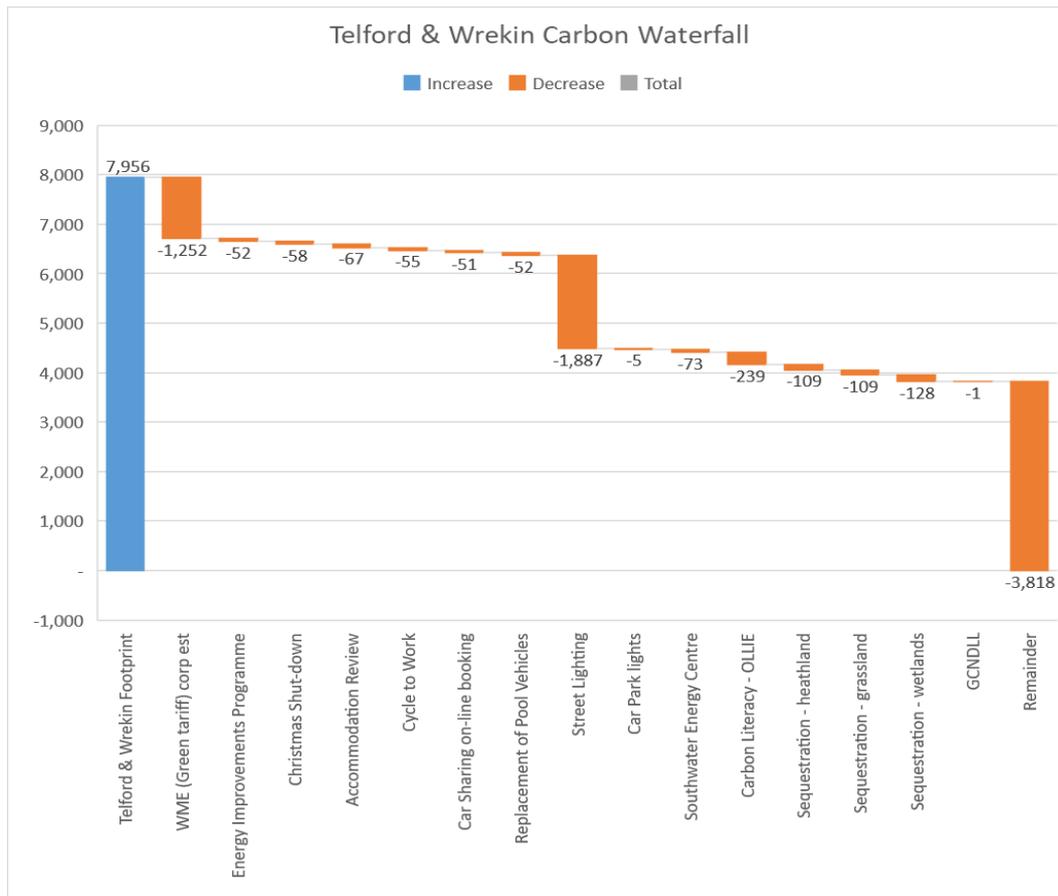
<b>Tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub></b>	<b>Fuel</b>	<b>18/19</b>	<b>Scope1</b>	<b>Scope2</b>	<b>Scope3</b>
Corporate Estate	Gas	1,776	1,776		
	Electricity	1,251		1,252	
Street Lighting	Electricity	1,887		1,887	
Transport & Travel	Petrol / Dies	3,042	302		2,740
<b>Total Consumption</b>		<b>7,956</b>	<b>2,078</b>	<b>3,139</b>	<b>2,740</b>

Schools will be included in the Borough-wide Action Plan. The Action Plan commits to engage and involve schools. A key part of this commitment is to include Schools as of March 2020 in the green energy tariff.

