



Net Zero Council

Introduction

The Council declared a climate emergency in July 2021 and reaffirmed the target of reaching net zero emissions by 2050 from council operations and activities.

Our Relevant strategies/plans

- Net Zero Carbon Plan.

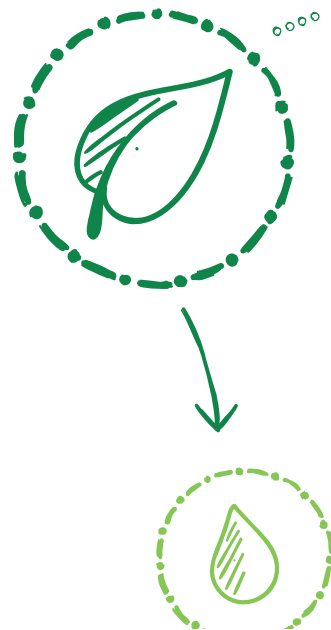


Photo image : Solar Panels,
Kidderminster Library





Objectives

Net Zero emissions by 2050 from council operations and activities.

Interim targets:

- Reduce our direct net emissions by 92% by 2024/25.
- Reduce all net emissions by 49% by 2030.



Scope 1 - Direct	Scope 2 – Indirect (but WCC has direct control over how much electricity we use and what type we purchase)	Scope 3 - Indirect
<p>Direct emissions from Council activities and operations under the Council's control including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Natural gas use in WCC buildings (excluding schools).• Fuel use in WCC vehicle fleet.• Residual fuel use (e.g., burning oil, LPG etc.) consumed at WCC sites (excluding schools).	<p>Indirect emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electricity use in WCC buildings (excluding schools) and street lighting (grid generation).	<p>Other indirect emissions for which WCC can access data for, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electricity (grid transmission and distribution).• WCC staff business mileage and air travel.• Electricity/gas use in buildings operated by Council's main outsourced contractors for Waste Management and Highways.• Fleet/staff mileage undertaken by main outsourced contractors for Waste Management and Highways.• Contracted fleet vehicle fuel use• Emissions from county-wide municipal waste disposal.



What we have delivered

The Council has been working to reduce its own carbon emissions over many years. Since 2009/10 the Council's own net carbon emissions have reduced by 45%. Much of this progress has been realised through improvements to Council buildings, street lighting, and a shift from landfill to energy from waste for household waste disposal.

WCC has taken significant action on our emissions reduction journey; from starting to invest in electric fleet vehicles, upgrading street lighting and traffic signals to LED and investing in renewable energy generation on our sites. Other initiatives include:

- Continued investment in the energy efficiency of Council buildings through the Council's £3m Energy Efficiency Spend to Save scheme (which has been running since 2010 making c.£400k savings a year) and the Capital Maintenance Programme.
- Solar power on several corporate properties (currently over 450kWp installed on corporate estate), and the Council has also installed Solar PV on many Worcestershire schools.
- Energy efficient new build and refurbishment programme - including refresh of the Council's Sustainable Design & Estate Principles – Working towards a Zero Carbon Estate document.
- Purchase of 100% renewable electricity for all street lighting since April 2020.
- Successful bid to Salix Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 1 (PSDS) and investment of £817,288 grant which funded 34 discreet energy projects across 25 council sites.
- Staff training on sustainability and climate change has been provided over a number of years and has included face to face training and e-learning modules. Since 2021, the Council has been delivering Carbon Literacy training to staff.
- Use of the Joint Impact Assessment (JIA) tool that requires review of environmental impacts (including carbon emissions), and is required for all new Council projects.
- 'Zero Heroes' staff sustainability champion scheme.



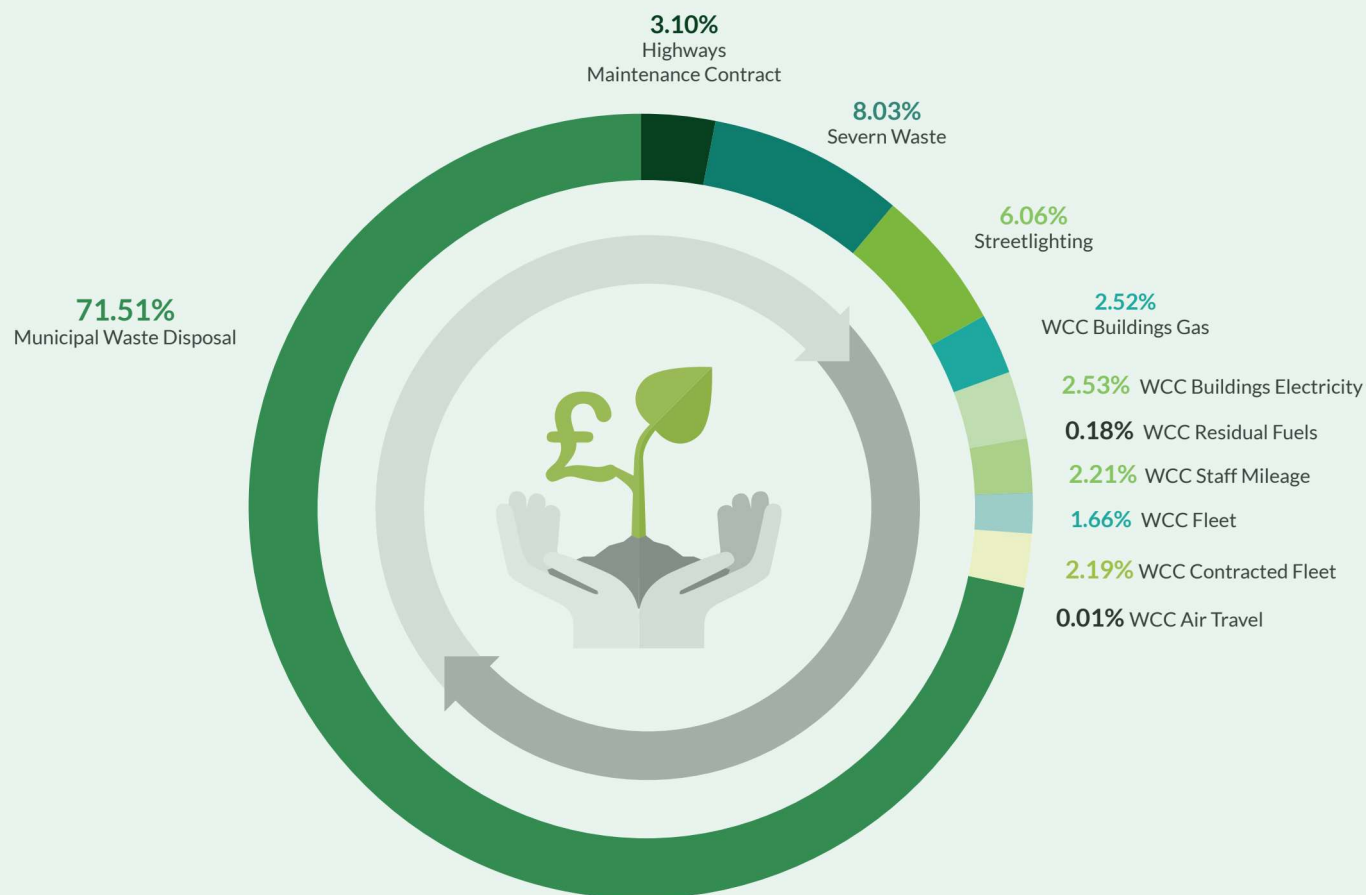
What we will do:

- Purchase 100% renewable, accredited green electricity for all street lighting.
- Complete the rollout of LED street lighting.
- Continue to review opportunities to decarbonise the Council's buildings through energy efficiency retrofit and investment in renewable energy generation.
- Ensure that all property projects and building works follow the Council's Sustainable Design and Estate Principles Guide to reduce emissions and adapt to future climate change.
- Ensure Council decisions consider the potential environmental impact of all WCC projects through completion of a Joint Impact Assessment (JIA), and any consequent full environmental sustainability assessment which includes assessment of carbon emissions.
- Identify replacement ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV) options for WCC fleet (taking technological advances in account).
- Review existing and future contracting requirements and develop a procurement policy for how WCC's supply chain will support the council's net zero ambitions.
- Keep under review the viability of carbon reducing technologies, such as carbon capture and storage, for energy from waste facilities.





WCC's Emissions: (absolute GHG emissions before application of green electricity tariff)

