

Title of report: Executive Response to General Scrutiny Recommendations Regarding the Climate and Ecological Emergency Review

Decision maker: Cabinet member environment and economy

Decision date: Friday, 16 July 2021

**Report by: Head of environment, climate emergency and waste services,
Principal Energy & Active Travel Officer**

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To approve the executive response to recommendations made by general scrutiny committee regarding the climate and ecological emergency review.

On 26 April the General Scrutiny committee made a further 11 recommendations after reviewing the executive response to the initial 58 recommendations in the climate and ecological emergency review.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The response to the General Scrutiny committee's 11 additional recommendations regarding the task and finish group review concerning the Climate and Ecological Emergency, as attached at appendix 1 is approved.**

Alternative options

1. None proposed; it is a statutory requirement to provide a response to recommendations made by general scrutiny committee. It is open to the executive to accept, partially accept or reject a recommendation from scrutiny committee, should a recommendation not be accepted an explanation should be provided.

Key considerations

2. On 8 March 2019 Herefordshire Council declared a Climate Emergency following unanimous support for a climate emergency resolution at Full Council.
3. This declaration was updated on 11 December 2020 when Herefordshire Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) following support for a climate and ecological emergency resolution at Full Council.
4. General scrutiny committee established a task and finish group on 20 January 2020 to carry out a climate emergency review.
5. The general scrutiny committee met on 25 January 2021 to agree the report and made 58 recommendations to the executive.
6. On 25 March 2021 the executive responded to the review setting out a response to each recommendation.
7. The full executive response is available here:
<https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=7731>
8. On 26 April 2021 the General Scrutiny committee made a further 11 recommendations to the executive.

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. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.
10. The executive response to the report supports the council's environmental policy commitments and the County Plan's ambitions 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
- 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)

Environmental Impact

11. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
12. The objective of the Climate task and finish group was 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. Equality duty
13. 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.

14. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.
15. For the recommendations that related to back office functions, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty. Where the recommendations relate to our providers they will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.

Resource implications

16. Where there are additional cost implications as a result of these recommendations they have been identified in the table below. All other actions will be met from existing budgets. Where further decisions are required upon completion of the recommendations, these decisions will consider any resource requirements in future reports.

Recommendation Number	Recommendation regards	Resource Implications
2	Establishment of a new standing panel to monitor the executive response to the Committee's recommendations.	Officer time will be required to support the development and ongoing secretariat of the new standing panel, however this will be informed by the outcome of the Rethinking Governance review.

Legal implications

17. Any recommendations or proposals made by general scrutiny committee to cabinet on a matter require by statute a response from cabinet whether that be to accept, partially accept or reject a recommendation. This decision is an executive one and is a non key decision. It is in line with the council's declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019 updated on 11 December 2020, and accords with the executive's response, to the council's resolutions, in September 2019.
18. There are no legal problems in doing what is proposed.

Risk management

19. There are no risks associated with agreeing the content of this report as the Executive response provides information and indicates how the work is being taken.

Consultees

20. None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Executive Response to General Scrutiny Recommendations regarding the Climate and Ecological Emergency Review

Background papers

- None identified

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

- Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE)