Planning for our future
Caring for the environment
Leading by example

Environmental Sustainability Plan 2026-30

HEREFORD & WORCESTER
HWFR
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Contents

OUR CORE CODE OF ETHICS

We follow the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in England which guides everything we do.

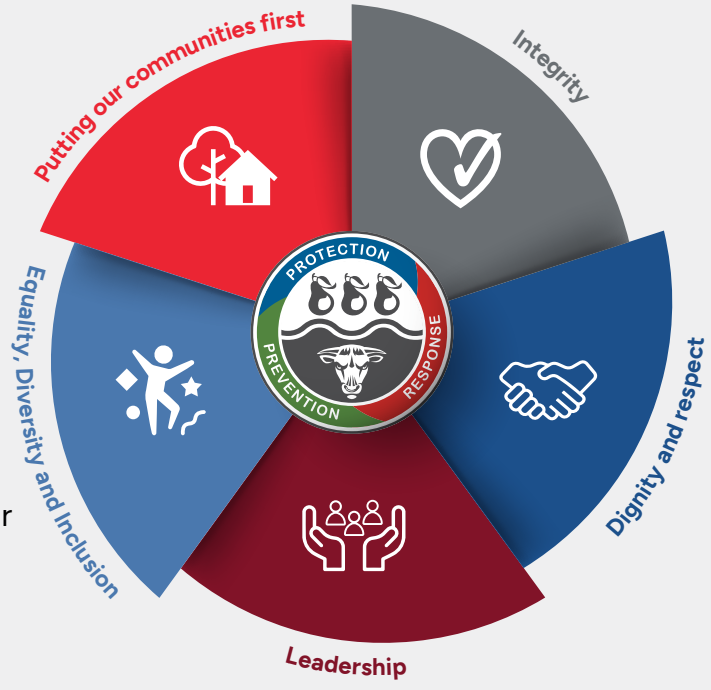
Putting our communities first
We put the interest of the public, the community and service users first.

Integrity
We act with integrity including being open, honest and consistent in everything we do.

Dignity and respect
We make decisions objectively based on evidence, without discrimination or bias.

Leadership
As positive role models, we are accountable for everything we do and challenge all behaviour that falls short of the highest standards.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
We stand against all forms of discrimination, create equal opportunities, promote equality, foster good relations and celebrate difference.



Foreword

As Chief Fire Officer, I am clear that Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) has a responsibility to demonstrate leadership in responding to climate change, and has a small part to play in supporting the national and local intent to reduce emissions and waste. Climate change also presents an operational challenge and therefore it is imperative that the Fire and Rescue Service adapts its ways of working to meet the needs of our communities in this regard.

Over the period of our Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021–2025, the Service has made excellent progress in reducing its environmental impact and embedding sustainability into our ways of working. This progress reflects the commitment and professionalism of our workforce, and it provides a strong foundation on which to build. Importantly, it has demonstrated that meaningful environmental action can be delivered alongside operational excellence, financial discipline, and public value.

This Environmental Sustainability Plan 2025-30, directly linked to the Service's Asset Management Strategy 2025-30 and underpinned by our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP), marks the next phase of our journey. It moves the Service from establishing good practice to embedding the principles of reducing our emissions and waste into normal working, in line with the expectations set out by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). Sustainability alongside value for money and efficient working in this regard will be embedded as a core principle of governance, planning, and service delivery. This helps to ensure that environmental considerations inform strategic decision making, investment, service design, estate management, fleet, procurement, and workforce behaviours.

We recognise that effective improvements to reduce emissions can bring numerous benefits, including improved efficiency, reduced exposure to future energy and fuel costs, and increased organisational resilience. Where investment is required, decisions will be informed by whole life costing and long-term value, balancing environmental responsibility with operational effectiveness, and available resources. Through robust data collection, transparent performance monitoring, collaboration with partners, and continued engagement with our workforce, we will set ambitious, measurable targets and report progress openly.