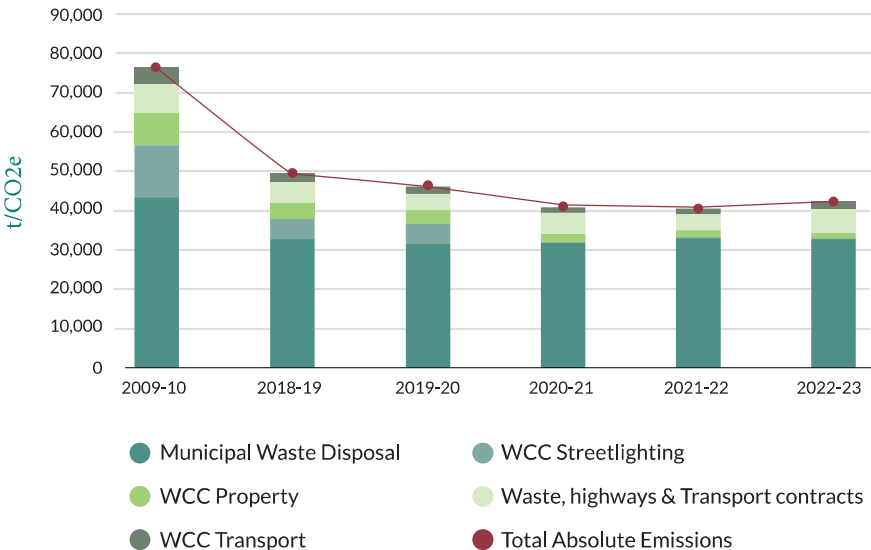


Net Zero Council

How we will measure performance

- The Council measures progress of its net zero commitments in an annual Green House Gas (GHG) report.

The progress of our emissions reduction journey to date is detailed in the graph below:



How we will work with partners / wider community

- Convene and contribute to the Worcestershire Sustainability Joint Working Group (WSJWG) which brings together all of those working in Sustainability in the public sector/public service roles in Worcestershire, with a focus on Net Zero.
- Lobby government for increased funding and powers through groups such as the County Councils Network, Midlands Net Zero Hub Board, to support wider net zero carbon objectives.



Green Economy

Introduction

Since 2012 the council has been helping enterprises across the county to become greener and to develop new, more environmentally friendly products and services, through a wide range of advice and grant funding programmes.

Worcestershire's environmental and low carbon goods and services sector is an area of strength, with many innovative businesses. With the Government putting clean growth at the forefront of its plans to achieve net zero carbon emissions, there is clear opportunity to maximise the local benefits of this and keep growing Worcestershire's green economy to the benefit of all in the county and beyond.

The council is supporting delivery of Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Energy Strategy, which includes clean economic growth as one of its priorities.

The work of the council referred to in other sections of the strategy e.g. energy, is helping to develop and grow the local market for green products and services.

Our Relevant strategies/plans

- Worcestershire Energy Strategy
- Plan for Growth - Worcestershire LEP (wlep.co.uk)



Photo image: Green space in Diglis, Worcestershire





Green Economy

Objectives

“By 2030, Worcestershire will have a thriving low carbon economy which supports the creation of high value jobs and stimulates investment and clean growth across the county...”

(Worcestershire LEP Energy Strategy)

WCC is seeking to help double the size of Worcestershire’s environmental and low carbon sector by 2030 from £1.1bn to £2.3bn by:

- supporting the ability of Worcestershire businesses to achieve growth without causing a subsequent rise in carbon emissions.
- promoting and encouraging the County’s flourishing low and zero carbon supply chain to expand further.
- Promoting and encouraging the development of skills needed to grow Worcestershire’s green economy e.g. science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).





Latest data 2020.

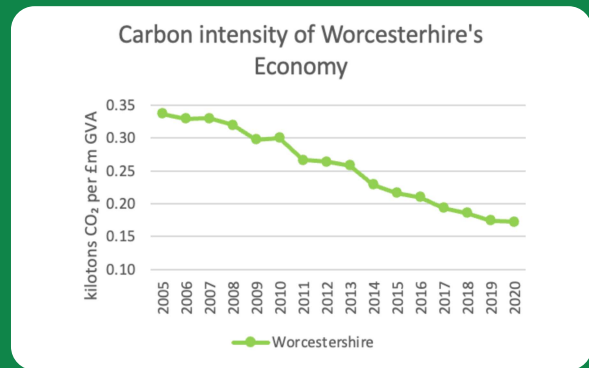
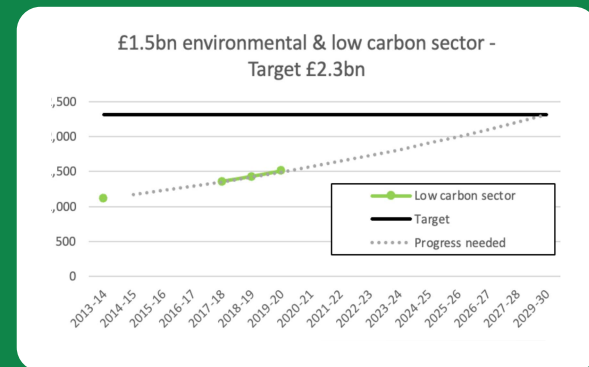
- The County is currently on track to achieve its growth target for the environmental and low carbon sector.
- Worcestershire's environmental and Low Carbon sector has outperformed the growth of the wider economy, with growth in turnover averaging 5% a year from 2014 to 2020.
- 700 Worcestershire businesses are active in the sector supporting 11,300 jobs
- While Worcestershire's overall economy has grown, carbon emissions have fallen, as shown to the right.



