

## **TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET - 18 March 2021**

### **TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL BECOMING CARBON NEUTRAL ACTION PLAN - ANNUAL UPDATE**

#### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR: COMMUNITIES, CUSTOMER AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR CAROLYN HEALY, CABINET  
MEMBER FOR VISITOR ECONOMY, HISTORIC & NATURAL  
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

## **PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

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

The impact of climate change is unprecedented, both globally and locally, with Borough residents and businesses seeing more frequent flooding, travel disruption and extreme episodes of heat in the summer.

The importance of this issue to our community can be illustrated by the 2020 Residents' Survey, which found that the majority of Telford & Wrekin residents were concerned about climate change.

The Council has been committed to reducing its carbon footprint for the last ten years. However, following the declaration of a Climate Emergency in July 2019, with a clear target for the Council's operations to be carbon neutral by 2030, action to tackle climate change has been at the heart of everything we do. The Council published its 'Becoming Carbon Neutral' Action Plan in February 2020. This report provides an update on progress in delivering this plan.

Good progress has been made in reducing emissions from the Council's operations, with a 36% decrease in 2019/20 compared to the previous baseline year. Emissions for the current year (2020/21) will show a further reduction and will be published later this year.

This is as a result of successfully implementing a wide range of carbon reduction measures. Key achievements over the last 12 months are highlighted in Figure 1 '20 steps in 2020 towards Becoming Carbon Neutral'. The Council has continued to prioritise this work, recognising the need to respond to the climate emergency as well as the Covid-19 pandemic. Appendix 1 sets out in detail the progress that has been made, and also includes proposed new actions which will lead to further improvements.

In addition to reducing emissions the Council has also committed to increasing carbon storage, building on the existing carbon storage of more than 10,697 tonnes/CO<sub>2e</sub>/hectare/year achieved through our Councils existing woodland landholdings. This has been enhanced through schemes such as: trialling habitat projects at The Granville, the first phase of delivering 70ha of species rich grassland, wetland and heathland and securing Green Recovery Challenge funding with the national charity 'Buglife' to deliver grassland enhancements at Rough Park Meadow.

Actions planned for the next year include a £1.37m grant-funded scheme to fit heat pumps and improved insulation in Council Leisure Centres, retrofitting Council buildings and temporary housing, measures to deliver a 30% reduction in business travel and a commitment to plant a tree for every reception age child in Telford & Wrekin on Council-owned land.

The report updates on how the Council has been working in partnership locally, regionally and nationally on the climate change agenda. The Council has established the Telford and Wrekin Climate Change Partnership, in conjunction with representatives from more than thirty local organisations. The Partnership is currently developing an action plan to tackle climate change across the wider Borough, which will be published for public consultation later this year.

The Council has also run a successful programme of communication campaigns in 2020/21 to help residents, businesses and communities make changes to reduce their carbon footprints. In order to enable even more local organisations to take action, the Council launched a new £100k Climate Change Fund in February 2021.

Next year, the Council will progress new projects aimed at reducing emissions across the wider Borough, such as improved cycling and walking routes, completion of the Newport Innovation Park (Ni-Park) with electric vehicle charging points and solar panels, and installation of electric vehicle charging points on Council car parks. It will also deliver new ways to educate and encourage people to get involved in tackling climate change, including through a free 'Green Festival' event, and interactive paving in Southwater that uses the power of walking to charge street furniture.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Cabinet:**

**Approves the Council's updated Becoming Carbon Neutral Action Plan 2020/21 set out in Appendix 1 outlining how the Council will continue to work to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's operations and activities and influence carbon reduction Borough-wide;**

**Delegates authority to Director for Communities, Customer and Commercial Services (and any Council Officer authorised in writing by the Director for Communities, Customer and Commercial Services) to exercise the Council's powers relating to, the preparation, publication, consultation and processing to secure the delivery of the Borough Action Plan;**

**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.**



# Steps in 2020

## towards Becoming Carbon Neutral

### Solar panels and LED lighting

fitted (8 projects complete, 8 in progress)

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 268 tonnes**

### (Enhanced) green electricity tariff

for Council buildings and schools

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 1,252 tonnes\***

### Cycle 2 work scheme

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 16.5 tonnes**

### natural cooling system

for our datacentre

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 60 tonnes per unit<sup>a</sup>**

46 Nuplace homes  
being built with **solar panels**  
and **charging points**

More than 500 additional  
**LED street lights**,  
99% of lights now converted

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 7,414 tonnes<sup>b</sup>**

### £100k of community grants

for climate change projects

### Climate Change Champion volunteers

More than **8,600 free trees**  
for residents and organisations

Storing carbon by  
**planting species-rich  
grassland**

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 9 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> storage**

£1.3m funding for **heat pumps** and  
**better insulated buildings**

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 800 tonnes\***

### 6 new electric vans

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 6 tonnes per annum**

### 174 new cycle stands

across Telford and Wrekin

### Over 1,400 employees home-working

saving on printing and travel

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING Printing: 5.2 tonnes per month\***

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING Mileage<sup>c</sup>: 22 tonnes per month<sup>c</sup>**

2,400 computers replaced with laptops  
using **80% less electricity**

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 200 tonnes**

recycling services

**saved 20,000+ tonnes of emissions**  
equivalent to 10,000 cars off the road

**4,000 engagements** with climate change  
social media posts, including **more than**  
**2,000 suggestions** from residents

Telford & Wrekin

**Climate Change Partnership  
set up** with 33 organisations involved

**Telford Energy Advice service**  
for residents

### Food waste recycling

in Council offices

**CO<sub>2</sub>e SAVING 1.25 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per month\***

\* approximate CO<sub>2</sub>e saving

<sup>a</sup> compared to conventional air conditioning

<sup>b</sup> since April 2017 compared to 2016/17 benchmark

<sup>c</sup> Compared to the 151,448 miles of business mileage claim by staff in April 2019, staff claimed approximately half this amount, 76,203 miles, in April 2020.



### 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 all the Council's priorities but particularly : • Our natural environment is protected – we are taking a leading role in addressing the climate emergency
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	The Council has made a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality in relation to its services and operations by 2030.	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	<p>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.</p> <p>A revenue budget of £100k is available in 2021/22 to provide resources to further develop the Action Plan and identify associated costs. There is also a Climate Change reserve of £50k that can be drawn down if required. (MLB 01/02/21)</p> <p>The proposed service and financial planning strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 contains a capital allocation of £4m to support Climate Change initiatives. This funding will be allocated to schemes as required within the Action Plan and appropriate finance support provided. (DR 1/02/21)</p>
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes	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

		<p>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.</p> <p>Implementation of the Plan may give rise to specific legal issues which will be picked up going forward (IR-02.02.21)</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 an annual update on the Council's 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. The content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to reduce emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> within the Council and across the Borough. The Action Plan in Appendix 1 includes the carbon reduction of the actions.</p>
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	<p>Risks: The Council is aware of current and predicted impacts of climate change. Some changes to</p>

		<p>the climate are already inescapable due to past emissions of greenhouse gases and 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>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.</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.</p>
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	Borough-wide impact

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

### **4. INFORMATION**

#### **4.1 BACKGROUND**

##### **4.1.1 Global Context**

The Paris Agreement, adopted in November 2016 by the UK, saw 195 countries agree on the need to keep global temperature rises this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius while pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.<sup>1</sup>

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report published a special report which indicates that limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius would require net zero carbon emissions by around 2050 (IPCC, 2018). The Panel recognises that any additional warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius would significantly worsen the risk of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people around the world.<sup>2</sup>

##### **4.1.2 National Context**

Britain's Climate Change Act 2008 contains a legally binding national commitment to cut greenhouse gas emissions. The target was originally an overall cut in emissions of at least 80% by 2050, relative to 1990. However, in 2019, this was amended with a target of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

On 18th November 2020, the Government announced the ten-point plan<sup>3</sup> for a green industrial revolution. The plan covers clean energy, transport, nature and innovative technologies, mobilising £12 billion to create and support up to 250,000 green jobs in the UK.

More recently, on 4 December 2020, the Government announced a new target to reduce the UK's emissions by at least 68% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

##### **4.1.3 Local Action – Declaration of a Climate Emergency**

The Council has had a successful long-term track record of reducing its carbon footprint, having reduced emissions by 44% from 14,173 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> to 7,958 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>, from 2005 to 2018, with the greatest reductions from 2011 onwards.

In July 2019, members of Telford & Wrekin Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency. The Declaration set out the commitment for the Council's operations to become carbon neutral by 2030 with an aspiration for

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<sup>1</sup> [https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english\\_paris\\_agreement.pdf](https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution>



the Borough to be carbon neutral by the same date. It should be noted that this is a much more ambitious than the current national target.

The Council also committed to:

- 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.

Telford and Wrekin Council is not acting alone to respond to the Climate Emergency. As of October 2020, 74% of District, County, Unitary and Metropolitan Councils had also declared a Climate Emergency.