This plan reinforces my commitment, and that of the Service, to meet the challenges caused by climate change which are detailed in our Community Risk Management Plan 2025-30, and to leave a positive legacy for the communities we protect, serve, and support – now and in the future.

Jonathon Pryce KFSM

Chief Fire Officer/ Chief Executive

Introduction

Climate change primarily through changing and more extreme weather patterns, is already having a tangible impact on HWFRS both operationally and as an organisation that uses fuel, energy and water and produces waste and emissions. The Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30 identifies increased operational demand arising from winter flooding and summer wildfires. In addition to these visible risks, there are fewer apparent consequences, including drought, biosecurity threats from invasive species, and seasonal disruption to ecological food chains.

This is not a conventional performance objective with clearly defined controls and accountabilities. Instead, it represents a complex, evolving challenge for which solutions will emerge over time. Robust governance arrangements will therefore be required to ensure appropriate accountability, scrutiny, and support through existing decision-making processes, while ensuring that limited available resources are deployed effectively and sustainably.

Context

Evidence around climate change indicates that the threat and impact of changing and more extreme weather patterns is something that may worsen in the future and seems to be more frequent in recent years, which affects us all. 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 consumer of energy and a direct source of CO_2 emissions arising from our activities and buildings, therefore it is appropriate we take responsible and cost-effective measures 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 and reducing our waste & potential pollutants.
- Preparing for the impact of a changing climate on our communities.
- The scope for more efficient use of energy.
- The future impact of the increase in energy and fuel prices.
- The investment and improvement in assets and infrastructure.

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 dry and hot weather in recent summers leading to an increase in fires (not in buildings), wetter winters and heavier annual periods of rainfall leading to 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) 2025-30 we consider how we can improve and/or adapt the services. Enabling us to be able to respond and protect our communities against the threats caused by these changing weather patterns, and the impact on our communities as they also grow and change.

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 consumed in the longer term, although this cannot be guaranteed and should be considered against rising energy costs. These whole life savings of any initiatives will be considered but this plan 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.

Context continued

What we have achieved before 2021

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 Wyre Forest, ensuring these are as efficient as possible with new building materials.
- Recycling at all locations.
- Adopting systems to reduce paper usage and wastepaper.
- 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 and hybrid vehicles.
- Installation of 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 of our estate are heated, with an aim to remove outdated inefficient systems, to prevent unnecessary energy usage.

Size of the Challenge

For us to truly know the size of the challenge we face as an organisation we need to continually improve our understanding of our current usage and costs and develop plans to prioritise areas where investment and change will have the greatest impact. The aim of reducing our carbon footprint through better energy usage, waste management and reducing pollution are a sound way to move forward.

The Service's carbon footprint will mainly be based on the energy use in our buildings, fuel used by our vehicles, activities undertaken in our service provision and the waste we generate. It will also consider the emissions from our supply chain and staff routine business. We will endeavour to adopt strategic directives into easy-to-understand headlines for our staff, such as Reduce, Repair, Reuse and Recycle.

What has been achieved so far

Our Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25

Progress in delivering the actions in the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25

How HWFRS is cutting carbon and improving how we work

Since 2021, the Service has been delivering its first Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25, setting out clear actions to reduce environmental impact while continuing to provide an effective emergency response. As the plan reached its final year, the results show real, measurable progress.

> Environmental sustainability is now part of how we plan, build and work every day, not just for the future.

More Energy Efficient Fire Stations Across the County

Our 25 Fire stations are at the heart of local communities and improving how they use energy has been a major focus. During 2021-25 all Service properties were surveyed by a specialist environmental consultancy, funded via the Government's decarbonisation grant funding scheme.

Investment in modern heating systems at **Upton Upon Severn and Tenbury Wells Fire Stations** has already cut carbon dioxide emissions by more than 25 tonnes every year – the equivalent of removing several petrol cars from the road. These improvements were supported by government grant funding designed to help public buildings move away from fossil fuels.

Cleaner Buildings

25.5 tonnes
of CO_2 saved each year from upgraded heating.

Nearly
10% reduction
in gas related emissions across the estate.

£280,000 invested in property sustainability projects since 2021.