The County is currently on track to achieve its growth target.

What we have delivered

- Worcestershire County Council's business support programmes have provided free advice and grant funding for c 1000 local small and medium enterprises to improve their energy efficiency, support wildlife and develop greener products. C 7000 tonnes carbon have been saved and an average 25% energy savings enabled.
- WCC is offering a free web based decarbonisation portal to local businesses to help make cutting carbon easy and engaging.
- WCC is supporting development of skills for our green economy through promoting STEM skills in schools and colleges, events such as Worcestershire Green Skills Week and provision of grant funding for accreditation for roles such as energy efficient retrofit assessors.





Green Economy



What we will do:

- Provide advice and grant funding for energy efficiency, decarbonisation and wildlife measures for 210 Worcestershire businesses by March 2025.
- Fund the **decarbonisation portal** for local businesses for at least a further 2 years.
- Track the size and performance of Worcestershire's green economy.
- Continue to support development of skills for our green economy.
- Develop the work detailed in other sections of this plan, thus continuing to develop the local market for green products and services.
- Continue to invest in and seek external funding for further initiatives.

How we will measure performance

- Numbers of local businesses supported, amount of carbon reduced and % energy reduction through WCC green business support programmes.
- Performance of Worcestershire's low carbon and environmental goods and services sector:
 - GVA of the sector
 - Numbers of businesses in the sector
 - Numbers of employees in the sector.
- Carbon intensity of Worcestershire's economy.



How we will work with partners / wider community

- Continue to deliver business support programmes in partnership with district councils, Worcestershire Growth Hub and partners such as H&W Chamber of Commerce etc.
- Lobby government for increased funding and powers through groups such as the County Councils' Network, Midlands Net Zero Hub, to support wider net zero carbon objectives.



What can you do?



At Home

By sourcing a reputable local trader for your renewable energy or heat pump installations you'll help build local supply chains. It is important to thoroughly insulate your home first.



At Work

Net Zero Worcestershire support
Worcestershire County Council



Climate Change

Introduction

The very significant flood event in 2007 led to a national review and then the Flood & Water Management Act 2010. This act clarified existing responsibilities across a range of organisations and added some new ones.

This included the designation of upper tier local authorities, Worcestershire County Council (WCC), as 'Lead Local Authorities' and gave them a wide range of new statutory duties and powers.

This led to a review of the existing flood risk management partnerships and activities in Worcestershire and established the WCC Flood Risk Management Team and the formalised partnerships with the district councils via the new shared services of the North Worcestershire Water Management team and the South Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership.

Along with the EU-led 'Flood Risk Regulations', the Flood & Water Management Act also led to increased partnership working across the Risk Management Authorities (WCC, district councils, Environment Agency, water companies, Highway Authorities) and an increased focus on accelerated flood risk management activity.

Flood risk management remains a high priority for Worcestershire County Council and we will continue to work closely with the Environment Agency on the delivery of the large flood defence schemes and generally reducing flood risk for more residents and businesses are specifically referenced in the Corporate Plan. Climate change projections for wetter winters and increased likelihood of extremely heavy summer rainfall storms increase the importance of this adaptation and mitigation work.



Photo image of Flood in Worcester City Centre



Our Relevant strategies/plans

Strategies supporting delivery flood risk management is guided by the following key strategies:

- **Worcestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy:** a statutory document under the Act produced and maintained to be consistent with the National Strategy by WCC.
- **National Flood Risk Management Strategy:** a statutory document under the Act produced and maintained by the Environment Agency.
- **County-wide Surface Water Management Plan:** a detailed evidence base produced and maintained by WCC to support the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
- **Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment:** a strategic assessment under the Flood Risk Regulations of flooding produced and maintained for Worcestershire by WCC.

- **River Severn Flood Risk Management Plan:** produced and maintained under the Flood Risk Regulations by the Environment Agency with support from WCC and its partners.
- **Local Flood Risk Management Plans:** produced and maintained by WCC and partners to articulate the understanding and guide flood risk in specific geographical locations in Worcestershire.

Photo image of flood plain in Worcestershire





Climate Change

Objectives

The Worcestershire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy' articulates the following strategic aims:

- Understand and appropriately prioritise flood risk.
- Manage and minimise the likelihood and impact of flooding.
- Develop and manage effective partnerships.
- Inform, develop and implement relevant, plans, policies and strategies.
- Secure, maximise and prioritise the appropriate allocation of funding and other resources.
- Deliver sustainable environmental and economic benefits and contribute to the wellbeing of Worcestershire's communities and residents.
- Develop, maintain and implement the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy's action plan.