In February 2020, the Council published its first 'Becoming Carbon Neutral' Action Plan which laid out the initial steps to carbon neutrality by 2030. A baseline of 7,958 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> for 2018/19 was established, against which further progress could be tracked and reported (see Section 4.2.1).

In October 2020, the Council's priorities were revised to include a new priority ***'Our natural environment is protected – we are taking a leading role in addressing the climate emergency'***. This commitment embeds climate action in the Council's decision-making processes to make sure that all service areas contribute to becoming carbon neutral.

## **4.2 CARBON NEUTRAL COUNCIL**

### **4.2.1 Carbon Emissions 2019/20**

The Council has continued to monitor emissions from the following activities:

- Corporate estate;
- Street lighting;
- Transport and travel.

Compared to the baseline year of 2018/19, the Council's carbon emissions in 2019/20 reduced by approximately 2,903 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> (36%) from 7,958 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> to 5,055 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>.

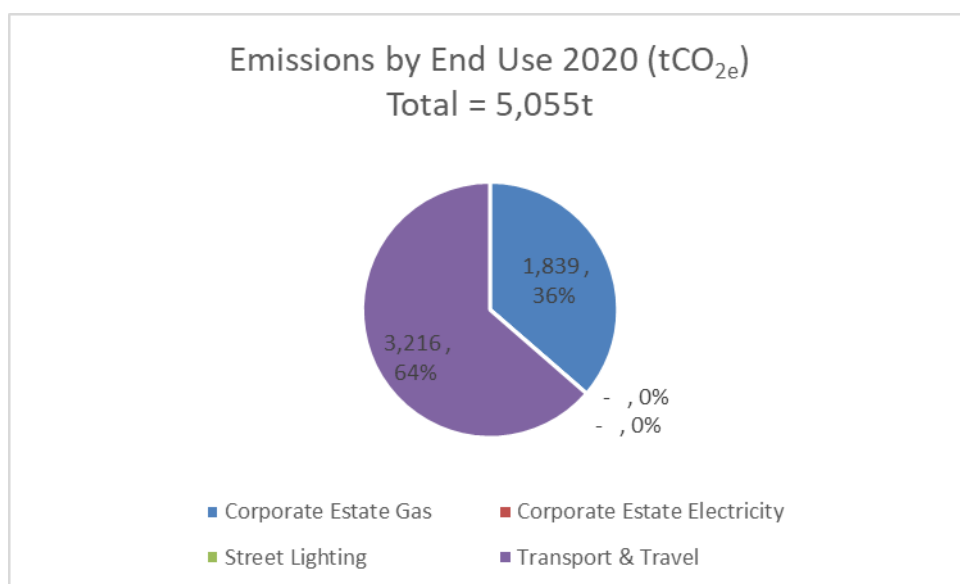
The Council's financial year starts in April, therefore data for the current year (2020/21) is not yet available. However, a further reduction is expected, in part due to changes in working practices linked to Covid-19 (see Section 4.2.2). In future, we will move to reporting emissions every six months (September/March).

These decreases in emissions have been achieved by implementing a wide range of carbon reduction measures (see Appendix 1 and Section 4.2.4). This has included moving to a new green electricity tariff. From April 2021, we will be moving to an enhanced green tariff with greater traceability of the source of electricity purchased.

In parallel, the Council has continued to reduce electricity usage, for example, continuing the conversion of traditional street lighting to LED, with 99% of street lights now converted. There is also continued investment in energy generation and energy efficiency retrofit schemes in Council buildings. To date, eight projects to install solar panels and LED lighting in Council buildings have been completed, in total saving -268 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>. The Council has secured 60% grant funding from the Sustainable Energy in Public Buildings (SuPuBu) fund for these projects.

Currently another scheme to install solar panels has started on site at The Place, with a pipeline of seven new projects in progress.

The pie chart below shows that the Council's 2019/20 residual carbon footprint was from transport/travel and gas use from the corporate estate.



Overall, there was good progress in carbon emission reductions in 2019/20. However, the data shows the importance of targeting heat and transport & travel, which have both been a focus in 2020/21, and will be moving forward.

Regarding low carbon heat for our buildings, the Council has successfully applied for funding from both the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund and the Low Carbon Skills Fund. The Low Carbon Skills funding was used to complete feasibility studies to assess whether heat pumps and thermal insulation could be installed at seven sites to improve energy efficiency and achieve carbon reduction savings. The studies were then used to submit bids to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund with £1.37m awarded for schemes to be delivered in 2021 to install air source heat pumps and improved insulation at Oakengates and Newport Leisure Centres.

