

GEM MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Report from: Director of Environment

Wards affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To review the Council's environmental performance during 2006/07, particularly in relation to the corporate Environment Strategy & ISO 14001, to ensure that it continues to improve overall.

Financial implications

2. The external commitments in the Strategy have already been included in budgets. The internal Good Environmental Management targets are designed to be met within existing budgets and resources.

Considerations

3. The appended report summarises the Council's performance against corporate Environment Strategy objectives.
4. The aim of the Environment Strategy is to provide an accessible overview of major environmental commitments already made by the authority. The commitments address the council's Corporate Plan 2007-10 priority to "protect the environment, including recycling much more waste and significantly reducing carbon emissions". The strategy summarises the objectives adopted, including controls on areas such as waste, energy and transport.
5. Internally the authority is committed to tackling its own environmental impacts through its certification across all functions to ISO 14001, the international environmental management standard. This is monitored through twice yearly visits from our external certifiers, SGS. The next visit is due in July 2007.
6. Externally the authority makes a major contribution to Herefordshire's environment through working with the public, in partnership with other organisations and the wider community. The full Environment Strategy document (on the council website) includes links to the more detailed strategies from which the summary objectives are drawn.
7. A number of the strategy objectives have proved difficult to provide quantitative data on and some new commitments have been entered into since the strategy was adopted in 2005. The strategy is therefore being refreshed during 2007 to ensure it remains up to date and that all entries have measurable outcomes. Some out turn figures for 06/07 are not yet available so gaps in the appended report will also be completed at that point.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Trish Marsh,
Sustainability Manager on (01432) 261930

Background

8. Reviews at top level by CMB, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Environment Scrutiny are designed to ensure that our commitment to overall improvement in environment performance, required by ISO 14001, is being met.
9. Environment Scrutiny have a role in scrutinising performance of the ISO 14001 system at full year and half year on behalf of Herefordshire residents and are defined within the system as interested parties. GEM (Good Environmental Management) plays a key role in delivering:
 - The council's commitment to safeguard the environment through everything in the Corporate Plan (1.5)
 - The council's Corporate Plan priority to 'protect the environment, including by producing much less waste, recycling much more of what remains and significantly reducing carbon emissions' (5.2)
 - Its environmental policy commitment to "demonstrable and continuous improvement of its environment performance" across all Directorates
 - The council's contribution to the Community Strategy for Herefordshire's guiding principle to "Protect and improve Herefordshire's distinctive environment", which states: -"Herefordshire has a rich and diverse environment with many unique features. This resource must be conserved and enhanced through raising awareness and education so that communities and future generation can continue to enjoy and benefit from the distinctive environment. This includes improving local public areas across the county, developing access to the countryside, protecting our biodiversity and tackling climate change through waste minimisation and energy efficiency measures. "

RECOMMENDATION

THAT: The report be noted, subject to any comments members may wish to make to the Cabinet Member (Environment & Strategic Housing).