Photo image of River Severn Worcester



Climate Change



What we have delivered since 2010

WCC has:

- Strong support for the completion and development of EA-led flood alleviation schemes at Bewdley, Severn Stoke, Tenbury, Worcester, Bromsgrove, Upton, Powick, Kempsey, Pershore, Kidderminster, Broadway.
- Highway flood adaptation schemes including the raising of New Road in Worcester and the A4106 in Upton upon Severn, keeping residents connected and moving and ensuring Worcestershire remains open for business.
- A significant programme of 100s of smaller drainage, surface water and ordinary watercourse flood alleviation schemes.
- Installation of a significant number of natural interventions on upstream catchments to slow and hold back the flow.
- Support for increased community resilience including the establishment of local community flood action groups
- Scrutiny of planning applications to ensure adequate surface water and flood risk management.
- Significant contribution to the response to emergency flood events and planning and preparation for future flood events, implementing continuous improvement.
- A lead role in flood event recovery and investigation.
- Flood recovery grant support for residents, businesses and communities during significant flood incidents.
- Co-ordination of multi-agency Flood Risk Management Plan groups at locations including Bromsgrove, Hagley, Redditch, Worcester, Wythall, Droitwich.
- Discharge of Land Drainage Act responsibilities to encourage and ensure the proper maintenance and management of the significant network of ordinary watercourses.
- Gathering, management and mapping of significant flooding data including over 2000 flood spots.



Climate Change



What we will do:

We will continue to deliver and strongly support all the above activities including:

- Completion of the large EA-led flood alleviation schemes at Bewdley, Severn Stoke, Tenbury and Toronto Close.
- Implementation of the ongoing programme of small to medium scale flooding and drainage schemes.
- Implementation of the expanded natural flood management programme on a range of catchments across Worcestershire.
- Continued scrutiny of new planning applications and potential discharge of new statutory Sustainable Drainage System responsibilities.
- Establishment of more local community flood action groups and support for existing groups and the increase in community resilience.
- Continued and improved flood event preparation, response, recovery and investigation.
- Further development of partnerships.

How we will measure performance

- Schemes completed and number of properties and businesses with reduced flood risk.
- Number of catchments worked on within the Natural Flood Management programme and the number of individual interventions installed.
- Number of planning applications scrutinised and percentage responded to within statutory timescale.
- Number of community flood groups supported and the number of multi-agency meetings attended.

In addition, an annual report is produced each year and examined by the WCC Economy & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel.

District council Overview & Scrutiny Panels also examine flood risk management on an ad hoc basis.

The response to every emergency flood event is closely scrutinised by a Local Resilience Forum de-brief process and some flood events are

formally investigated by WCC under its FWMA duties. All flood events are at least informally investigated. All of these processes culminate in the production and implementation of improvement plans.



Climate Change



How we will work with partners / wider community

Partnerships within and across Risk Management Authorities and communities are completely fundamental to the successful delivery of flood risk management. This happens via constantly building relationships and daily communication and the following more formal structures:

Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) A quarterly meeting of WCC elected member representatives, independent specialist invitees and Environment Agency officers to oversee flood risk management and administer Local Levy and Government capital funding on its six-year programme of schemes.

Worcestershire Strategic Coordinating Group: A multi-agency group to give strategic direction to flood risk management in Worcestershire.

