

GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT (GEM) REVIEW

Report from: Director of Environment

Wards affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To review the Council's corporate environmental management / ISO 14001 system to ensure that it continues to be suitable, adequate and effective, delivering improvement in environmental performance and full compliance with all relevant legal and other requirements.

Financial implications

2. Ensuring compliance with legal requirements in respect of environmental obligations requires expenditure. However, there are opportunities for environmental improvements that would also contribute financial savings.

Risk Management

3. It is important that environmental risks are included on Risk Registers where appropriate.

Considerations

4. ISO 14001 requires that top management review the environmental management system regularly. The corporate GEM group agreed the Management Review on 31st October 2007 and it is now being considered by directors. Key findings from the report, which covers the period from October 2006 to September 2007, are appended
5. Reviews by CMB, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Environment Scrutiny Committee are designed to ensure that possible need for changes to the policy, objectives and other Environmental Management System (EMS) elements are addressed at the top level of the Council, bearing in mind audit results, performance against objectives and targets, concerns of relevant interested parties, changing circumstances and the commitment to environmental improvement.
6. The Review includes key findings from a recent Legal Compliance Review in respect of Council environmental obligations, undertaken to meet the requirements of the ISO 14001 standard.
7. The environment policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect changes since it was agreed in mid 2005.

Background

8. GEM (Good Environmental Management) plays a key role in delivering:
- The Corporate Plan commitment to deliver sustainability and safeguard the environment through contributions from across the Council (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" through "setting formal objectives 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).

Attachments

- Revised Environment Policy
- Management Review

Background Papers:

- None identified.