

*Planning for our future.
Caring for the environment.
Leading by example.*



Environmental Sustainability Plan

2021-25



HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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Foreword

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) recognises how important it is to make sure we are committed to reducing our carbon emissions and the impact we have on the environment in everything we do. This Environmental Sustainability Plan (2021-2025) sets out how we will continue to improve the ways in which we use our resources to ensure the least harm to our environment. Each year this grows in importance as our awareness is raised on the critical importance of changing our behaviours with regard to climate change and sustainability. Legislation and regulation reflect this priority and we are committed to ensuring we meet our requirements and where possible exceed expectations.

Whether we are thinking of how we travel to work, what we do in our daily work, how we design a new service, where we hold a meeting and the myriad of choices we make in our daily lives, having sustainability underpinning every choice we make and every action we take must be integral to us delivering our vision, mission and strategic goals. The use of environmental impact assessments must become a common practice, at all levels and across all areas of the organisation, if this plan is to be fully embedded in the organisation.

We also recognise that many of the measures we plan to take to cut our carbon footprint will also help us operate more efficiently in some ways through the ability to use less energy and therefore reduce those costs and offset the inevitable future increases to fuel and energy costs. However the potential additional costs of investment in infrastructure, monitoring our impact, and using environmentally friendly services (such as recycling, or purchasing biodegradable or recyclable materials), may actually be more expensive overall than current working practices. Using the information that will be gathered in the first two years of this plan, and working with our dedicated staff, we will be able to set challenging targets and report our progress on the journey to become a more environmentally conscious and sustainable organisation.

Introduction



It cannot be stated strongly enough that to meet the ambition of Government to become carbon neutral will be incredibly challenging. It is not yet clear whether it is an achievable goal, however, it is an ambition that Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is prepared to pursue and in endeavouring to achieve the goal will take us further forward and improve the Service rather than choose to ignore the challenge. The evidence available shows that the scale of change is unprecedented; global and national system change will be needed to support local system change.

This is not therefore another Service performance goal for members and officers where control and accountability is clear, this is a challenge where the totality of the solutions needed is not clear and the approach taken will be emergent. We will need to put in place appropriate governance arrangements to ensure accountability, scrutiny and support through existing decision making processes.

Climate change is already upon us. While there are visible impacts of this through increased flooding, wind, rain and storm intensities, there are also hidden impacts such as droughts, biosecurity with the risk of invasive species, and seasonal changes to the food chains for species. The summer of 2018 was one of the hottest ever recorded and summer temperatures could increase further in parts of the UK if the current trajectory global warming continues.

While certain parts of the world will have more severe and imminent impacts (such as low lying areas in South East Asia), the UK is not immune. These impacts only highlight the need to act now on reducing our emissions. The details set out in the Action Plan require us to make good decisions about what to invest in with our limited resources, therefore we must understand the consequences of climate change with and without action.

The World Health Organisation identifies climate change as the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century. The impacts for the UK, although less than for some other parts of the world, will still be significant. There will be an increase in heat wave days and a longer heat wave season, resulting in greater risk of wildfires and there will also be periods of heavier rainfall increasing the likelihood of widespread flooding. Such events will have significant impact on our Service; therefore it is important that we act and set an important example by reducing our impacts on the environment.

Context



Climate change is a real and immediate threat for us all. Carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels have already reached their highest level for almost half a million years and are rising faster than ever. Like all public sector organisations, HWFRS has a key role to play in both mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change – both as a respected community service and through the services we provide.

HWFRS is a considerable consumer of energy and a direct source of CO₂ emissions arising from our activities and buildings, therefore we need to act now to adapt and manage risks to service delivery, local communities, infrastructure, businesses and the natural environment. The Authority's climate change challenge falls into:

- Cutting the Service's carbon footprint;
- Preparing for the impacts of a changing climate on our communities.

Aside from the moral and environmental case for taking action to tackle climate change there are many other drivers for the Service to address this issue. These include:

- the considerable scope for more efficient use of energy to realise cost savings
- the future impact of the increase in energy and fuel prices

Specifically these will have three main impacts on the Service:



Service Delivery

Climate change has a significant effect on the services we provide and how we provide them. We have already seen the impacts of prolonged periods of grass fires in recent summers and the severe flooding events across many parts of our counties in the last two decades. It is imperative that through our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) we consider how we can improve and/or adapt the services we provide to be able to respond and protect our communities against the threats caused by climate change. In support of this, we need to ensure that the way we deliver our services also has the least impact on the environment through energy usage and pollution control and environmental protection measures.

Financial

Projects to reduce carbon emissions will more often than not come with the requirement of financial investment. However, some schemes, especially those that target energy and fuel efficiency, can lead to savings through a reduced amount of energy being used in the longer term. These whole life saving will be considered but this policy should be seen as an opportunity to invest in improving the way we work and our impact on the environment, which may not necessarily always cost less.