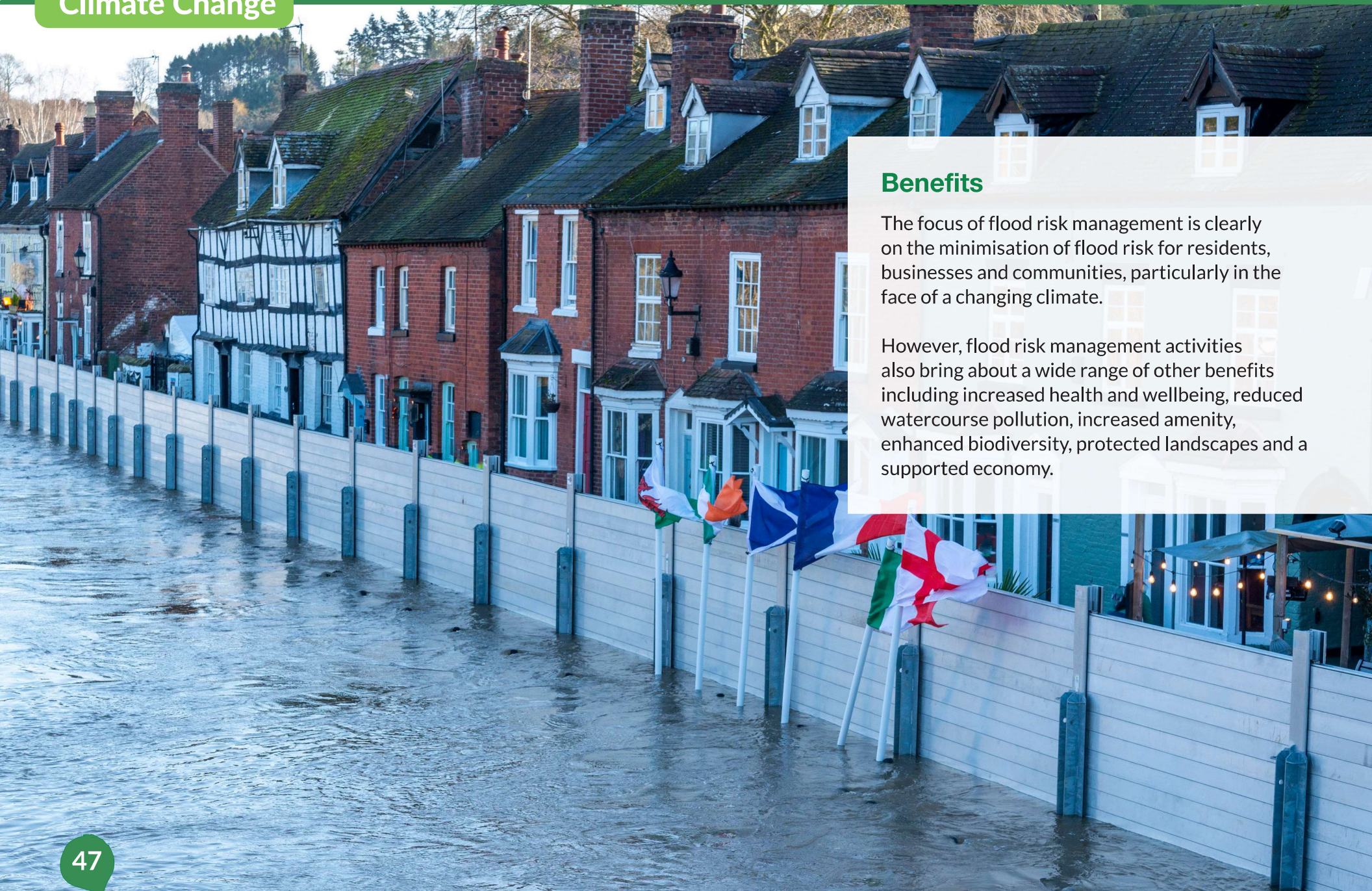
Worcestershire Land Drainage Group: A multi-agency group to give tactical and operational direction to flood risk management in Worcestershire.

District land drainage partnership boards: A meeting of district and county council officers to give direction to the land drainage partnerships.

Flood Risk Management Plan Groups: Multi-agency groups to develop and oversee implementation of Flood Risk Management Plans for particularly vulnerable locations within Worcestershire.

Tactical Co-ordination Group and Operational Cells The formal governance structure for efficient and coordinated tactical and operational response to significant flood events and subsequent recovery from them.

Local community group multi-agency meetings: meetings between communities and the range of flood risk management authorities to ensure to ensure a shared understanding and two-way sharing of priorities and actions.



Benefits

The focus of flood risk management is clearly on the minimisation of flood risk for residents, businesses and communities, particularly in the face of a changing climate.

However, flood risk management activities also bring about a wide range of other benefits including increased health and wellbeing, reduced watercourse pollution, increased amenity, enhanced biodiversity, protected landscapes and a supported economy.



Communities and Wellbeing

Introduction

The Council is helping communities to take positive action to protect and enhance the natural environment; helping residents to save money as well as improve physical and mental health in the process.

WCC is supporting residents to:

- take action to improve their local green spaces and mental wellbeing by coordinating regular volunteer activities such as woodland management.
- volunteer to encourage others, including school children, to reduce, reuse and recycle household waste through our Let's Waste Less volunteer scheme.
- cut carbon emissions and create healthier and cheaper to run homes through home energy efficiency advice and grant programmes (see energy section).

- cut air pollution, improve physical health and save travel costs through the development of a network of active travel routes and improving green infrastructure.

Relevant strategies/plans

- Worcestershire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Herefordshire & Worcestershire Waste Strategy
- Worcestershire Energy Strategy
- Worcestershire Fuel Poverty Plan
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.



Photo image of People holding energy saving icons

Communities and Wellbeing

Objectives

WCC is seeking to:

- Involve communities in the management of their greenspaces.
- Engage volunteers to learn new skills, socialise, gain physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits and deliver meaningful environmental benefit.
- Increase the provision and quality of biodiverse green spaces for Worcestershire residents.
- Help reduce instances of poor health made worse by cold homes and cut carbon emissions from housing.
- Improve air quality and promote active lifestyles.

