

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>General scrutiny committee</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>Monday 28 September 2020</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Task and Finish Group Report – Climate Emergency Review</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Chair of Climate &amp; Ecological Emergency Task and Finish Group</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To consider the Task and Finish Group's report on Climate & Ecological Emergency review.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) The committee considers the task and finish group's report at appendix A; and**
- (b) The committee submits the findings and recommendations to the executive for consideration.**

## **Alternative options**

1. The recommendations proposed in the Group's report represent the Group's findings. If there are any additional recommendations that the committee wishes to make these can be considered at the meeting.

## Key considerations

2. On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a climate and ecological emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at full council.
3. On 26 September 2019, Cabinet approved the executive's response to these resolutions, setting out a number of actions and policy commitments including:
  - An accelerated reduction of the council's own carbon emissions and the aspiration to become net carbon neutral by 2030/31.
  - The council will work with strategic partners, residents and local organisations to develop a revised countywide CO<sub>2</sub> reduction strategy, aspiring for carbon neutral by 2030.
  - That the general scrutiny committee is invited to consider building into their work programme and/or establishing a task and finish group to:
    - i. Review the draft carbon management plan;
    - ii. Review partners' plans and strategies to recommend how best to develop a joint countywide strategy;
    - iii. Develop and propose a checklist of criteria for the development of new and review of existing council strategies to assess their suitability to deliver on carbon reduction.
4. General scrutiny committee established a task and finish group on 20 January 2020 to carry out a climate emergency review.
5. The review is intended to support policy development by providing the task and finish group's findings and recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Economy and Skills and the Sustainability & Climate Change team.
6. The review will contribute to the design and delivery of the Council's new climate change commitments, as set out in the 'Executive Response to the Climate Emergency'.
7. At an early stage the group identified key topic areas to focus the review on. Both external and internal speakers who are experts in their fields were identified and invited to meetings to present to the group and discuss these subject areas.
8. This review has taken place during the Covid-19 pandemic, since March meetings have been held online.

## Community impact

9. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts and encourages constructive challenge and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review.

10. The resulting improvements in local air quality, improved public health and efficiencies from addressing the climate emergency will positively contribute towards the delivery of the council's corporate plan objectives of 'Securing better services, quality of life and value for money' and 'Enabling residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives.'
11. Flooding has been a focus of the groups work throughout the year with recommendations in the report made to look to lessen the impact of flooding and to support those that have been the victims of flooding in Herefordshire.
12. As a part of this work improving the fabric of buildings across the county has been given consideration and the positive impact that plays on both the environment and the health of our residents both for new build and existing properties.

## Environmental Impact

13. The objective of this task and finish group is to ensure the council's operations reflect the ambition set out in the declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency and the setting of the 2030 net zero carbon targets for the council and county. The findings and recommendations in this review support the council's environmental policy commitments in aiming to:
  - Improve and extend active travel options throughout the county (EN2)
  - Understand and support sustainable living (EN3)
  - Invest in low carbon projects (EN4)
  - Identify climate change actions in all aspects of the councils operations (EN5)
  - Seek strong stewardship of the county's natural resources (EN6)
  - Protect & enhance the county's biodiversity, value nature and uphold environmental standards (EN7)
  - Develop environmentally sound infrastructure that attracts investment (EC6)
14. It strongly supports the County Plan's ambitions for Herefordshire to:
  - Protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live
  - Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources

## Equality duty

Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

15. If the committee agrees with the findings of the task and finish group, the report will need to be considered by the executive and, depending on their decision, due regard will need to be given to the public sector equality duty.

## **Resource implications**

16. The recommendations agreed by the committee will be sent to the executive. In considering their response an assessment of resource implications will be undertaken.

## **Legal implications**

17. The functions of the general scrutiny committee include the powers to make reports or recommendations to the executive with respect to the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and to make reports or recommendations to council or the cabinet on matters which affect the authority's area or the inhabitants of that area.
18. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **Risk management**

19. The recommendations agreed by the committee will be sent to the executive. In considering its response the executive will need to assess any risks arising from the recommendations.

## **Consultees**

20. None

## **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Report of the Task and Finish Group – Climate & Ecological Emergency Review.

## **Background papers**

- None identified.