

Cllr Swinglehurst, Cabinet Member for the Environment

Responding to the climate and nature emergency

Herefordshire Council declared a climate emergency on 8 March 2019

By September 2019, we committed to minimising our impact on the environment, and agreed to:

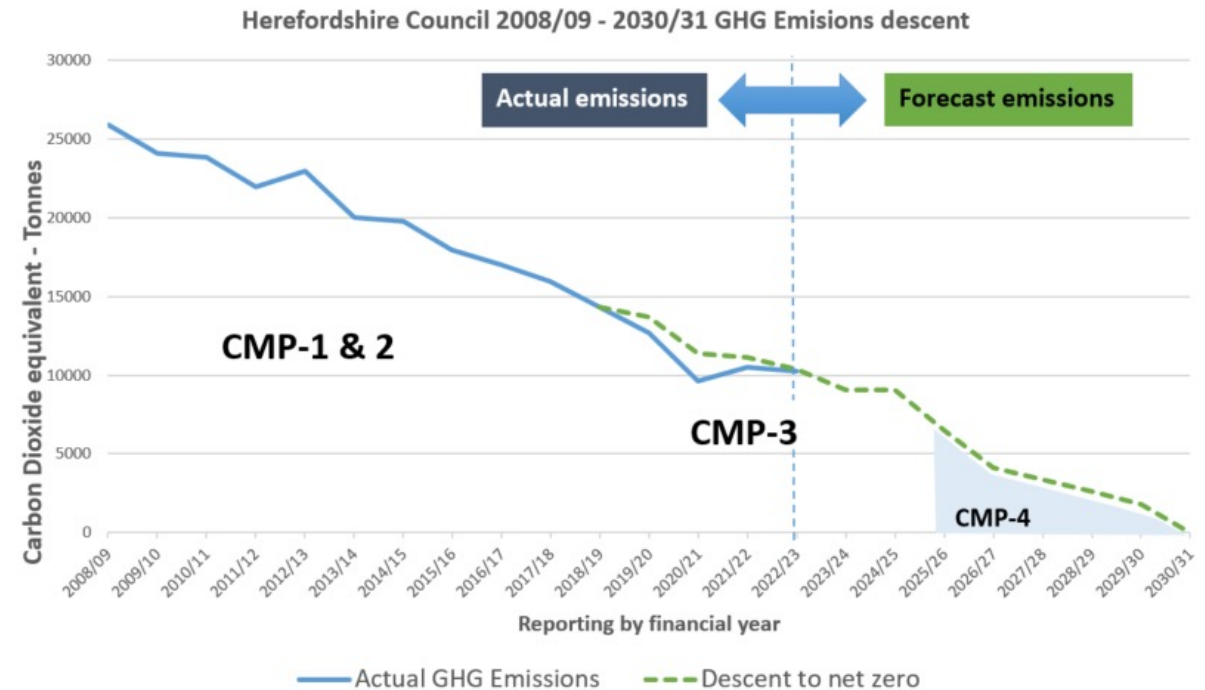
- Accelerate a reduction of emissions and aspire to become carbon neutral by 2030/31
- Deliver an updated [carbon management plan](#) and [associated action plan](#) for council emissions by April 2020
- Work with strategic partners, residents and local organisations to develop a revised countywide carbon dioxide reduction strategy aspiring for carbon neutrality by 2030
- Use 100% renewably sourced energy where this provides the best carbon reduction return on investment

The Council is currently leading by example and is on track in our journey towards net zero, setting an example for the whole county.

The Council's current Greenhouse Gas Report

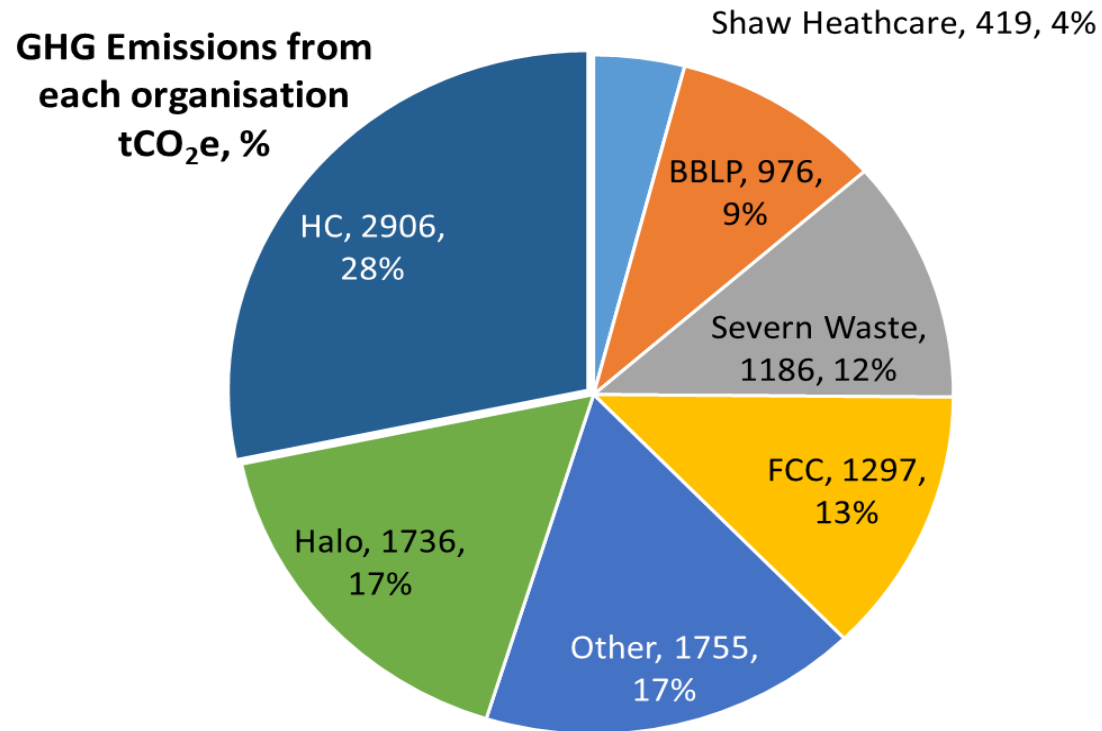
- Total emissions are now **10,277 tCO₂e**
- This is a decrease of **15,610 tCO₂e** or **60.3%** since 2008/09 baseline year
- Annual emissions reduction since 2008/09 has averaged 4.1% of the baseline each year. Over the last 5 years, the reduction from baseline has averaged 3.4% per year.
- Since 2021/22, emissions have reduced by 1.71% of the baseline.

The rate of emissions reduction is slowing.



The next Carbon Management Plan

The Council is now developing our next Carbon Management Plan from 2025/26 - 2030 which will take us to our net zero target.



We face a challenge with the next plan as the majority of Council emissions have already been reduced.

Over half of our current emissions come from our delivery partners – these are sources where the Council has more limited or indirect control.

The contractor's fleet is the single largest emissions source (32% of emissions) including waste collection, waste transfer and maintenance of the public realm. Emissions are high due to the distances covered, the need to use heavy and specialised vehicles and that those vehicles almost exclusively use diesel.

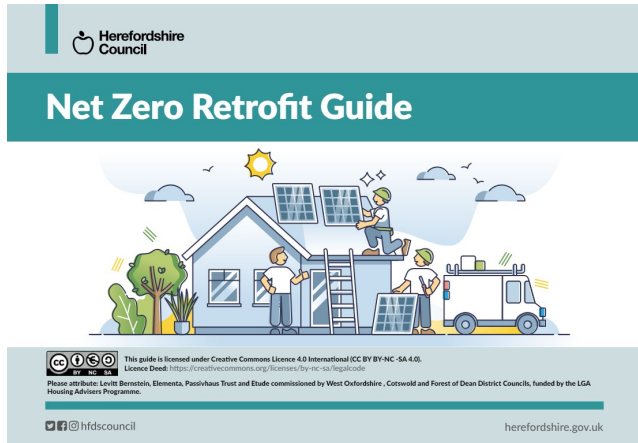
We will need to be innovative to reach our net zero target.