The Council has also started to tackle emissions from the Council's transport and travel activities, for example by:

- Implementing a Cycle 2 Work Scheme for employees in November 2020;
- Replacing pool vehicles with ultra-low emission vehicles, starting with six electric vans which have been operational since November 2020;
- Running a campaign in September 2020 to encourage employees to take-up ultra-low emission vehicles as part of the Council's Car Lease Scheme.

#### **4.2.2 Impact of Covid-19 – New Working Practices**

The 2019/20 footprint was only slightly affected by Covid-19 restrictions, which started in mid-March 2020. In line with Government advice, the majority of office-based employees then started working from home (typically more than 1,400 employees a day), which as well as helping to reduce the spread of infection has been beneficial from a climate change perspective.

The effects of these new working practices will be included when emissions data is reported for the current accounting year (2020/21), however to illustrate:

Printing: in an average month, prior to lockdown, the Council printed 353,320 pages. Post lockdown, the Council printed an average of 49,491 pages a month. This is a reduction of approximately 5.2 tonnes of CO<sub>2e</sub> emissions a month.

Business mileage: In April 2019, staff claimed 151,448 miles (43 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>) of business mileage, however in April 2020, this was almost halved to 76,203 miles (22 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>).

Energy: In April 2019, the energy consumption of Addenbrooke House (one of the Council's main office buildings) was 19,518 kWh (approx. 5 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>), however in lockdown in April 2020, this reduced to 11,143 (approx. 2.5 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>), which is a 43% reduction in energy use.

The carbon savings made will be significant and data will be updated at the end of this financial year to assess the full year impact on emissions. The pandemic has highlighted the benefits of staff working from home and the Council is keen to sustain these new working practices. In particular, there is an opportunity for the Council to explore a blended way of working with some staff working a portion of their time at the office and at home (in reporting future emissions, a key action will be to identify how best to account for energy being used by employees while undertaking Council work from home).

As such, Council policies on home, mobile and flexible working, and business mileage are currently being reviewed, including a commitment to reduce business mileage by at least 30% on an ongoing basis from April 2021. A new corporate travel plan has been commissioned to drive delivery of this target.

The initial Council response to the Covid-19 pandemic had been planned and delivered as an emergency response. However, the Council has also been

planning the transition from the initial emergency response to recovery and reset. The Council has created a “Recovery, Reform, Reset” strategy which identifies a number of themes to address short, medium and long term actions needed over the next twelve months and beyond. One of the themes is the Environmental & Infrastructure Thematic Group, which has nine priorities, including sustainable travel, green infrastructure recovery and the transition to net carbon zero. This approach links in with the Council’s Becoming Carbon Neutral Action Plan.

### **4.2.3 Carbon Sequestration (Storage)**

The Council has now completed work to estimate the current carbon sequestration<sup>4</sup> rates within its existing woodland landholding. Carbon sequestration is the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide, and is a key way of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and helping to tackling climate change. Other green spaces owned by the Council do have a carbon sequestration value, however further work needs to be carried out to determine their value.

The Council’s woodland landholdings sequester an average of 10,697 tonnes/CO<sub>2e</sub>/hectare/year. This has not been included in the Council’s carbon reduction figures, as this relates to existing woodland. However, the action plan includes a range of projects to increase carbon storage, including enhancing, restoring and creating heathland, species rich grassland, wetland habitats and woodland. This includes a commitment to plant additional trees on Council land, creating additional community forest with a tree planted for every child starting in reception on an annual basis (currently 2,153 children).

Further details will be published in a Local Nature Recovery Strategy and a Borough-wide strategy for woodland management in 2021.

So far the Council has successfully:

- Registered with DEFRA/Natural England as a ‘nature recovery delivery partner’;
- Secured funding from Natural England to launch a habitat mapping project with volunteers and local specialists;
- Trialled habitat projects at The Granville, the first phase of delivering 70ha of species rich grassland, wetland and heathland;
- Secured Green Recovery Challenge funding with the national charity ‘Buglife’ to deliver grassland enhancements at Rough Park Meadow.

The Council has also increased the accuracy of the measurement of the Borough’s tree canopy cover, which has shown that the Borough already has a 15% canopy cover – higher than the national average<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> The removal and storage of carbon from the atmosphere in carbon sinks (such as oceans, forests or soils). For example, forests absorb and store atmospheric carbon due to photosynthesis.