Reputational and the Service's role as a Community Leader

As a community leader with an outstanding reputation HWFRS has a significant role to play in ensuring all of our communities lead lower carbon lifestyles. The Service recognises that it cannot do this in isolation but by promoting best practice and working with others in all sectors we can make positive impacts for the future.

Context (continued)



Size of the Challenge

For us to truly know the size of the challenge we face as an organisation we need to assess our current usage and costs and develop plans to prioritise areas where investment and change will have the greatest impact with the aim of reducing our carbon footprint through better energy usage, waste management and reducing pollution. We aim to do this in the first two years of this plan.

The Service's carbon footprint will mainly be based on the energy use and fuel use from our estate, activities undertaken in our service provision and the waste we generate. It will also take into account an estimate of the emissions from our supply chain and staff business and commute mileage and a proportion of business travel on public transport. We will endeavour to adopt strategic directives into easy to understand headlines, such as Reduce, Repair, Reuse and Recycle.



What have we done already?

With the available resources at our disposal for this area of improvement we have already started our journey towards becoming a more environmentally friendly organisation through the following:

- Adding environmentally efficient solutions to new build and renovated buildings within the budgetary constraints of the projects, such as Pebworth, Malvern, Worcester and the Wyre Forest and ensuring they are as efficient as possible with new building materials.
- Recycling at all locations.
- Adopting systems to reduce paper usage and waste paper.
- Investing in newer vehicles with the most efficient engines and highest environmental ratings.
- Undertaking to install electric vehicle charging points at selected sites to enable a phase over of some combustion engine cars and vans to all-electric vehicles.
- Planning to install LED lighting across our estate in 2021.
- Planning to install Building Management Systems to monitor and control energy usage across our estate.
- Developing a plan to assess how and why parts our estate are heated, and aim to remove outdated inefficient systems, and not use energy unnecessarily.

Strategic Approach



Our Service priorities are aligned to delivering the best Fire and Rescue Service to our communities that we can sustainably afford with the available resources. To highlight our commitment to mainstreaming carbon reduction and protecting the environment we aim to inform our staff and our communities of our commitment and allocate sufficient resources to we deliver our objectives and achieve the challenging targets, alongside our core strategies and goals.

The following objectives have been identified for 2021-22:

- To research and explore alternative methods and systems to reduce our energy usage.
- To reduce our usage of single use materials.
- To explore the use of electric vehicles and begin the investment in the necessary infrastructure to achieve this.
- To reduce the amount of waste produced.
- To promote biodiversity and habitats on our properties.
- To consider how our activities impact on the environment and linked to our CRMP review how we respond to climate change events operationally.
- To lead our communities by demonstrating and promoting good environmental practices and ensure our workforce has an improved understanding of the need to become a more environmentally conscious organisation and undertake a long term change programme to achieve this.

To ensure sustainability is embedded into the Service, strategies and projects should support environmental impacts by considering energy efficiency, waste reduction, less travel and reuse and recycle products whenever possible.

How are we planning to deliver these priorities and reach our targets?

We will adopt an environmental sustainability plan and raise awareness of the issues and impacts at a political level, alongside optimising the use of the available allocated resources to deliver the foundations required to drive this agenda for the next five years.

How will we measure our success?

We aim to set targets in 2023 once the baselines for carbon emissions, water and waste have been established in the first two years of the plan.

- Carbon emissions through lower energy usage will reduce.
- Renewable and low carbon energy sources will increase reaching or exceeding our targets.
- Waste will be reduced and recycling will increase.
- Critical adaptation measures will be implemented.
- New planned developments/equipment/supplies will have minimal environmental impact.

The following principles will guide us on our journey through carbon reduction:

- Learn from others and become an example of best practice.
- Develop carbon reduction projects that are effectively programme managed.
- Identify any risks and opportunities from carbon reduction plans.
- Embed environmental implications into our decision making.
- Ensure sustainable procurement practices apply to all areas of the Service.
- Encourage, engage and support others in reducing their carbon footprints.
- Raise awareness and commitment.
- Regular monitoring and reporting of our performance.

Areas of Focus



Property

A large proportion of the opportunities for the Service to reduce its carbon footprint will come from how we operate and maintain our estate. We will utilise dedicated expertise to evaluate our estate and identify where we can invest to improve our energy usage and reduce our energy loss.

Technology

New technology will play a significant role in developing and streamlining working practices, which will ultimately have a positive effect in reducing our carbon footprint. The ability for flexible, agile and remote working supports less travel.