Photo image of Wild Flowers,
Worcester County Hall

Communities and Wellbeing



Targets

WCC's work contributes to achieving the following targets:

- 3,200 greenspace volunteer hours per year.
- 250 active Health Walks leaders.
- 150,000 trees planted on County Council land.
- Development of 5 new public greenspaces.
- 2000 energy efficiency interventions per year for fuel poor households (Worcestershire Energy Strategy).





Communities and Wellbeing



What we have delivered

Countywide:

- Over 4200 volunteer work party hours at WCC Countryside sites.
- 50,000 trees planted.
- Green Flag awards at Waseley Hills Country Park, Worcester Woods Country Park and St. Wulstan's Nature Reserve, recognising their welcoming environment, biodiversity and community involvement.
- 1526 energy efficiency interventions per year for fuel poor households since 2019 (2022).
- Local cycling and walking improvements.

WCC has:

- Led regular Countryside sites volunteer work parties, where members of the public can work alongside Countryside Service staff on projects such as hedge laying, woodland management, and orchard restoration. In the last year, many volunteers have had the opportunity to meet new people, get fresh air, exercise and learn new skills. Taking part provides moderate physical activity, improves muscle strength, relieves stress and can help combat depression.
- Coordinated the Worcestershire Health Walks programme providing opportunities for regular exercise with others in the county's beautiful natural environment.
- Operated the Lets Waste Less volunteer programme encouraging local communities to reduce the amount of waste they throw away.
- Through the Natural Networks programme we have provided biodiversity advice covering 2600ha, created and enhancement habitats on over 130ha, supported 170 projects providing grants of over £700,000 for biodiversity enhancements, accessible to residents and visitors.
- Led countywide home energy efficiency programmes (see energy section).
- Local cycling and walking Infrastructure Plans: One plan in consultation and seven plans in development.



Communities and Wellbeing



What we will do:

We will continue to deliver and strongly support all the above activities including:

- Continue to protect our natural environment and promote the positive benefits it has for mental health & wellbeing.
- Continue to offer volunteering opportunities in countryside management and waste prevention.
- Continue to deliver the Worcestershire Health Walks programme.
- Continue to coordinate the Warmer Worcestershire home energy efficiency & fuel poverty network offering energy efficiency advice and grant programmes.
- Continue to invest in and seek external funding for further initiatives.

How we will measure performance

- Number of countryside and Let's Waste Less volunteer hours.
- Number taking part in Health Walks.
- Area of WCC maintained public green space.
- Number of Worcestershire homes benefiting from energy advice and grant programmes.
- Miles of active travel routes.

