



Title of report: Carbon Management Plan 2026/27-2030/31

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 21 May 2026

Cabinet member: Councillor Swinglehurst, Culture and Environment

Report by: Corporate Director, Economy and Environment

Report author: Energy Resilience Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To approve the council's new Carbon Management Plan (CMP) which sets out the council's approach to reducing carbon emissions for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31. The plan is focussed on the council's own operations, and will enable the council to deliver energy efficiencies, increased resilience and potential financial savings.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The Carbon Management Plan 2026/27 – 2030/31 is approved.**

Alternative options

1. Do not adopt the CMP and proceed without any guiding document to deliver continued emissions reduction from 2026/27 onwards. This would be contrary to the ongoing approach taken by the council to deliver energy efficiencies and reduce carbon emissions by 2030.

Key considerations

2. The Herefordshire Council Plan 2024-28 identifies reducing carbon emissions and achieving related efficiency and savings as a priority, The Carbon Management Plan is a key enabler towards this objective. Target benefits include:
 - a. Improving the energy efficiency of buildings to reduce council expenditure and secure energy resilience
 - b. Installing appropriate renewable energy technology to reduce council energy use, deliver savings and support local industry and employment
 - c. Increased use of renewable energy where appropriate to support energy and business resilience of the organisation, reducing reliance on price-volatile imported fuel supply, and delivering long-term savings
 - d. Maximising potential for reduced air pollution to improve public health, particularly older population with respiratory illnesses and younger children.

The Carbon Management Plan (CMP) sets out Herefordshire Council's approach and the actions required to achieve these objectives via energy efficiency and emissions reduction. The majority of UK local authorities have some form of CMP.

3. Herefordshire Council produced its first CMP in 2011 covering a 5-year period and this will be the fourth CMP. Previous plans have been revised and updated at the end of each period to produce the next plan and ensure continuous progress. The third CMP covered 2020/21 to 2025/26 and this revised, fourth plan presented for adoption began development in early 2025. This was guided by a Cabinet Task & Finish group which met between January and May 2025.
4. The plan identifies emissions sources and the actions required to reduce or eliminate carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency. Collectively, enough suitable actions are identified to achieve and potentially exceed the stated target for the council to no longer be a net source of carbon emissions after 2030/31.
5. The plans have enabled the council to deliver significant progress on carbon emission reduction and to achieve financial efficiencies and environmental benefits. Carbon emissions in the 24/25 year were 63.5% lower than the 2008/09 baseline¹.
6. The proposed fourth CMP identifies actions that further reduce council carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and resilience, support cost reduction and deliver emissions 'offset'.

¹ This figure refers to the revised emissions boundary for future reporting as set out in the CMP.

Community impact

7. Local government has a clear leadership role in demonstrating and delivering on energy efficiency, organisational and community energy resilience, and other benefits clearly derived from carbon reduction. The council's work can help inform, involve and engage businesses and residents across the county, and is supported by the council's business support services, for example advice and signposting to specialist support on energy efficiency and cost savings.
8. External factors such as 'energy shocks' caused by global instability, fuel price volatility and scientifically-evidenced impacts of climate change have a detrimental impact across Herefordshire's residents, environment and local economy in common with all parts of the UK.
9. Reductions in carbon emissions through reduced use of fossil fuels, and switch to renewable sources, supports improved energy resilience, price-stability and potential long-term cost-savings, public health benefits including associated health and care costs from respiratory illnesses and long-term impact on young children through poor air quality.
10. The CMP and its subsequent delivery are a key driver to the council's objectives to deliver improved energy efficiency, resilience, and further associated economic and organisational sustainability, cost control/reduction and other benefits.

Environmental impact

11. Delivery of the CMP will contribute positively to the environment through reducing carbon emissions and limiting environmental impacts of energy use.
12. Reducing fossil fuel emissions contributes to improving local air quality and therefore public health.

Equality duty

13. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the council to consider how it can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that it is paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
14. The mandatory equality impact screening checklist has been completed for this decision, and it has been found to have no impact for equality.
15. Evidence indicates that some emissions reduction measures can unintentionally deepen inequality but also recognises that impacts of climate change disproportionately harms existing marginalised groups. Future delivery of actions will require equality duty screening.

Resource implications

16. The plan includes outline cost estimates for each action.
17. Business cases are not included, as these will be required when funding and delivery opportunities are realised throughout the plan period.
18. All future actions within the plan will require the appropriate governance.

19. Some actions may be eligible for grant funding, should these funding sources become available. The council has previously secured funds for decarbonisation works which have been instrumental in the development of a sound business case.
20. Subject to approval of project funding and inclusion in the capital programme and revenue budget, activity identified in the CMP Action Plan may deliver potential revenue savings and generate additional income and return on investment for the council.
21. No impact on ICT, human resources or property has been identified.

Legal implications

22. There are no specific implications within this report.
23. The relevant legal provisions for this decision can be found in the council's constitution, www.herefordshire.gov.uk/constitution.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Reputational risk arising from the lack of a credible plan to reduce energy costs, achieve a balanced energy portfolio, increase energy resilience against supply and price volatility and by delivering significant carbon reduction by end of financial years 2030-31.	The carbon management plan outlines a credible route to achieve the councils energy use objectives. Local Authorities' published plans are regularly examined by various campaign groups etc.
Failure to maximise opportunities to achieve emissions reduction.	The plan identifies where action on emissions can be delivered across the council and where further opportunities exist.
Failure to identify and pursue future external funding opportunities to deliver improved energy performance and carbon emission reduction.	Future funding for public sector bodies is unclear, but the CMP incorporates an ongoing proactive approach to identification of external funding using a clear data-driven approach and understanding of opportunities for efficiencies to reduce carbon emissions.
Failure to improve energy efficiency results in increased risk to unexpected price rises adding pressure to in-year budgets.	Reduced overall energy consumption and shift to electricity through the strategic and proactive CMP helps improve resilience and minimise the risk of supply-side shocks and resulting price volatility, therefore reducing risk of unexpected financial pressures.

24. Risks will be managed at service level and escalated as required.
25. The council's annual carbon emissions are a performance indicator within Economy & Environment.

Consultees

26. PGC was undertaken on Monday 23rd March 2026, was recorded and is available to view.
27. A written response from the Independents 4 Herefordshire group was received and is attached as Appendix 3.

Appendices

- 1 - Aiming for 2030: Herefordshire Council Carbon Management Plan 2026/27 – 2030/31
- 2 – Equality duty checklist for CMP
- 3 – i4H response to PGC

Background papers

None.

Glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report

CMP – Carbon Management Plan

Carbon neutrality – the point at which an organisations emissions less any emissions offset are equal to zero.

Offsetting - this is the process of removing emissions directly from the environment or reducing emissions sources that are outside of the councils' own operations. The reduction in these emissions is counted as an equivalent reduction in the councils own emissions.