

Title of report: Meeting Net Zero Carbon in Herefordshire

Meeting: Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: Wednesday 27 March 2024

Report by: Sustainability & Climate Change Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All wards)

Purpose

The report updates the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on progress towards the net zero carbon target for Herefordshire. The report details the current figures for the County's greenhouse gas emissions, trends indicated by the emissions reduction data, the work of the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership (HCNP) Board and the challenges to reaching our net zero carbon target by 2030.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) That the committee notes the progress towards the 2030 net zero target and work of the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership Board; and**
- b) The committee determines any other actions or recommendations it may seek to make.**

Alternative options

1. None identified. This report provides an update to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Key considerations

2. The Climate Change Act 2008 enshrines in law the UK's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels, by 2050.
3. The current UK target is the Nationally Determined Contribution to reduce emissions by 68% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. This aligns with the commitment to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C in line with Article 4 of the Paris Agreement of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
4. This national target has not been disaggregated for specific regions or counties. The UK Government does however, produce estimated values for the emissions generated within each County and so local emissions change can be monitored.
5. Many local authorities have chosen to publically declare emissions reduction targets at the County level.
6. In 2019, Herefordshire Council set a target for net zero County emissions by 2030.
7. The Council can influence the emissions from its own operations but this is less than 1% of the County's emissions. To achieve Countywide emissions reduction, the Council must work with other stakeholders and does so through the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership Board HCNP.
8. The Council can influence emissions sources through local policies including those related to land use, transport and commercial activities. This includes:
 - a. Setting local planning policy that enables developments that contribute to emissions reduction
 - b. Provision of transport infrastructure, public transport and active travel options
 - c. Using regulatory powers in relation to licensing, buildings and land
 - d. Procurement decisions and the requirements made of contracted services
 - e. Working with other public sectors partners, businesses and communities
9. However, some emissions sources are beyond the Council's influence, as are some structural and behavioural factors that are linked to emissions.
10. A report providing an update of the current emissions from Herefordshire, the challenges in meeting the 2030 target and the role of the HCNP is included as Appendix 1.

Community impact

11. There are no direct community impacts as a result of providing an update to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
12. The effects resulting from a changing climate will potentially impact every community in the County. Risk and level of impact is increased for specific geographic areas, commercial activities and demographics.
13. Working towards net zero carbon supports improvements that will benefit all who reside and visit the county by improving air quality and water quality, protecting local nature and reducing waste. Improvements in these areas will positively contribute towards the delivery of the Council's County Plan (2020-24), specifically the following success measures:

- a) increase flood resilience and reduce levels of phosphate pollution in the county's river.
- b) improve the air quality within Herefordshire.
- c) improve residents' access to green space in Herefordshire.

Other benefits generated through emissions reduction include:

- d) economic development and employment opportunities in the net zero sector
- e) improved public health and reduced health risks
- f) improved mobility through public transportation and active travel choices

Environmental Impact

- 14. Climate and environmental impact are intrinsically linked. Activities that impact the climate impact biodiversity and local air, water and soil quality. Emissions reduction and climate adaptation will also have associated environmental impacts.
- 15. Working towards net zero carbon supports the County Plan's ambitions to:
 - a) seek strong stewardship of the county's natural resources
 - b) protect and enhance the county's biodiversity, value nature and uphold environmental standards
 - c) build understanding and support for sustainable living
 - d) develop environmentally sound infrastructure that attracts investment
 - e) minimise waste and increase reuse, repair and recycling

Equality duty

- 16. There are no equality duty implications associated with providing this progress report to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
- 17. Environmental inequalities tend to disproportionately impact areas of deprivation and those with lower household income¹.
- 18. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/the-state-of-the-environment-the-urban-environment>

19. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.

Resource implications

20. There are no resource implications associated with providing this progress report to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
21. Any recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Committee will require separate governance.

Legal implications

22. The role of the scrutiny committees is to help develop policy, to carry out reviews of council and other local services, and to hold decision makers to account for their actions and decisions.

Risk management

23. There are no risks associated with providing this progress report to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
24. Any new projects arising as a result of recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee will require separate governance.

Consultees

25. None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Meeting Net Zero Carbon in Herefordshire

Background papers

- None identified

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	John Coleman	Date 20/02/2024
Finance	Judith Tranmer	Date 19/02/2024
Legal	Sean O'Conner	Date 21/02/2024
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 21/02/2024

Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 20/02/2024
Procurement	Carrie Deeley	Date 16/02/2024
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 18/02/2024
Approved by	Ross Cook	Date 08/03/2024

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

- Carbon Dioxide (CO₂)
- Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e)
- Climate Change Act (CCA)
- Climate Change Commission (CCC)
- Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE)
- Department of Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ)
- Feed-In Tariff (FiT)
- Greenhouse Gases (GHGs)
- Herefordshire Climate & Nature Partnership (HCNP)
- kilotonnes (kt)
- Land use, land use change and Forestry (LULUCF)
- Methane (CH₄)
- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
- Nitrous Oxide (NO₂)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Working from home (WFH)