

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2025 Update

Purpose of report

1. To update Members on the progress in delivering the actions set out in the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2025.
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Recommendation:

It is recommended that:

- i) The Fire Authority note the progress to deliver the action plan set out in the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25 (see Appendix 1),*
- ii) Approve the updated action plan for 2023-25 (see Table 1), and*
- iii) Approve the publication of the revised actions in an updated Environmental Sustainability Plan.*

Introduction & Background

2. At the Fire Authority meeting on 24 February 2021, Members approved the Environmental Sustainability Plan* (ESP) (2021-25) and its publication (see Appendix 2). **Members will note that the format has been updated to match other Service core strategies.*
3. The ESP sets out how the Service will improve the ways in which it uses resources to ensure the least harm to our environment. The plan put in place some prompt measures to assess and address our energy usage. It also established the foundations to enable future changes and improvements to the way the organisation uses and disposes of carbon-based resources, water, and minimises pollution and waste.

Action Plan Update & Notable Achievements

4. The ESP (2021-25) has been reviewed at its mid-point, and shows excellent progress against the identified actions. Appendix 1 provides an overview, with over 95% of actions either completed / partially completed (14 completed, 9 on-going / partially completed, and only 1 not yet started).
5. The Fire Authority approved £300,000 from reserves for Environmental Sustainability projects in June 2021. The reserve was allocated for use on carbon reduction projects across the estate. Since the last update, the Service have appointed a Property and Environment Manager, who is responsible for delivering the capital build projects, property maintenance

programme, and importantly numerous aspects of the ESP 2021-25 action plan.

6. In January 2021 the Service commissioned Erebus Environment Limited (EEL) to carry out a high-level energy audit of 22 fire stations. Written reports were provided to the Service highlighting quantified energy saving opportunities in decarbonising our built estate and wider actions to support the Services' journey towards net zero. The report(s) identified a possible 13.7% reduction in emissions through energy management and renewables projects. It noted that further reductions might be achievable if subsequent fossil fuel heating replacement schemes are delivered aligned with the anticipated decarbonisation of the national grid.
7. EEL summarised that if all recommended projects were implemented this would result in a 43% total reduction in the Services' emissions by 2030. This evidence base has been, and will continue to be used to identify opportunities to improve equipment, building fabric and the management of energy use throughout the period of the ESP 2021-25. This will form part of the targets and objectives for the 2025-30 plan.
8. Grant funding, to the sum of £83,166 from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme has been used to provide heat decarbonisation projects at Upton-upon-Severn and Tenbury Wells Fire Stations. The project involved the removal of the gas boilers and radiators, the installation of electric heating systems, and the introduction of solar PV panels at both locations. This project has resulted in a reduction in our CO₂ emissions from gas usage by approximately 25.5 tons a year, 9.3% of the current estate. Both projects were finally commissioned in May 2023, and will be reviewed at six and twelve months.
9. An additional application for grant funding from the Government's Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund was submitted in May 2023. This bid, totalling £80K, concerns decarbonisation design project fees at; Malvern, Pebworth, and Pershore fire stations, and Operational Logistics at Malvern. If successful, and then progressed to completion, these projects would reduce CO₂ emissions from gas by a further 66.2 tons a year, an additional 24% across the estate.
10. The Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) has been used to assess our capital build projects at; Broadway, Redditch, and Hereford. BREEAM is a voluntary scheme that aims to quantify and reduce the environmental burdens of buildings by rewarding those designs that take positive steps to minimise their environmental impacts. The new build projects incorporate environmental sustainability measures such as; solar PV panels, EV charging points, and safe and secure cycle parking, and all three schemes have been designed to achieve an overall BREEAM rating level of 'Good.'