Fleet

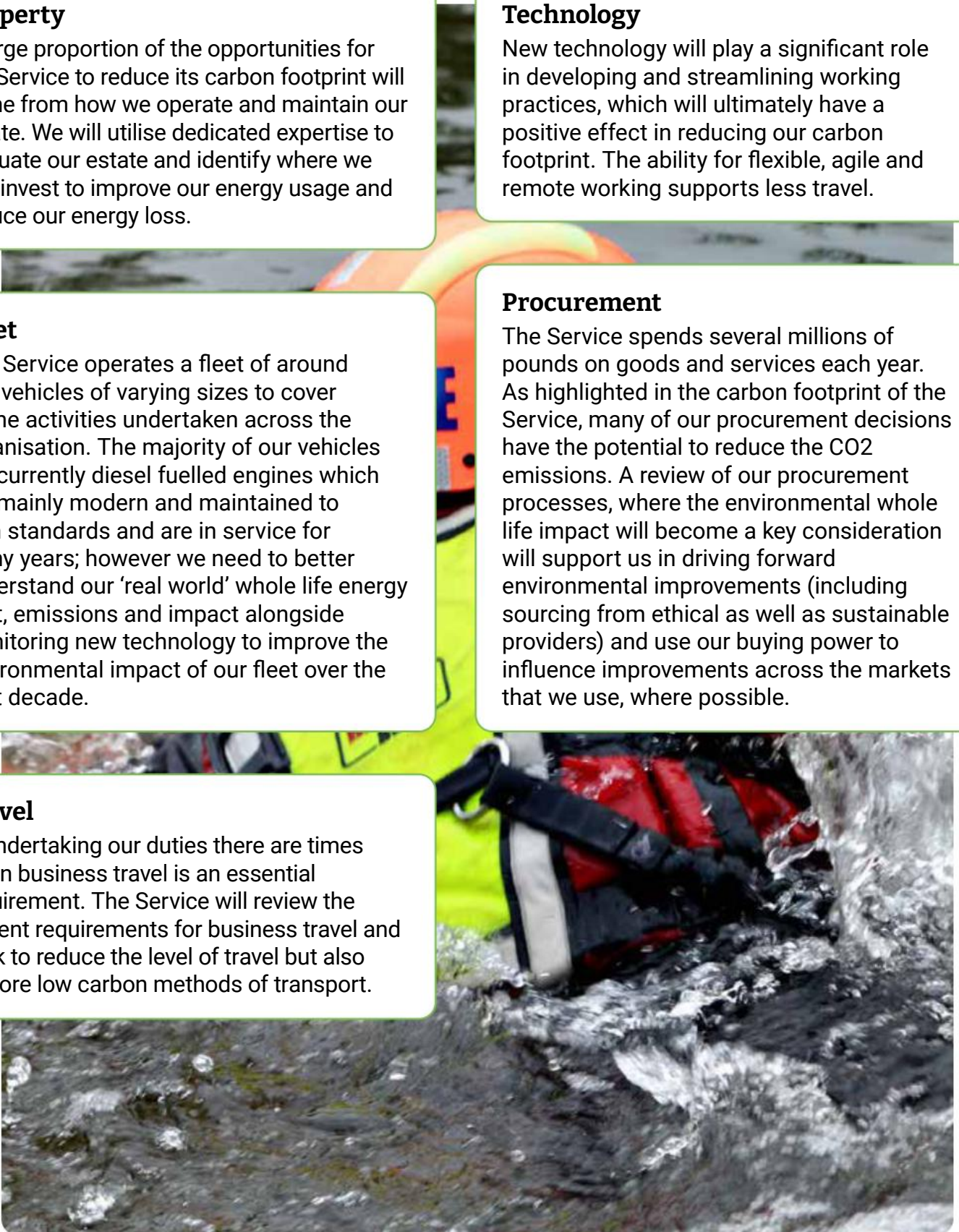
The Service operates a fleet of around 150 vehicles of varying sizes to cover all the activities undertaken across the organisation. The majority of our vehicles are currently diesel fuelled engines which are mainly modern and maintained to high standards and are in service for many years; however we need to better understand our 'real world' whole life energy cost, emissions and impact alongside monitoring new technology to improve the environmental impact of our fleet over the next decade.

Procurement

The Service spends several millions of pounds on goods and services each year. As highlighted in the carbon footprint of the Service, many of our procurement decisions have the potential to reduce the CO2 emissions. A review of our procurement processes, where the environmental whole life impact will become a key consideration will support us in driving forward environmental improvements (including sourcing from ethical as well as sustainable providers) and use our buying power to influence improvements across the markets that we use, where possible.

Travel

In undertaking our duties there are times when business travel is an essential requirement. The Service will review the current requirements for business travel and seek to reduce the level of travel but also explore low carbon methods of transport.



Areas of Focus (continued)



Waste

Waste production adds to the level of carbon emissions and therefore our waste practices are influenced by the carbon reduction agenda. We need to reduce the volume of waste which is sent to landfill but also increase the volume of waste currently recycled, alongside considering the whole life impact of things we purchase and use.

Supplies and Equipment

The replacement of all supplies already ensures that a whole life approach is taken. This ensures that all costs from purchase, use of the items through to disposal considerations are captured in the initial decision making process. Where possible recycled products will be used and, at the end of life, consideration given to reuse or recycle.

Finance

The economic climate has proved challenging for the whole of the public sector especially when considering the requirements to fulfil the potential to address environmental impacts; however with appropriate planning and through seeking sustainable investment opportunities for carbon reduction and other initiatives, progress can be made. We will therefore seek opportunities for external funding streams, prioritise spend on measures which should give a higher return (carbon and financial) and embed the principles of invest to save and the circular economy.

Behaviour Change

The majority of plans to reduce the Service's carbon footprint are viewed from an organisation level; individual behavioural changes from all of our personnel can make huge impacts on reducing our carbon emissions. Raising awareness of the scale of the challenge will act as a catalyst to encourage all personnel to support the organisation's efforts by making small changes where they can to reduce energy, reduce travel, reduce waste and recycle more.

Water

Climate change is likely to increase water demand while shrinking water supplies. HWFRS will review its non-operational water usage, and consider how it can use potable water more effectively and reduce wastage.

Prevention and Mitigation of Emergencies

Where possible the Service will explore opportunities to support our communities in the prevention and mitigation of climate change related emergencies, through working with partner agencies. From our estate, activities undertaken in our service provision and the waste we generate. It will also take into account an estimate of the emissions from our supply chain and staff business and commute mileage and a proportion of business travel on public transport. We will endeavour to adopt strategic directives into easy to understand headlines, such as Reduce, Repair, Reuse and Recycle.



Action Plan 2021 & 2022



ACTION	OWNER	DATE
Service-wide engagement and communication to raise awareness and encourage ideas for carbon reduction		
Allocate specified reserves for use on carbon reduction projects including establishing a lead manager for the development and delivery of key aspects of this plan		
We will utilise expertise where appropriate to evaluate our estate and identify where we can invest to improve our energy usage and reduce our energy loss		
Following the CRMP process we will review our operational and prevention resources and assets to ensure we are suitably prepared to deal with increasing activity in relation to climate change		
Improve recording, monitoring and reporting of all carbon impacts across the Service		
Liaise with the ODC Group to establish how this will be driven through the organisation		
Include environmental impact awareness on induction and development programmes		
Introduce into the annual awards a process to recognise and reward the greatest positive impact on progressing this plan		
Work with our Property and Estates function to deliver this plan and improve the impact of our estate on the environment over the next five years		
Complete the programme of LED light installation across all of our sites		
Work with specialists to undertake energy audits on our sites to identify most suitable and appropriate energy sources, within budgetary costs parameters		
Complete the programme of smart meters for all of our sites		
Investigate drying rooms technology to reduce energy on station		

Action Plan 2021 & 2022 (continued)



ACTION	OWNER	DATE
Review and improve our current waste/recycling collection provisions		
Explore the use of all type of powered vehicles for the Service's light vehicle fleet		
Provide electric vehicle charging points where possible on our sites		
Reduce the frequency and duration of car journeys for work purposes, where possible		
Develop a workplace plan, to include agile and remote working and usual place of work		
Embed whole life, ethical and sustainable approach to equipment and supplies, wherever possible		
Include environmental impact considerations into our procurement processes and suppliers to include goods and services		
Move towards a paper free environment		
Maximise external funding opportunities to facilitate carbon reduction/environmental projects		
Revise our Asset Strategy for estates to target greater energy efficiency, CO2 reductions, and water usage solutions, within budgetary limitations		
Investigate grey water harvesting systems		

Next Steps

The environmental sustainability plan and identified actions are a very good starting point on our journey to becoming carbon neutral. The plan will continue to be a live document over the coming years and updated as new information and ideas emerge.

The following areas will be the next steps for the coming year.

- Fire and Rescue Authority approval of the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2025.
- Publication of our Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2025.
- Use the Organisational Development and Challenge Group (ODCG) to help champion this across all areas of the Service to promote behaviour change.
- Carry out climate impact assessments on our functions.
- Support our supply chain to better understand their carbon footprint and the impact it has on our Service.



Ownership of the Environmental Sustainability Plan

The Service's Senior Management Board will:

- Champion and provide leadership on climate change.
- Prioritise projects and measures and allocate appropriate capital investment and ongoing revenue commitments to underpin the development of this plan.
- Monitor and report progress.
- Remove obstacles to the successful implementation of carbon reduction projects.
- Review and champion plans which require financial investment.
- Ensure a coordinated approach to projects to deliver our carbon reduction objectives and targets.



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