<sup>5</sup> In March 2020 it was estimated that there was 3.2 million hectares of woodland in the UK representing 13% of the total UK land area (10% England, 15% Wales, 19% Scotland and 9% Northern Ireland) compared to 38% for Europe as a whole and 31% worldwide. In the urban area of Telford and Newport there is 26% canopy cover.

In order to increase awareness of the importance of trees in helping to capture carbon, reduce flooding, create new habitats and improve health and well-being, the Council launched the Trees4TW initiative in November 2020 as part of National Tree Week. The scheme provided 8,600 free trees, a mix of native species grown in the UK, to households, schools, charity organisations, public sector services, businesses and landowners within the Borough. The scheme closed before the published end date due to unprecedented demand.

The Council will continue to map opportunities for woodland restoration, restructuring, natural woodland generation and new planting and engage with third party land owners who are keen to re-wild their landholdings.

#### 4.2.4 Delivery in Action - Case Studies

Figure 1 gives a snapshot of key achievements over the last year. The case studies below provide more details and a full update is provided in Appendix 1. Some of these actions have contributed to reducing the Council's own emissions and some are more community-focused where the Council has played a leadership role to support the wider Borough becoming carbon neutral.



Work has commenced to build 46 Nuplace homes off Southwater Way (Nuplace is the Council's housing company) with all properties to include solar panels and electric car charging points



A food recycling service for the Council's main office buildings has been trialled. Food collections were rolled out to the three main Council buildings in January 2020 and the service ran for ten weeks before the lockdown. Circa 2.5 tonnes of food waste was collected. This will recommence once offices re-open.



The Council's main ICT server rooms will be relocated in February 2021 with natural cooling installed. Natural cooling devices use outdoor conditions to reduce the need for refrigeration, saving costs and reducing carbon emissions.





Three of the Council's key contractors are now working in partnership with the Council to tackle climate change. Idverde and Veolia<sup>6</sup> have produced carbon reduction action plans. Balfour Beatty developed and implemented a sustainability plan as part of their contract prior to April 2019.



The Council has introduced environmental criteria weightings to encourage suppliers to use sustainable practices and to reduce carbon emissions in the supply chain. For example, Lyreco (stationery supplier), has a 40% carbon reduction target to reduce the current footprint of deliveries from 2.80 tonnes of CO<sub>2e</sub> to 1.68 tonnes of CO<sub>2e</sub>. We are achieving this by consolidating deliveries from Lyreco.



More than 2,400 desktop computers have been replaced with laptops, in total saving -200 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub>. The new laptops also enabled the roll-out of Microsoft Teams at the start of the pandemic within 48 hours, delivering further emission savings from effective home-working.



Working in partnership with Natural England, the Council has started to deliver great crested newt district licensing across the Borough. This scheme will involve the strategic restoration and creation of pond networks at a landscape scale. Licencing became operational this year. This will contribute towards the Council's carbon sequestration.



The six new electric vans will help to reduce the Council's emissions by around 6 tonnes CO<sub>2e</sub> per year.

The electric vans replace six conventional diesel vans. They will be used by the Highways and Enforcement teams for work around the borough.

<sup>6</sup> Veolia services carbon impact is listed below:

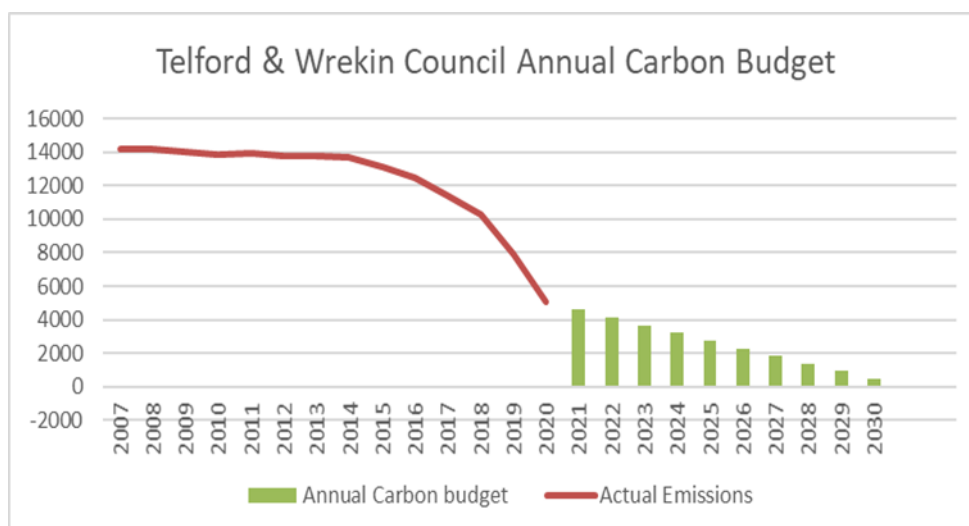
- Fleet of vehicles that carry out the collection service produce the equivalent of 1,349 tonnes of carbon dioxide, whereas the service has avoided the equivalent of 20,231 tonnes of CO<sub>2e</sub> (net) through the processing of the materials collected.
- Food waste has avoided 605 carbon dioxide equivalent tonnes
- Recycling (purple top bin and blue bag) has avoided 19,709 carbon dioxide equivalent tonnes
- Garden waste (green wheelie bin) –has avoided 52 carbon dioxide equivalent tonnes
- Refuse (red top bin) –avoided 1,498 carbon dioxide equivalent tonnes through energy recovery

