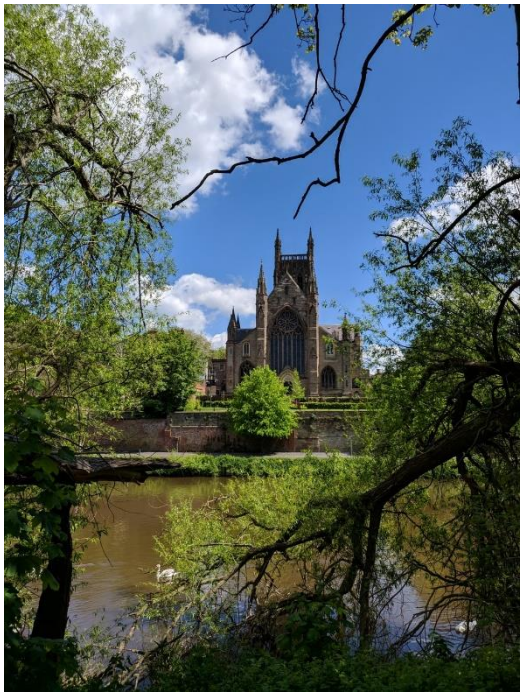
Case study: Worcestershire County Council's progress on carbon reduction

Rank: First	Score: 81%



Worcestershire County Council has reduced its total Greenhouse Gas Emissions from 76,536 to 45,835 tonnes/CO_2e from 2009-2010 to 2019-2020. This overall 40% reduction is due to a 58% drop in Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, and a further 30% reduction in Scope 3 emissions, which is largely because of changes in waste disposal. The total emission reduction was 10% greater than was initially pledged from the baseline year in 2009-2010.

Other progress that has been made includes:

- The council has invested £3 million through the councils energy efficiency spend to save scheme, which has currently led to an estimated £400,000 in savings per year.
- The council has implemented river water cooling and ground source heat systems in the Hive building, which is an award winning public and university library. Both systems use sustainable methods to heat and cool the building using naturally restoring resources.
- As of April 2021, the council has achieved 100% renewable electricity for all council buildings.
- Carbon emissions from transport has reduced by 62% due to reductions in the number of staff claiming mileage, as well as there being fewer fleet vehicles and replacing staff and fleet vehicles with lower emissions models.
- The council uses the Joint Impact Assessment (JIA) tool which requires a review of the environmental impacts, including carbon emissions, of all new council projects.
- Worcestershire County Council has also established a 'Zero Heroes' staff sustainability champion scheme, including a section on the staff Intranet which features briefing sessions.

Carbon accounting

Worcestershire County Council produces an annual emissions report, which can help lead to a meaningful comparison of emissions over time. This also demonstrates transparency in reporting and showcases the data behind the changes for interested individuals. The council has also listed evidence of which datasets were not collected; however this does lower the accuracy and completeness of the data reported. The emissions data are also relevant to all internal and external stakeholders, and is translated to help council staff know what action to take, and so that residents can see what work is being done to achieve Net Zero in their local area.

Offsetting carbon emissions

The council has demonstrated good practice by offsetting carbon emissions from its own estate where absolute reductions are not possible. The council has set a budget aside to plant 150,000 trees, which will create two new woodland areas in the county for residents and visitors to enjoy. This approach offers holistic benefits because, not only will it contribute to balancing the councils' emissions, but it will also contribute to natural environment and health and wellbeing outcomes.

Image: Severn Way, Worcester (Unsplash)