11. LED lighting continues to be installed at fire stations as part of our planned programme of work, and will continue to be installed as we carry out further refurbishments at existing fire stations.
12. The Service has purchased 8 electric vehicles in 2022/23; 5 Vauxhall Corsa's and 3 Toyota Proace vans. These are due to be delivered during Q1 of 2023/24, and meet the objective set in the Fleet Plan 2021-2025, that where appropriate electric vehicles will be considered when replacing the ancillary fleet.
13. A total of 30 EV charging points have been included in projects (12) / installed (18) in 2022/23. Installations include; Worcester (5), Evesham (2), Malvern (3), Operational Logistics (3), Leominster (1), and Wyre Forest (4). Included in capital build projects; Broadway (1), Redditch (4), Hereford (4), and Leominster STF (3).
14. An initial review and analysis of our most purchased consumables has been carried out which has enabled the consideration of alternative options for products. This includes the rollout of refillable water bottles and reusable insulated cups to all operational staff. This initiative will reduce the use of single use plastic on the incident ground by an estimated 6000 cups annually.
15. MS Teams and video conferencing has enabled meetings and training events to be held virtually. This has reduced our carbon emissions from vehicular movements. In addition, we have developed and adopted a hybrid working approach which includes agile and remote working for corporate and office-based staff.
16. In 2022/23 the Service carried out a comprehensive decontamination programme of its fire fighting foam tanks on all its fire appliances. The Service conducted trials as part of research carried out by ProDecon UK to investigate the methodology and effectiveness of the proposed decontamination process. As such, HWFRS was committed to leading the sector in its scientific approach to establish the most appropriate protocols when dealing with persistent organic pollutants, now known to be in legacy fire fighting foams. The Service is now using fluorine free foam, and has published a position statement on the website concerning the use of fire fighting foams at operational incidents.

Proposed Action Plan 2023-25

17. Subject to Fire Authority approval, it is recommended the completed actions to date are published in a revised Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25. Additionally, a revised action plan (see Table 1 below) outlining the 12 remaining / on-going actions be included. Further updates would then be provided to the Fire Authority as appropriate.

Table 1.

Action	Owner	Date	Update 2024/25
1. Service-wide engagement and communication to raise awareness and encourage ideas for carbon reduction.	Assistant Director Assets	On-going to 2024/25	
2. Improve recording, monitoring and reporting of all carbon impacts across the Service	Property & Environment Manager	On-going to 2024/25	
3. Liaise with various internal HWFRS groups to establish how this will continue to be driven through the organisation.	Assistant Director Assets	On-going to 2024/25	
4. Include environmental impact awareness on induction and development programmes.	Assistant Director Assets / GC Training	On-going to 2024/25	
5. 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.	Property & Environment Manager	On-going to 2024/25	
6. Complete the programme of LED light installation across all of our sites.	Property & Environment Manager	On-going to 2024/25	
7. Complete the programme of smart meters for all of our sites.	Property & Environment Manager	On-going to 2024/25	
8. Investigate drying rooms technology to reduce energy on station.	Property & Environment Manager	Commence Review 2024/25	
9. Move towards a paper free environment.	Director of Protection & Assets	On-going to 2024/25	
10. Maximise external funding opportunities to facilitate carbon reduction / environmental projects.	Director of Protection & Assets	On-going to 2024/25	
11. Revise our Asset Strategy for estates to target greater energy efficiency, CO ₂ reductions*, and water usage solutions, within budgetary limitations. *subject to funding approval target a 15% reduction in CO ₂ emissions from gas usage.	Assistant Director Assets / Property & Environment Manager	Review in 2023/24 and report 2024/25	
12. Investigate grey water harvesting systems.	Property & Environment Manager	Commence Review 2024/25	

Conclusion / Summary

18. Members are recommended to note the substantial progress made in delivering the actions set out in the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2025. Subject to Fire Authority approval, it is recommended the completed actions to date are published in a revised Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25, and an updated action plan outlining the remaining / on-going actions be included.

Corporate Considerations

Resource Implications (identify any financial, legal, property or human resources issues).	Resourcing for Environmental Sustainability projects is identified at project inception. Upgrades to LED lighting across the estate is funded via the property programme budget, and additional costs associated with ancillary electric vehicles has been included within the capital fleet budget.
Strategic Policy Links & Core Code of Ethics (identify how proposals link with current priorities and policy framework and align to the Core Code of Ethics).	The Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25 directly links with the Climate Change Act 2008. It is also directly linked to the Asset Management Strategy 2021-2025, the Community Risk Management Plan 2021-25, and the three core strategies of; Prevention, Protection and Response.
Risk Management / Health & Safety (identify any risks, the proposed control measures and risk evaluation scores).	Not applicable.
Consultation (identify any public or other consultation that has been carried out on this matter).	Not applicable.
Equalities (has an Equalities Impact Assessment been completed? If not, why not?).	An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken as required for specific actions related to the Environmental Sustainability Plan.
Data Protection Impact (where personal data is processed a DPIA must be completed to ensure compliant handling).	Not applicable.

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25: Action Plan Update, June 2023.

Appendix 2 - HWFRS Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25, dated February 2021.