

Herefordshire's Journey to Net Zero carbon by 2030

8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a climate emergency and set a target of zero carbon by 2030. In December 2019 this was strengthened to a 'climate and ecological emergency', showing the Council's commitment to protecting Herefordshire's natural environment, biodiversity and wildlife.

April 2020 an updated [carbon management plan](#) and [associated action plan](#) for Council emissions was published and the Council commits to using 100% renewably sourced energy where this provides the best carbon reduction return on investment.

January 2021 A Task and Finish Group, established to carry out a climate emergency review to contribute to the design and delivery of the council's new climate change commitments, reported back to the general Scrutiny Committee. They made a total of 72 recommendations covering a wide range of topics supporting the Council's journey to net zero and nature rich. **All Council decisions now include consideration for Climate and Ecological implications.**

Autumn 2021 The Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership was established to catalyse and coordinate new action to help the whole County reach net zero by 2030. Herefordshire's Climate and Nature Action Plan is developed with involvement of people from across the County. The plan focuses on six key areas including sustainable housing and buildings, energy, transport food, land use and farming and waste and can be found at www.zerocarbonherefordshire.gov.uk Public awareness of the action plan is supported by the Greener Footprints communications and engagement campaign.

January 2022 A Citizen's Assembly was held and as a result **35 recommendations** of projects, which could help the County progress towards net zero, were made under four categories: Buildings, Transport, Land-use, food and farming, Cross cutting. The new homes bonus grant funding of £1.33m was allocated to the climate change reserve to progress these recommendations.

Changes in Planning - Environmental Building Standards Supplementary Planning Document

The Environmental Building Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been drafted in response to the council's recognition of the climate and ecological emergency and vision for a zero-carbon. The key aim of this SPD is to drive up environmental standards of buildings in Herefordshire and set out recommendations to drive up higher, more efficient standards of building design and construction and will encourage the adoption of these by developers and householders. The SPD includes best practice recommendations for standards in key areas of building performance, energy use, external environment, accessibility, and construction. The guidance also includes best practice case study examples for high-quality sustainable design, use, and construction.

As a supplementary planning document, it cannot enforce building standards or introduce new policies into the development plan. The Local Plan is currently being updated, and the revised plan will include policies to deliver and set out higher environmental building standards to help meet carbon zero targets, net zero carbon is an integral theme threaded throughout the draft Local Plan. The SPD is seen as an interim measure to set out recommendations for best practice building standards. The SPD provides detail of how development can achieve higher quality buildings through design and higher quality materials, as well as greater use of renewable energy technology in buildings. This identifies ways the new Local Plan can include the future policy to ensure that it is fully aligned with our zero-carbon, nature-rich goals for Herefordshire.

For existing buildings, there is the Net Zero Retrofit Toolkit to provide guidance on retrofit schemes to help improve the efficiency of existing buildings. This is expected to be used by householder and developers to use for existing and listed buildings.

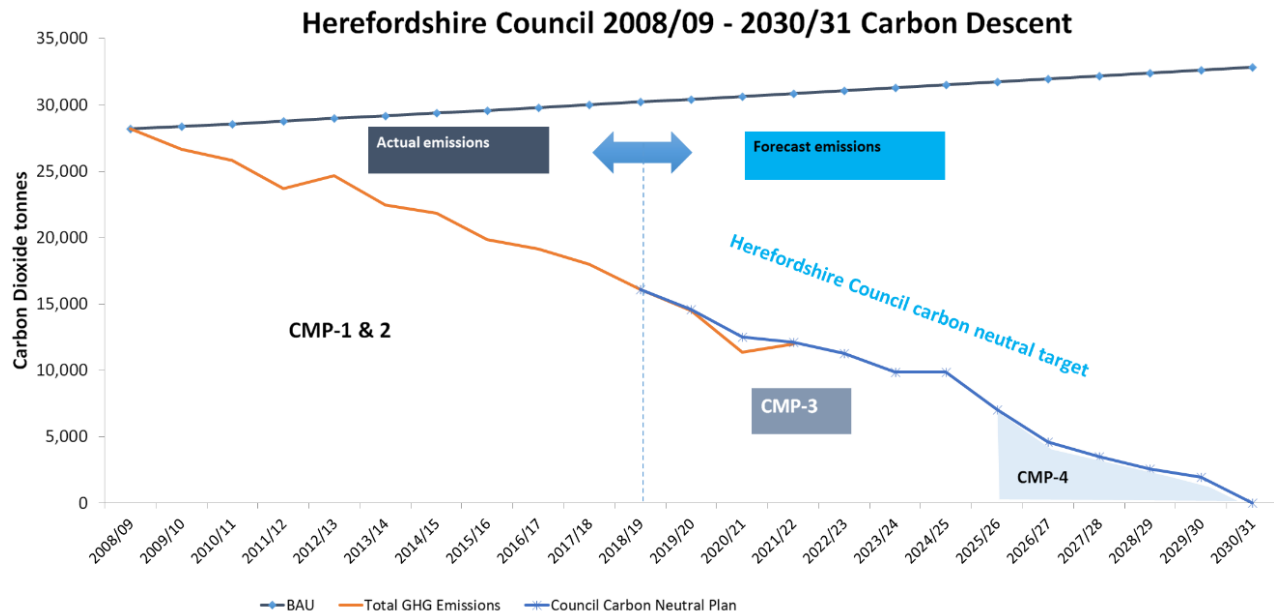
Future Homes Standard

The Herefordshire Future Homes Report sets out the environmental building design standards for future housing developments on council-owned land and council retrofit schemes. This document outlines the Herefordshire Future Homes standards we will use when building these homes and represents a key step towards the Council's 2030 carbon reduction commitment, and a key step towards better housing for all. This standard will be part of the solution to the climate crisis – reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero. Herefordshire Future Homes will be healthy for residents – eliminating cold, mould and damp. This aims to build warm and cosy homes, in healthy neighbourhoods