Environmental planning policies

Herefordshire Future Homes

The Herefordshire Future Homes Report sets out the environmental building design standards for future housing developments on council-owned land and council retrofit schemes.

With a shortage of housing to meet the needs of local communities, we are progressing plans to build homes in the county that are affordable and designed to net zero-carbon standards.



Net Zero Retrofit Guide

Herefordshire Council has reviewed and utilised (with permission) the guidance provided by The Forest of Dean, Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils to produce a retrofit toolkit. This is a guide for those wishing to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon in their building schemes.

Environmental planning policies

Some key environmental, ecological and climate policies within the [Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy](#) are listed below.

Policy SS7 – Addressing Climate Change (p45)

Development proposals will be required to include measures which will mitigate their impact on climate change.

Policy MT1 – Traffic Management, Highway Safety and Promoting Active Travel (p130)

Development proposals should promote and incorporate transport connections, including access to services by means other than private motorised transport and encourage active travel.

Policy LD2 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity (p146)

Development proposals should conserve, restore and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity assets of Herefordshire through retention and protection of nature conservation sites and habitats and important species.

Policy LD3 – Green Infrastructure (p149)

Development proposals should protect, manage and plan for the preservation of existing and delivery of new green infrastructure.

Policy SD1 – Sustainable Design and Energy Efficiency (p151)

Development proposals should create safe, sustainable, well integrated environments for all members of the community. Where possible, on-site renewable energy generation should be incorporated and sustainable construction methods should be utilised.

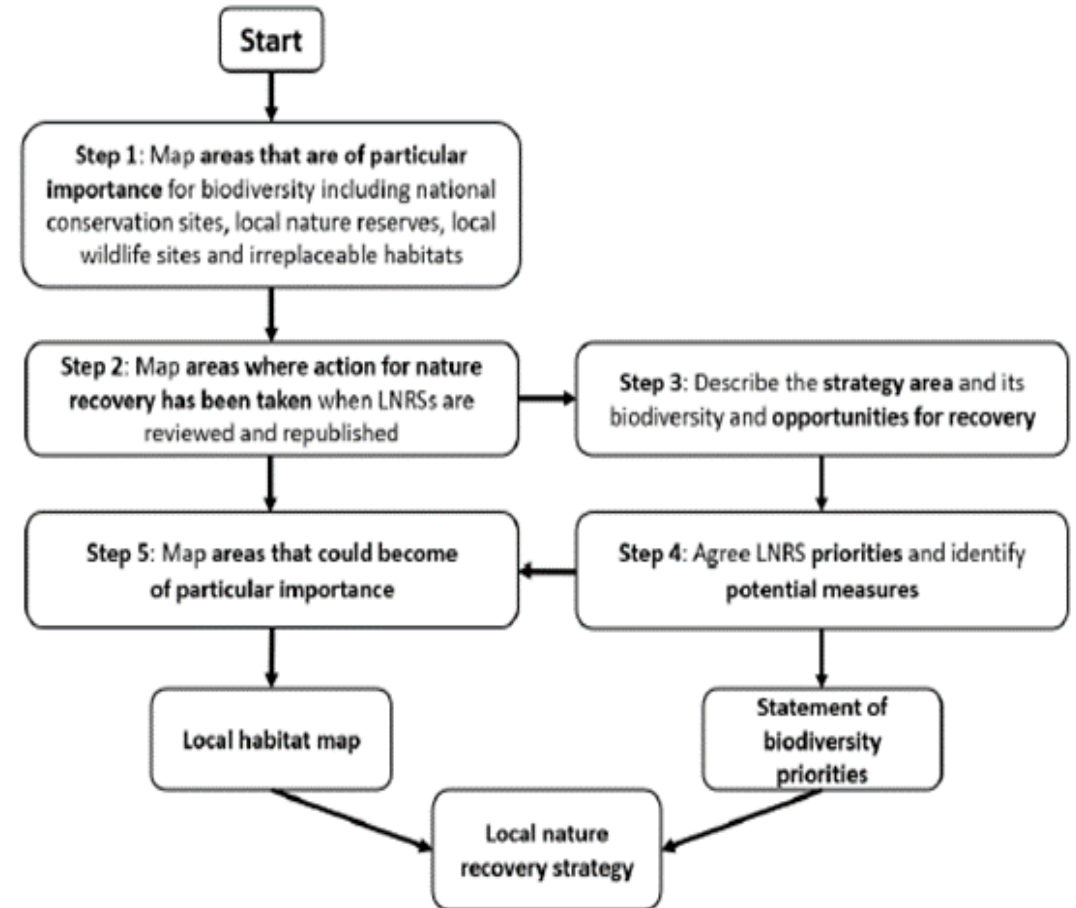
Policy SD2 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation (p154)