#### **4.2.3 Becoming Carbon Neutral Action Plan**

Our Becoming Carbon Neutral Action Plan (Appendix 1) sets out proposals to be delivered over the short, medium and long term. It is published in line with the Council Motion showing our commitment to take action now - but it is not set in stone. The actions are based on a range of assumptions and current knowledge but recognise that learning from partners and communities, new technologies, changing public attitudes, public funding and government regulation are evolving and will influence the Action Plan. The Plan is therefore live and will be formally reviewed and rolled forward annually.

Unlike many published Action Plans the Council has sought to identify the tonnage of CO<sub>2e</sub> to be saved by the actions in the Plan – where possible. On this basis it is anticipated that the most developed actions in this initial Plan alone will enable the Council to reduce its emissions by 4,138 tCO<sub>2e</sub> by 2030 with further actions identified, to be scoped over the next 12 months, set to close the gap – as depicted below:



The Action Plan is divided by themes and includes a focus on:-

- Switching to an entirely Green Tariff for energy while continuing to develop options to generate more renewable energy locally
- Completing implementation of LED solutions for street and highway lighting
- Implementation of a retrofit Energy Improvement Programme across key Council buildings
- Reviewing our accommodation, working patterns and associated travel plans
- Becoming one of the first carbon literate Council's
- Procurement of a multi partner electric vehicle framework and deployment across car parks in Telford & Wrekin
- Working with our major contractors to produce Carbon Reduction Action Plans covering their operations

In addition to these specific actions the Council is committed to driving innovation and to protect, care and invest into our Borough. As a Borough we have seen successes in attracting new investment, jobs and new homes that benefit our communities. We recognise the need to continue to invest and grow to support the regeneration and success of the Town, tackling inequalities and creating new employment while also tackling climate change. We will therefore focus on delivering developments that are inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient. As such, we will be exploring a number of initiatives through the Action Plan linked to:

- ❖ Station Quarter – the next regeneration phase of the Town Centre, delivering new commercial and residential development at a major public transport hub that futureproofs the success of the Town Centre and the economic benefits this brings across the Town. We will:
  - promote this as a Smart Quarter – aiming to reduce the carbon footprint;

- maximise digital connectivity; and
  - create connected and accessible living, leisure and working space that aims to set a standard for Town Centre development
- ❖ Evaluating the feasibility of expanding the existing Energy Centre in Southwater
    - Carry out a heat mapping and energy master planning study to determine the potential to expand the existing Energy Centre in Southwater, which currently provides heat and power to Telford Ice Rink and Southwater One, to other buildings in Telford Town Centre
    - Working collaboratively with public and private sector partners, subject to business case, to connect across the Centre, including Station Quarter – lowering fuel consumption, reducing carbon emissions and energy costs.
  - ❖ The Local Plan Review
    - Developing policy proposals that support and promote a transition to a carbon neutral future
    - Seek sites for renewable and low carbon energy generation to stimulate investment in low carbon technologies, jobs and businesses
    - Drive standards in new housing and commercial development
  - ❖ Nuplace
    - Explore proposals/technologies for delivering carbon reduction in Nuplace homes
  - ❖ Electric Vehicle Forecourt
    - Work in partnership with Gridserve to provide a 100% renewable fast charging electric vehicle forecourt for the Borough
  - ❖ Climate Change Strategy
    - Build on the initial action plan to look in greater detail at adaption and resilience

We are also working to further develop data on emissions arising from all contracted services (Scope 3) with short terms actions to influence commissioning and procurement processes to promote both social responsibility and carbon reductions.

Telford & Wrekin Council's approach to carbon neutrality will also realise co-benefits. For example, actions on sustainable travel modes will tackle air quality but this also has benefits to health from exercise and mental well-being as-well as reducing carbon emissions.