Other stations have benefited from **improved insulation** and **upgraded electrical heating systems**, helping buildings stay warm using less energy and lowering long-term running costs.

What has been achieved so far continued

Our Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25

Building Sustainably from the Ground Up

New fire stations have been designed with sustainability in mind from the outset.

Recent developments at **Broadway, Redditch and Hereford** included solar panels, electric vehicle charging points and secure cycle parking, all designed to reduce environmental impact while supporting modern operational needs. Each has been assessed using the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (**BREEAM**), a recognised standard for sustainable building design.

At the Redditch site, sustainability extended beyond the finished building. During construction, **700 tonnes of soil were reused on site**, significantly reducing waste and vehicle movements. Similar arrangements are in place for the new Fire Station in Hereford City.

> Sustainability isn't just about energy – it's about how we design, build and reuse resources responsibly.

Using Less Energy, More Smartly

Small changes can have a big impact when applied across an entire organisation.

Energy efficient **LED lighting** is being installed as stations are refurbished, cutting electricity use while improving visibility and safety. A programme to install **smart energy meters** is also underway, providing better data on energy use to help identify further savings. Full installation is expected by the end of 2027.

Specialist facilities have also been upgraded. Firefighters' drying rooms, essential for response operations, are now being fitted with **low-energy systems** that reuse warm air instead of wasting it. These systems are already operating at **Broadway, Pershore, and Redditch Fire Stations**.