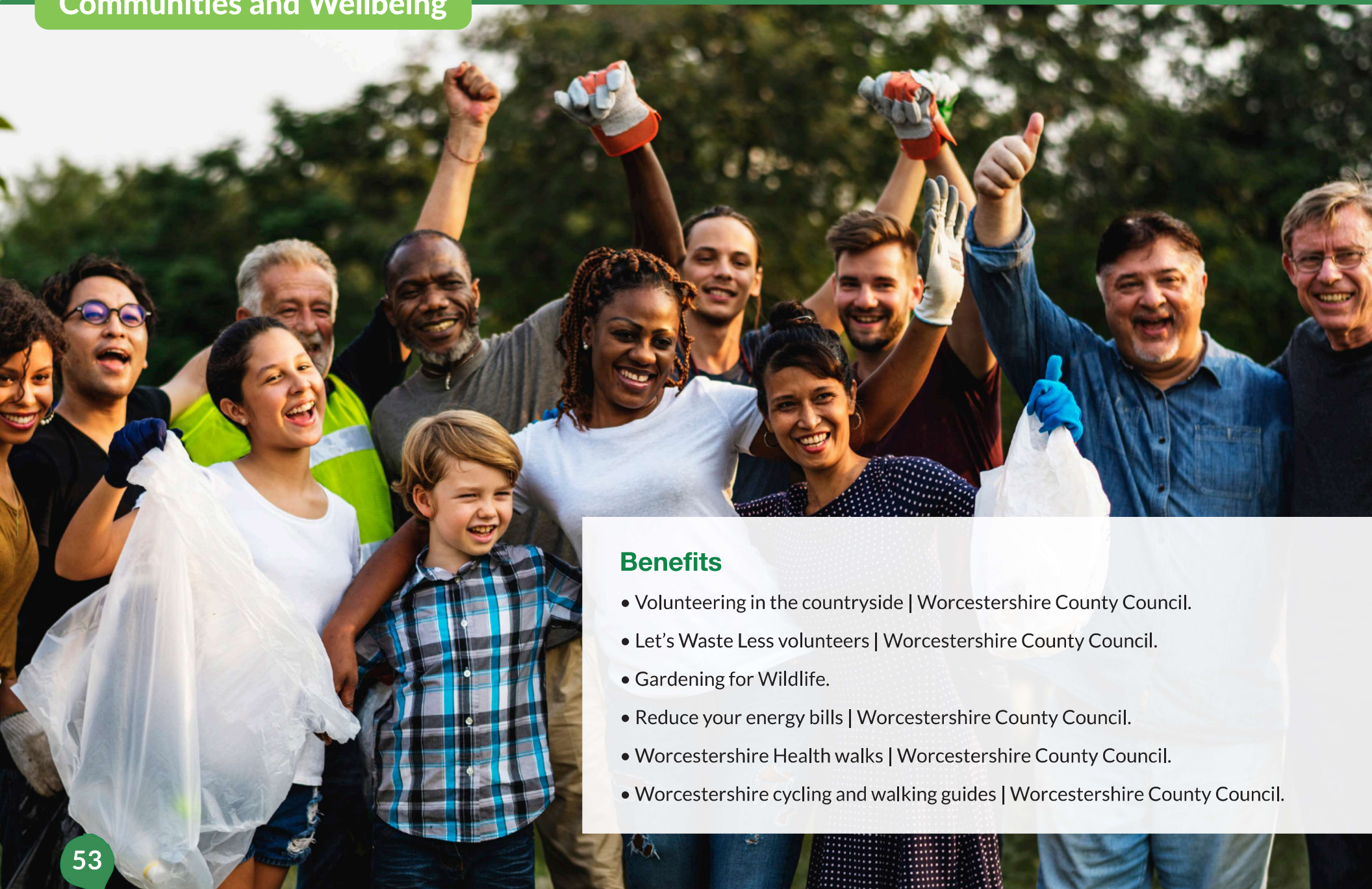


How we will work with partners / wider community

- Work with Worcestershire's health services to offer environmental volunteering, health walks and warmth on prescription services to those in need.
- Work with Warmer Worcestershire partners to review the county fuel poverty plan.
- Lobby government for increased funding and powers through groups such as West Midlands Sustainable Housing Action Partnership and Midlands Net Zero Hub, to support wider community environmental action objectives.



Communities and Wellbeing



Benefits

- Volunteering in the countryside | Worcestershire County Council.
- Let's Waste Less volunteers | Worcestershire County Council.
- Gardening for Wildlife.
- Reduce your energy bills | Worcestershire County Council.
- Worcestershire Health walks | Worcestershire County Council.
- Worcestershire cycling and walking guides | Worcestershire County Council.



Monitoring Performance

We will monitor our performance by reporting annually on the following indicators, a full performance report will be submitted through the County Council's corporate governance process which includes the senior leadership team, corporate business board and Cabinet. The monitoring and performance against the Environment Improvement Plan will also be subject to discussion and scrutiny at the Members Advisory Board (Climate Change and Biodiversity) and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Indicator	Target	Current Performance	Progress
Trees Planted	150000	50000	
Hectares of Biodiversity Gain	N/A	Reporting commences Jan 2024	
Reduction of County Carbon emissions	50% Reduction on 2005 by 2030	2,264 kilotons CO2 emissions (2020) 3.8 tonnes co2 per head	
Waste produced per head of resident	To decrease the Kg er head of resident each year	474.9 KG	
Active travel Improvements	N/A	36 Improvements in 22/23	
New or Improved Cycleway (KM)	N/A	3.6km (2022/23)	
Worcestershire County Council carbon emissions	To achieve Net Zero by 2050 Interim targets: Reduce our direct (scope 1 & 2) net emissions by 92% by 2024/25. Reduce all (scope 1, 2 and 3) net emissions by 50% by 2030	Scope 1: 2,008 tonnes CO2 (22/23) Scope 2: 0 (22/23) Scope 3: 40,357 Tonnes CO2 (22/23)	
To grow the green Economy of Worcestershire	To achieve annual growth of the low carbon sector of 5%, doubling the sector by 2030	11,300 jobs (2019/20) 700 businesses (2019/20)	
To protect homes and busniesses from flooding	To increase the number of homes and busniesses protrected from flooding	5727 additional homes and busniesses protected from flooding	
Homes benefitting from Energy advice and grant programmes	2000 homes supported per year		
Homes supported through the Home energy upgrade scheme	400 homes supported by march 2025	Scheme Launches Novemebr 2023	
Healthy Walks across Worcestershire	N/A	1796 registered walkers	