Development proposal that seek to deliver renewable and low carbon energy will be supported when they meet certain criteria including not resulting in any significant detrimental impact upon the character of the landscape and can be connected efficiently to existing nation grid infrastructure if required.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also has an environmental objective to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment (NPPF Chapter 2). While 'NPPF Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change' says the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- LNRS will cover the whole of England, no gaps or overlaps
- Herefordshire 1/48 'responsible authorities'
- Non-binding spatial planning tool to support nature recovery network
- Evidence-based, locally-led and collaboratively produced
- Aims to focus delivery through other mechanisms - e.g. BNG and ELMS
- No consent to create habitat without landowner agreement



Herefordshire LNRS timeline

March 2024	Baseline mapping
April 2024	Broad awareness raising and publicising participation phase
Jan – April 2024	Draft opportunity mapping production
May-July 2024	Participation phase including public events and a digital portal
May – June 2024	Production of the LNRS Species List
June 2024	Collation and analysis of participation phase data
June – Aug 2024	Completion of draft strategy
Sept 2024	Pre-consultation engagement with Natural England
Oct – Nov 2024	Public engagement
December 2024	Post engagement amendments to strategy and maps
January 2025	Pre-adoption consultation with NE
March 2025	Formal adoption

EnviRecover - Energy from Waste facility

- Household waste collected from black bins in Herefordshire is taken to EnviRecover, a state of the art energy from waste facility, where it is used as a fuel to generate electricity. The facility is operated by our contractor, Severn Waste Services
- It provides the county with a reliable, safe and cost-effective means of dealing with non-recyclable waste and accepts up to 230,000 tonnes of waste per year.
- The waste is burnt at over 800°C using the heat to produce steam which drives a turbine that generates over 135,000 MWh of electricity per year. This is supplied to the National Grid and is enough to power more than 38,500 homes the equivalent of all of the homes in Hereford city and more.
- EnviRecover has recently reached a milestone having generated **1 million MWh** of electricity from our waste!



Herefordshire Council environmental projects

Biodiversity Net Gain

- Capital investment to support highways biodiversity net gain across public open spaces and roadside verges
- The green spaces and hedgerows alongside our travel network are wildlife corridors providing:
 - Habitats for wildflowers and grasses, which provide food for insects
 - Homes to wildlife
 - Hedgerow shrubs and trees, which provide nesting and food for birds
 - Safe links for mammals moving across their area
- Projects undertaken on hedgehog and insect conservation



River Water Quality

Herefordshire's rivers are currently struggling with high levels of nutrients entering the watercourses and affecting water quality. We have been working on a variety of projects to both improve water quality and enable economic growth including:

- **Interim Phosphate Delivery Plan** which includes a phosphate calculator enabling developers to calculate the amount of nutrients their proposed development will add to the watercourse



- **Construction of integrated wetlands**, pioneering project in Luston which will act as a natural solution to taking nutrients out of the effluent from treatment works and provide mitigation for new development. Shortlisted for 2024 LGC award for environmental services.
- **Supporting the Nutrient Management Board** in bringing forward a new action plan to provide a catchment wide strategy to address pollution.
- **Cabinet Commission established** to undertake a more strategic and systems led review of river quality to progress the restoration of the Wye and Lugg.

Value of collaborative working

Herefordshire Council has brought Powys, Monmouthshire, Bannau Brycheiniog and Forest of Dean Councils together to form the new Commission to take a fresh look at the phosphate challenges on the Wye.

‘Building Bridges over Troubled Waters’ conference - Brought together the environmental campaigners with the agricultural sector to hear about positive things that are being done in the Wye catchment to restore the health of the River. The second meeting was held on Friday 23 February 2024 in Monmouth.

Other examples of positive collaboration

- **Retrofit Guide** - adapted from the excellent document produced by The Forest of Dean, Cotswold and West Oxfordshire District Councils - allowed us to capture existing work and make it relevant to our County
- **Farm audits** – cross border working sharing best practice with Monmouthshire Council
- **Updating Herefordshire’s Specially Designated Sites** - Herefordshire Council are set to join up with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust in reviewing and updating the county’s designated Local Wildlife Sites.



Adaptation to climate change and mitigation

- Adaptation is about protecting our assets, buildings, businesses, people, environment and society from the worst projected impacts of climate change.
- Impacts will still happen regardless of our efforts with Net Zero / carbon reduction.



We contracted Sustainability West Midlands to produce our:

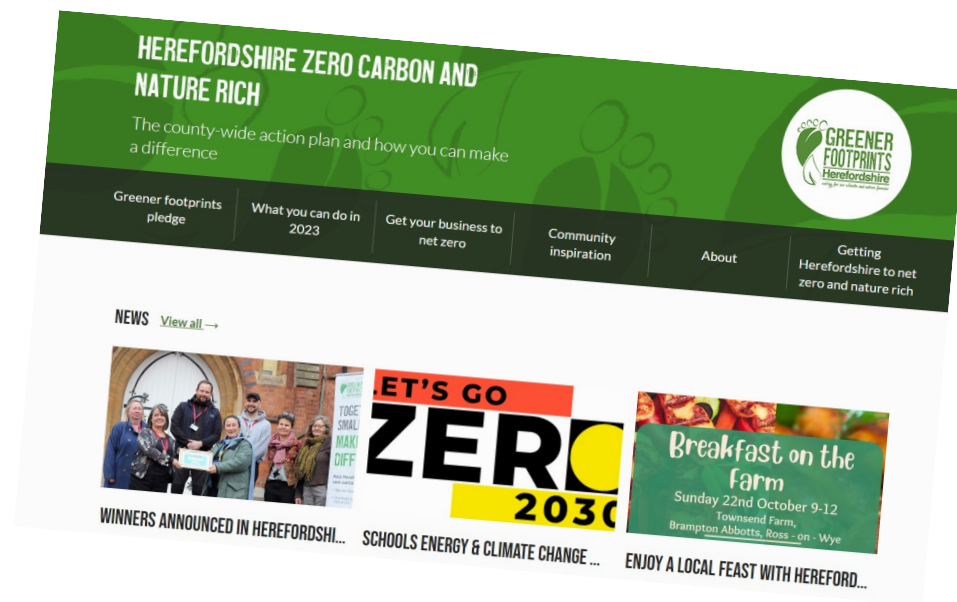
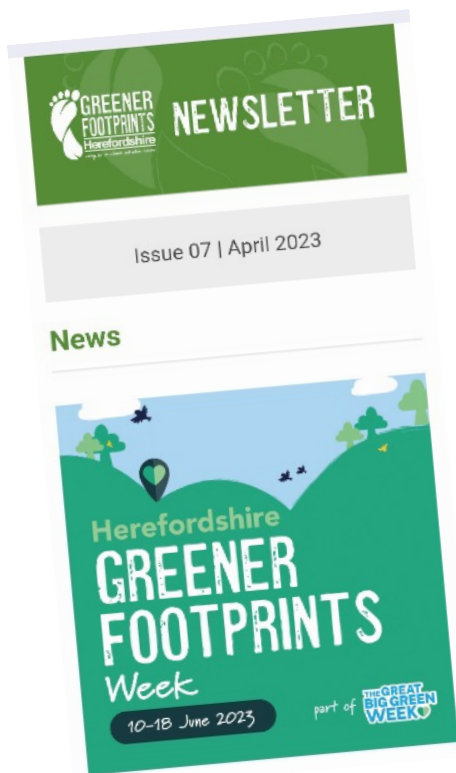
- **Severe Weather Impacts Assessment Report** and accompanying database of historic weather events
- **Technical report** detailing the risks, opportunities and future projections
- **Adaption plan**
 - Sets out recommendations that we to take to reduce impacts of severe weather events
 - Informed by stakeholder feedback and local expertise



The 'Greener Footprints' Initiative

Greener Footprints is a Herefordshire Council initiative to support the county's response to the climate and nature emergencies

- zerocarbon.herefordshire.gov.uk website
- Social media presence - sharing ideas and signposting local initiatives
- Webinars
- E-bulletin
- Events
- Awards for schools and businesses



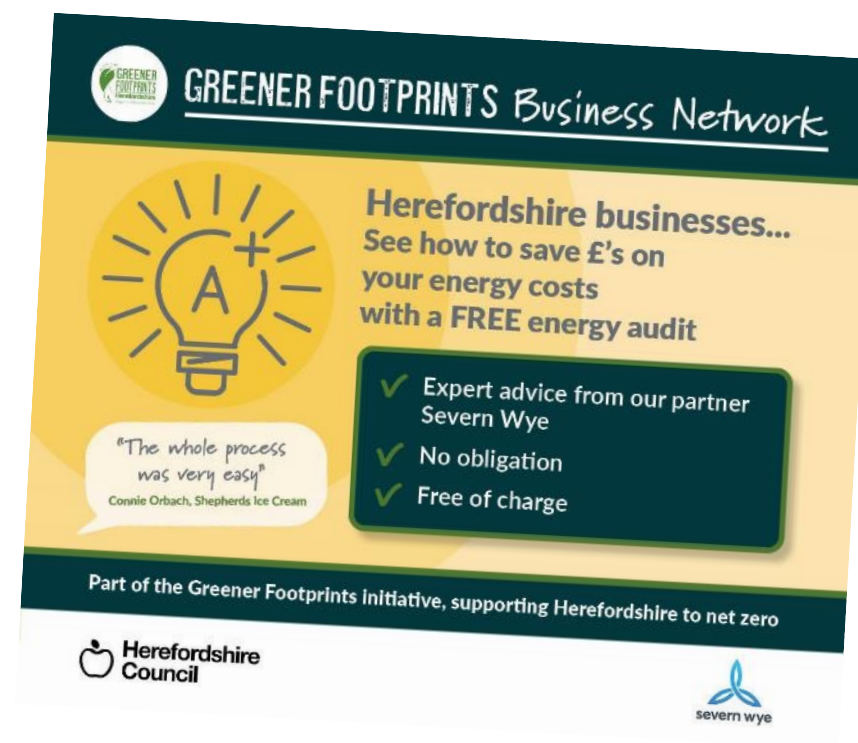


Greener Footprints Business Network

- **Business energy audits:** Over 40 businesses have received free business energy audits



- **Herefordshire Business and Energy Climate conference:** Over 70 businesses attended the Business and Climate conference



Grants to improve your home's energy efficiency and reduce energy bills

Keep Herefordshire Warm is a local project that offers free energy advice to residents in the county. They also administer energy efficiency grants on behalf of the council, which can be used to make a range of home energy improvements.