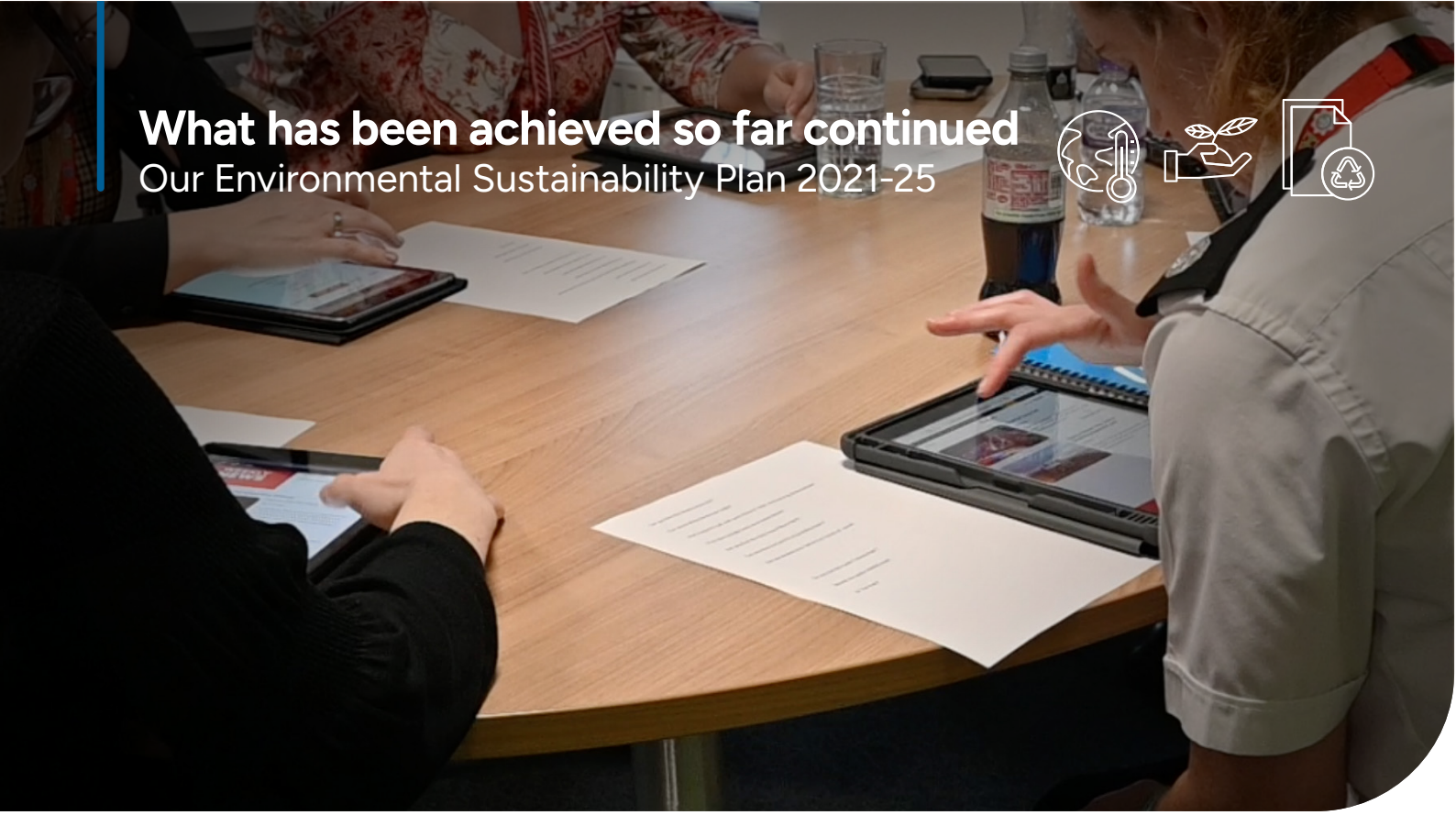
Moving Towards Cleaner Transport

Emergency response will always require vehicles and the larger ones will continue to use combustion engines for the foreseeable future until new resilient technology emerges, but despite this the Service is still working to make its fleet cleaner wherever possible.

Electric and Plug in Hybrid cars and vans are now part of the Service's everyday fleet, replacing petrol and diesel vehicles used for non-emergency roles. To support this transition, **30 electric vehicle charging points** have been included in projects across the estate, with **23 already in use**.

This investment helps reduce emissions, improves air quality and prepares the Service for future advances in low carbon transport.

> Cleaner vehicles and charging infrastructure are helping future proof the Service for years to come.



What has been achieved so far continued

Our Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-25

Cutting Paper, Cutting Travel

Some of the biggest environmental benefits come from changing how people work.

The appropriate and proportional use of **video meetings and online training** has reduced the need for travel, cutting fuel use while saving time.

At the same time, the Service has taken major steps towards reducing paper use. **650 Digital tablets** issued to operational staff now support training, communications and meetings, significantly reducing printing and paper consumption at the same time as improving the quality, consistency and effectiveness of the information being promulgated.

> By cutting carbon, reducing waste and using resources more efficiently, the Service is demonstrating that protecting people and protecting the environment go hand in hand.

Making Sustainability Part of Everyday Work

Environmental responsibility is no longer a side project, it is becoming part of everyday decision making.

Environmental awareness is now included in staff induction and development programmes, while procurement processes increasingly consider the full environmental impact of products, from manufacture to disposal. Work has been completed to reduce single use plastics and harmful chemicals in our supply chain and usage.

A fully researched and laboratory assessed trial was developed to clean contaminated (from historical use of older chemical foams) fire engine foam tanks in 2022. During 2023 all tanks were cleaned, and the firefighting foam we now use has been specifically sourced and is one of the least environmentally damaging products on the market. The decision to use it is always balanced against the risk to life and property, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies such as the Environment Agency.

Areas of Focus 2026-30

Property

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

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 fuel engines which are mainly modern and maintained to high standards and are in service for many years and the larger vehicles cannot be improved at this point in time. We will continue to explore cost effective and resilient options for all smaller vehicles which use less fossil fuels and lower our emissions.

Technology

New technology will play a significant role in not only improving our buildings, such as new efficient heating systems or insulation, but also by developing and streamlining working practices, which will ultimately have a positive effect in reducing our carbon footprint.

Procurement

The Service spends significant sums 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 CO_2 emissions and/or pollutants and waste. Continual improvements to 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).

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 work harder 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.