## 4.2.5 Future Commitments

New actions have been added to help meet the target for the Council's operations to be carbon neutral by 2030 (see Appendix 1). The new actions include suggestions from local organisations, Councillors, employees, and residents (>2,000 suggestions received), along with research into national best practice.

Where possible, the contribution that these new actions will make to reducing the Council's carbon footprint have been quantified, however it should be noted that in some cases further work is needed to accurately assess this. The Council's action plan will continue to be a live document, which will be amended as actions are delivered and added on an ongoing basis, with an annual progress report to Cabinet and half yearly data updates.

The Council's future pathway to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 is set out in the carbon budget<sup>1</sup> below. Where we can undertake actions to go further faster the Council will endeavour to do so.



This is based upon an annual carbon footprint as follows:

Year	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
Carbon Footprint (tCO <sub>2e</sub> )	4,595	4,136	3,676	3,217	2,757	2,298	1,838	1,379	919	460	0

## 4.3 CARBON NEUTRAL BOROUGH

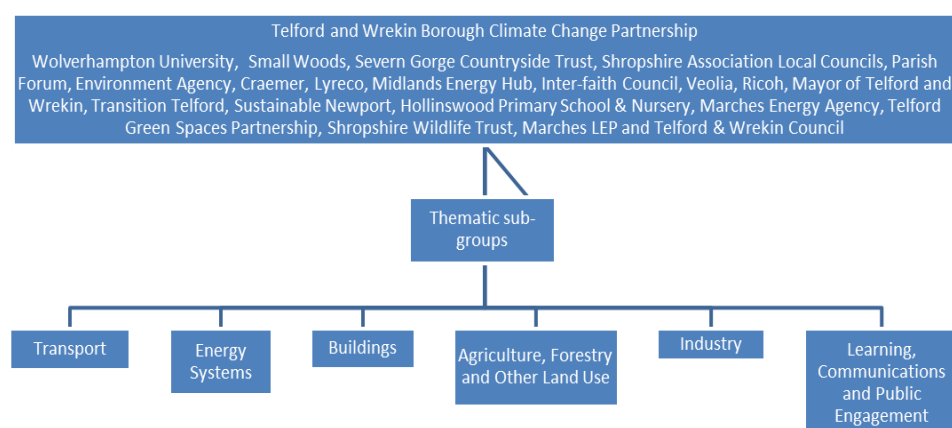
The Council has also played a key role in supporting others in the Borough to tackle climate change and improve the Borough's environment:

<sup>1</sup> A carbon budget is the cumulative amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions permitted over a period of time to keep within a certain temperature threshold.

### 4.3.1 Telford and Wrekin Climate Change Partnership

To address the Climate Emergency, the Council committed to setting up a Telford and Wrekin Climate Change Partnership, which first met in June 2020. Through the Partnership, the Council is working collaboratively with businesses, educational establishments, community groups, Town & Parish Councils and other public sector organisations, using our partners' knowledge and expertise to further the climate change agenda Borough-wide.

The Partnership is set up as follows:



The Council has worked closely with the Partnership to establish six thematic sub-groups. The thematic sub-groups have enabled even more organisations from within the Borough to get involved, often bringing a unique skill-set and interest specific to the thematic areas. Each sub-group is developing their own action plan, which will be brought together within an overarching Borough action plan, which will be consulted on with residents in spring 2021.

### 4.3.2 Town & Parish Councils

The Council is actively working with Town and Parish Councils to support and encourage action at an even more local level. The Council has provided practical information and advice through a Climate Emergency Toolkit for Town and Parish Councils, and also established a Town and Parish Climate Change sub-group (16 Town and Parishes are members), which feeds into the main Telford and Wrekin Climate Change Partnership.