#### **4.2.4 Biodiversity & Carbon Offsetting**

Biodiversity has already been impacted by the current rise in average temperature. Species distributions are changing, along with the timing of migration, breeding and flowering. The latest State of Nature Report for the UK identifies that 41% of species have decreased in abundance and, of those species assessed, 15% have been classified as threatened with extinction from Great Britain. There is a 'Climate Emergency' and also a 'Biodiversity Crisis' and the Council recognises both need to be addressed locally.

Nature-based solutions can play a key role in mitigating against, and adapting to, the impact of a changing climate. Natural solutions and land management practices can be used to maximise our natural habitats ability to absorb carbon from the atmosphere through natural processes, known as carbon sequestration.

The Action Plan sets out how, only after seeking to reduce carbon emissions through organisational change, the Council will seek to offset residual carbon budgets through local carbon sequestration projects.

In 2020 the Council will publish a Local Nature Recovery Strategy - detailing how the Council working with partners will enhance, restore or create heathland, species rich grassland and wetland habitats including within its Green Network and will continue to refine ways to accurately measure and monitor their ability to sequester carbon.

As a minimum we are committing through Council owned land to enhance, restore and/or create up to –

- 15 Ha of heathland
- 30 Ha of species rich grassland and
- 25 Ha of wetland

Over the next 12 months we will develop a borough wide strategy for woodland management that:

- Identifies areas for natural woodland regeneration
- Restores and restructures existing woodland areas
- Develops proposals to create a linked series of community forests

To support local partners we will publish a parish level woodland opportunity map and work to develop delivery plans and funding to implement our 'forest community' vision.

#### **4.3 Carbon Neutral Borough**

The Council is setting an example and seeking to provide leadership by reducing its own carbon emissions and using the planning and regulatory powers local government has to shape and influence action on climate change in the Borough. However the Council does not have the power to significantly reduce carbon emissions across the Borough as a whole, alone. The Council is aware that many people, organisations and businesses in Telford & Wrekin are already exploring smarter, greener ways of working and living – and recognises there is much to learn and share between partners.

Following the launch of the Council's Action Plan, the Council will be establishing a Climate Change Partnership based on the principles of a Cooperative Commission – inviting local organisations, representatives of the community and influencers to come together to explore and implement ways and means for the Borough to become carbon neutral.

The aims of the partnership are to:

- Share best practice and look for opportunities to develop joint initiatives
- Develop and own a carbon baseline for the Borough
- Develop and own a Carbon Neutral Action Plan for the Borough
- Promote the existing Climate Change initiatives going on in the community
- Encourage organisations from different sectors to commit to reducing carbon emissions
- Engage with different parts of the community to gather new ideas on climate change initiatives
- Organise a number of community events/action days.

Subject to the Partnership's views this could involve the establishment of thematic groups to develop ideas and cooperative solutions to address challenges in reducing the Borough-wide footprint.

The Council has an established cross party Environment Scrutiny Committee who it is proposed will play a key role in the engagement strategy working with the Partnership.

#### **4.4 Communications Campaign**

On 5<sup>th</sup> February, the Council launched Sustainable Telford & Wrekin – a new website promoting climate change and initiatives including plastic free Telford. The website will be developed as a route through which partners including Parish and Town Councils, community groups, interest groups, businesses and residents can engage together and with the Council via a virtual network to:

- support/get involved with carbon reduction action;
- put forward suggestions and ideas on how carbon emissions can be reduced within the Borough.
- Share best practice, ideas, case studies and toolkits

A programme of events is being developed to include Earth Day (April), linked with Carnival 2020 and a new business innovation event – which will raise public awareness and showcase action and innovation being pioneered locally in addressing climate change.

As part of the Action Plan the Council will also be developing ways of working directly with Parish and Town Councils and with schools to encourage and support their action.

#### **4.5 Next Steps**

The Council's newly appointed Climate Change & Sustainability Coordinator will work with the Council's Climate Change Working Group to implement and develop the Council's Action Plan and wider engagement with partners and the community.

### **5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Papers for Full Council, 25 July 2019 for Climate Emergency

### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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