with space for kids to play, space for nature, and provision of sustainable transport options. Herefordshire Future Homes will minimise energy use and fuel bills – tackling fuel poverty and making these homes truly affordable to live in.

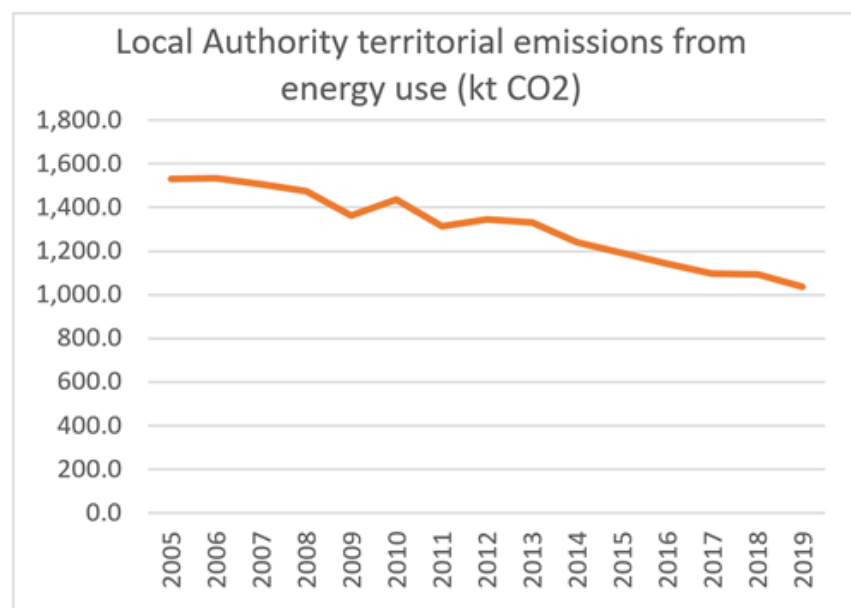
Herefordshire Council's 2021-22 Carbon Footprint

Total emissions are down by **57.4%** (16,176 tCO₂e) overall compared to 2008/09 (baseline year) when the Council started measuring carbon emissions. **The Council is also on target to meet its 75% reduction by 2025/26 and its commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030/31.**



County Carbon reductions

Since 2005, Herefordshire Council has been using data provided by government to report carbon emissions from the county. Over this time we have seen a **32% decrease** in emissions. This carbon footprint represents a **territorial-based** footprint, which is based solely on emissions from **energy** use in the county.



What's happening in 2023?

The recommendations from the Citizens Assembly have been reviewed in consultation with teams across the Council. 15 projects are moving forward in the first phase with more projects which have been initially scoped and ready to go once phase 1 projects underway and delivering.

Priority projects include:

- Active travel – walking
- Home energy efficiency audits
- Decarbonisation of corporate buildings
- Decarbonising/Electrifying the school transport fleet
- On street residential electric charge points
- Energy and Climate Business Conference
- Supporting the development of the retrofit supply chain and PAS 2035 skills training
- School travel plan support
- Taxi and private hire low carbon strategy
- Farm carbon audits
- Business energy audits
- Renewables survey
- Updating the LCLIP for Herefordshire
- Herefordshire Council Tree Management Plan
- Developing zero carbon website

The Built and Natural Environment team have also undertaken various projects to address the Climate and Ecological Emergency:

- Development of the Nature Strategy which sets out a series of priority actions for the council to address both the ecological emergency and wider benefits including climate change.
- Due to commence working on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and Nature Recovery Network Mapping which will identify land for proposed habitat restoration this may well include the creation of woodland, orchard, tree planting which will increase carbon sequestration.
- We have also recently had sign off to commission a tree management plan for the councils own land this will set out good practice in terms of tree planting, management and replacement and will advise on a strategy for Ash die Back to ensure removal only where necessary and replacement planting of a wide variety of species to ensure longevity of the trees in situ. We are proposing to include within the management plan a mechanism to assess level of carbon sequestration our tree coverage brings within the county.
- We are also involved in a number of biodiversity projects to offset highways maintenance; including tree planting within areas of open space within the market towns and tree, shrub and hedgerow planting at our wetland sites.

In Summary

Good progress has been made by Herefordshire Council, leading the way to show it is possible to reach its ambitious net zero target. Residents, community organisations and businesses must now make their own changes, from making homes more energy efficient, reducing and recycling waste and choosing alternatives to car travel. Together we can better protect the environment and preserve our wonderful county for future generations.