### 4.3.3 Community Engagement

Since the Climate Emergency Declaration, the Council has been committed to raising awareness amongst residents, local communities and businesses of the impact of climate change and the positive steps that people can take to reduce this.

The Council has run a programme of communication campaigns over the last 12 months. In total, there were approximately 4,000 engagements with these campaigns over this period, which included:

- World Environment Day (June 2020) – launch of My Wild Telford with >500 photos of the Borough's green spaces and wildlife submitted by residents;
- Co-operatives for Climate Action Day (July 2020) – Facebook live Q&A event on Climate Change;
- Recycling Week (September 2020) – Veolia ran a competition to name characters to raise awareness of different recycling bins (>100 entries);
- Trees4TW (November 2020) – launch of scheme offering free trees to residents and organisations in the Borough to coincide with National Tree Week.

A calendar of communication will continue during 2021. As well as linking in to national and international campaigns, it is also planned to run a free community event in Telford Town Park in autumn 2021 (subject to Covid-19 restrictions) to showcase the things that people can do to reduce their carbon footprint, help nature, and live 'greener'.

A range of new case studies and information have been added to the Sustainable Telford & Wrekin Website ([www.sustainabletelfordandwrekin.co.uk](http://www.sustainabletelfordandwrekin.co.uk)) to give practical examples to help people that want to take action, featuring members of the Telford & Wrekin Climate Change Partnership and the Council.

As well as raising awareness, the Council has also prioritised understanding the community's views about climate change, and involving local people and organisations in developing future plans to tackle it. The 2020 Residents' Survey included a whole section on this topic.

Residents were asked to rate how concerned they were about climate change on a scale of 1 (not concerned at all) to 10 (extremely concerned). Around 25% of residents were extremely concerned, whereas only 6% were not concerned at all. On the scale of 1-10, 74% answered 6 or above, reinforcing the Council's decision to declare a Climate Emergency in July 2019. More than 2,000 individual ideas for tackling climate change were suggested, mainly focused on Transport, Housing, Planning and Waste/Recycling.

The survey also asked what residents were already doing, or would consider doing, to reduce their own carbon footprint. Recycling was the activity that the highest percentage of residents do regularly (91%), however the results suggest that there is also potential to increase other activities, for example to triple the number of people using public transport, walking and cycling.

Looking at longer-term action, more than half of residents (59%) said that they already had fitted insulation and a further 20% would consider doing this. The two areas with the biggest potential to increase in the next five years were buying an electric vehicle and installing renewable energy (60% and 55% respectively).



***‘You said, we did’ – how we’ve used this feedback:***

- ✓ ***We have created a new priority within the Council Plan, ‘our natural environment is protected and the Council has a leading role in addressing the climate emergency’, to reflect residents’ concern about climate change;***
- ✓ ***We have used the suggestions put forward by residents to update the Council’s Becoming Carbon Neutral Plan (see Appendix 1);***
- ✓ ***We have shared all residents’ suggestions about how to tackle climate change with the Telford & Wrekin Climate Change Partnership, to help develop the Borough-wide action plan.***

The Council also launched a new volunteering opportunity on World Environment Day, Climate Change Champions. The Champions actively engage with their communities to share information on climate change. Champions have submitted case studies for the Sustainable Telford & Wrekin website to illustrate why they had chosen to become a volunteer.

Within the Council, elected members of all political parties have had the opportunity to give their views, and have contributed ideas to further develop the Council’s Becoming Carbon Neutral Plan, through two member drop-in events and a programme of meetings with the Environment Scrutiny Committee.

The Telford and Wrekin Climate Change Partnership provides a key forum for the Council to engage with key external partners and stakeholders, and through the formation of the six thematic sub-groups even more local organisations have got involved. As part of developing the Borough Action Plan, the Partnership is developing a communication and engagement plan. This will include consulting residents on the draft action plan.

#### **4.3.4 Telford & Wrekin Climate Change Fund**

The Council launched a £100k grant scheme on 19 February 2021 to encourage local organisations in Telford and Wrekin to take action to reduce their carbon footprint and to support a green recovery at a local level. The scheme is open to a wide range of local organisations, including Town & Parish Councils, voluntary and community groups, Friends of Parks & Local Nature Reserves, schools, nurseries and small businesses. A maximum grant of £5k is available with a minimum ceiling of £1500 per application (apart from small businesses which are able to receive up to 50% of costs, to a maximum of £2.5k).



## 4.4 REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WORKING

### 4.4.1 Regional and National Collaboration

Whilst our key focus is on reducing the Council's own carbon footprint and tackling climate change within our Borough, we also recognise that the impact of climate change crosses boundaries and so it is vital for us to work with and learn from neighbouring authorities, those throughout the UK who have also declared Climate Emergencies and other partnerships in the region. Where appropriate, we have and will continue to collaborate on projects and funding bids with others. Examples of how we have been working regionally and nationally include:

- **Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** – the Council is represented on the LEP Board in order to inform their Energy Strategy, giving access to LEP projects and funding, such as MarRE funding (£200k awarded to Telford & Wrekin organisations through joint promotion);
- **River Severn Partnership** - the Council is represented on the Partnership and its sub-groups. It has worked with partners to develop expressions of interest for funding opportunities that could deliver on key priorities in relation to flood risk management at a strategic level;
- **Shropshire Council & Shropshire Climate Action Partnership (SCAP)** – community partnership for the Shropshire area) – a member of SCAP attends the Telford & Wrekin Climate Change Partnership meetings and vice versa in order to share good practice and identify opportunities for joint initiatives, for example a new community-led project to support residents understand and reduce their carbon footprints. The actions proposed in the SCAP action plan (published January 2021) have been reviewed as part of our best practice research, and where appropriate, included as part of the update of the Council's Becoming Carbon Neutral action plan (see Appendix 1);
- **Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Sustainability & Transformation Partnership (STP)** – the Council, in partnership with Shropshire Council, is leading work to develop a Climate Change Strategy across health and social care organisations in Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire;
- **Shropshire County Pension Fund** – the Council does not have control over the investment decisions of the fund, which are taken by the Pensions Committee (a separate legal body). An encouraging confidential report (provided by LGPS Central Ltd) on the fund's climate risk was presented to the Committee in August 2020 and the Council has representatives on the Committee who will continue to highlight the Council's climate change objectives during the current consideration of the fund's strategy and future investment options. Training has also been undertaken by Committee members which has included Responsible Investment; utilising Environmental, Social and Governance factors (ESG) and understanding impact investing.
- **National networks** – as well as benchmarking and sharing our approach through national networks, such as APSE (Association of Public Sector Excellence) Energy, we have also incorporated new

actions into our action plan through a review of best practice from other councils.

#### **4.4.2 Asks of Government**

Telford & Wrekin Council will continue to call for increased ambition from Government in tackling Climate Change at a national level, and lobby for more support and funding to achieve our carbon neutral target by 2030. Delivering our ambitions for Telford & Wrekin is absolutely dependent on Government action, and a step change in policy, investment and regulatory powers is required to achieve our vision of 'A thriving, carbon neutral, climate resilient community where all our local residents and organisations actively contribute to and benefit from a more sustainable future'.

Whilst the Council welcomes the new national funding schemes that have been launched this year, such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund, our experience has been that funds are often oversubscribed or have unrealistic deadlines. Whilst we will continue to proactively submit funding bids, and encourage others in Telford & Wrekin to do so, the Government needs to do much more to drive the change needed and at pace, and to provide additional financial support to mitigate the significant 'new burdens' being placed on local authorities as a result of growing concern and public pressure about Climate Change.

Our 10 asks of Government are:

- Increase its funding to local authorities to deliver carbon reduction targets;
- Allow a greater amount of time for authorities to bid for and complete projects through Government climate change funding, and apply less prescriptive criteria to funding, to enable larger and more innovative schemes to be delivered;
- Strengthen Building Regulations to allow a faster transition to low carbon development;
- Remove barriers to community renewable energy schemes e.g. no NNDR on solar panels, extension of Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme;
- Set explicit decarbonisation objectives for Ofgem to allow for strategic grid reinforcement;
- Make a commitment to increase renewable energy generation nationally, with clear targets and financial support;
- Bring forward legislation in the form of carbon taxation to incentivise behaviour change based on the polluter pays principle;
- Bring forward the commitment to ban the sale of new diesel and petrol vehicles to 2030;
- Incentivise low carbon agriculture;
- Increase the budget for national Climate Change research and innovation.

#### **5. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- Papers for Full Council, 25 July 2019 for Climate Emergency
- Papers for Full Council, 5 March 2020, Matters Determined by Cabinet

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Conference of the Parties, Adoption of the Paris Agreement, Dec.12, 2015  
U.N. Doc. FCCC/CP2015/L.9/Rev/1 (Dec. 12, 2015)

HM Government (2020). The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution

IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. In: Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, T. Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. World Meteorological Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 32 pp.

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