Areas of Focus 2026-30 continued

Supplies and Equipment

The replacement of all supplies already ensures that a whole life approach is taken. This ensures that all costs from purchase and use of the items through to disposal considerations are captured in the initial decision making process. Where possible we will continue to use recycled products and, at the end of life, consideration will be 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 staff can have an impact 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 wherever they can to reduce energy, travel, waste and to recycle more.

Water

HWFRS will review its non-operational water usage and consider how it can use portable water more effectively and reduce wastage.

Aims / Targets 2026-30

1. Transition to Reduce Travel Emissions

Progressively transition the Service's fleet towards lower emissions by prioritising the replacement of light-duty support vehicles and cars with Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) and electric vehicles (EVs), this will be supported by investment in charging infrastructure. The aim is to significantly reduce emissions associated with fleet operations and business travel while maintaining operational effectiveness and resilience 24/7 and over prolonged periods of emergency service activity.

Aim / target: to increase the Service's ancillary fleet (light-duty vehicles) from 15% to 50% with ULEVs an some EVs.

2. Reduce Carbon Emissions on our Estate and Improve Energy Efficiency

Reduce carbon emissions from the Service's estate by lowering gas usage and moving to efficient electricity consumption across all sites. **This will be achieved through the phased replacement of fossil-fuel-based heating systems with low carbon alternatives and improvements to building fabric and insulation**. The ongoing rollout of energy-efficient technologies including LED lighting and intelligent building management systems will support this. These measures will enhance energy efficiency, reduce operating costs, and improve the resilience of buildings.

3. Increase On-site Renewable Energy Generation

Expand on-site renewable energy generation by installing solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and battery storage systems on suitable fire station roofs, training facilities, and other Service-owned buildings. **Where financially and practically feasible, these systems will be designed to supply at least 20% of the buildings overall energy demand**, reducing reliance on the national grid and exposure to energy price volatility, while contributing directly to carbon reduction targets.

4. Embed Sustainable Procurement and Circular Economy Principles

Strengthen sustainable procurement practices by **embedding environmental and social value criteria into all purchasing decisions**. This includes prioritising sustainable and ethically sourced clothing and equipment and working with suppliers who demonstrate strong environmental performance. Circular economic principles will be promoted by extending the life of assets through repair, refurbishment, and reuse, and by reducing the need for single-use or disposable items wherever possible.

Aims / Targets 2026-30 continued

5. Minimise Waste and Maximise Recycling and Reuse

Reduce the volume of waste generated across operational sites, workshops, and offices, with a clear ambition to minimise waste sent to landfill. This will be achieved through improved waste segregation, increased recycling and reuse, better contractor engagement, and staff awareness initiatives. Performance will be monitored to drive continual improvement in waste reduction and diversion rates.

Aim / target: Increase waste recycled within the plan period to 25%.

6. Strengthen Operational Resilience to Climate Change

Enhance the Service's ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to the impacts of climate change. **This includes improving fire prevention, mitigation, and response capabilities** in the face of hotter, drier summers, and continuing to **develop water first responder skills across all operational fire crews** to manage increased winter flooding risk. These actions will ensure the Service remains effective and resilient as climate-related incidents become more frequent and severe; as set out in the Service's Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2025-30.

Next Steps

The previous environmental sustainability plan and identified actions were a very good starting point on our journey to reducing our carbon and waste output. This plan will continue to be a live document over the coming years, that will be updated as new information and ideas emerge and will build on those improvements already achieved prior to 2026.

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

- Fire and Rescue Authority approval of the Environmental Sustainability Plan 2026-2030.
- Publication of our Environmental Sustainability Plan 2026-2030.
- Use the Service's Comms Hub and TriplePlay media screens to help champion this across all areas of the Service to promote behavioural change.
- Continue to support our supply chain to better understand their carbon footprint and the impact it has on our Service.
- Continue to apply for Government Decarbonisation grant funding schemes where eligible.

HEREFORD & WORCESTER HWFR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

HWFire

Service Headquarters, Hindlip Park, Worcester WR3 8SP
0345 122 4454 | info@hwfire.org.uk | www.hwfire.org.uk