If you would like advice or are struggling to pay your energy bill then call Keep Herefordshire Warm free on 0800 677 1432 to speak to one of their friendly and professional advisors.

Or visit <https://www.yesenergysolutions.co.uk/schemes/keep-herefordshire-warm/>



Keep Herefordshire Warm Case study

Mr O contacted our team in August. He lives in a small mid-terrace, with his partner and daughter.

Mr O expressed concerns about his mounting energy debt now £2,000. His Personal Independence Payment award was not enough to alleviate his debt alone, especially with the consideration of the costs of keeping the house up-and-running.

Via the Household Support Fund, KHW awarded £500 towards his energy costs. He also received an energy advice pack, alongside both the initial and in-depth assessment.

Resulting in **total savings of £984.**



“Thank you for your time, knowledge and input. I can’t express my relief...knowing I can keep warm has a huge psychological impact...as the fear of debt was overwhelming. Thank you again.”

Grants to improve your home's energy efficiency and reduce energy bills

There are currently three other schemes available to help improve the energy efficiency of your home:

- The [Home Upgrade Grant](#) is for Herefordshire residents who don't have mains gas heating, have a household income under £36,000 and have an Energy Performance Certificate of D, E, F or G
- The [Home Energy Savers](#) initiative helps Herefordshire residents identify home energy improvements and offers funding support for approved projects
- The [Connected for Warmth insulation scheme](#) is free for all residents in Council Tax Bands A to D, in owner-occupied or privately rented housing



Home Upgrade Grant (HUG)

If you are off gas and your total household income is under £36,000 you may be eligible for a home upgrade grant.

Home energy experts will survey your property and design the most effective set of improvements, to make the biggest difference to the efficiency, comfort and cost of powering your home.

Some homes will benefit most from maximising **insulation and draughtproofing**. Some will also get state-of-the-art **heating systems**.

You can find out if you are eligible at
<https://www.gov.uk/apply-home-upgrade-grant>



Electric Vehicle Charge points

Concession contract in council owned car parks:
Expansion plans being finalised – to increase charge point socket provision across the county car parks.

LEVI fund

Herefordshire Council has been allocated over £2.3million of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding for:

- Pilot project – onstreet charge points – first in the county - installation expected 2024
- Capital fund – charge points onstreet and in rural car parks – installation expected to begin 2025
- New officer posts to support delivery



- 30 suggestions from residents for on street charge point locations received via EV webpage
- 22 Expressions of Interest received for charge points in Town and Parish car parks to be funded through LEVI scheme.
- EV drivers group – membership has increased to 48

Beryl Bike Hire

Successful bike hire scheme launched in Hereford in July 2019

- **145 Beryl Bikes**
- **75 e-bikes**
- Most people in the City are only a five minute walk from a Beryl bay
- Number of journeys on a Beryl bike or e-bike have exceeded **1,000,000 km**
- If you haven't tried one yet download the Beryl app or visit: <https://beryl.cc/scheme/hereford>

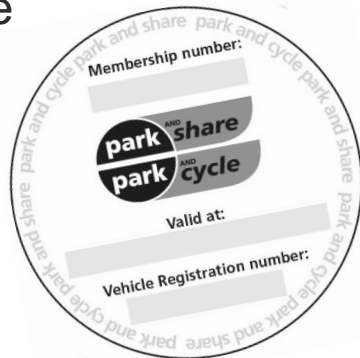


Park and Choose

Many people would love to be able to cycle to work or to college but often journeys may be too far to manage by bike.

Park and Cycle offers a staging post, providing convenient locations on the outskirts of the City for people to break their journey, park their car for **free** and continue by bike, making the most of traffic-free routes and getting in some exercise for the day.

More information at
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/parkandcycle>



Walking initiatives



- **Nordic Walking courses** planned for Hereford this summer. Increasing health and fitness and encouraging every day walking.



- **Get walking** virtual tours to incentivise walking more often for active travel and wellbeing.



- Stride Active are working with local schools to deliver our **Walk to School** programme