

Title of report: Executive response to General Scrutiny Recommendations regarding Herefordshire Council's response to the Covid pandemic

Decision maker: Leader of the Council

Decision date: Tuesday 14 September 2021

Report by: Solicitor to the council

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 council's response to the Covid pandemic.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The response to the General Scrutiny committee's recommendations 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. The general scrutiny committee met on 11 June 2021 to consider all aspects of the council's response to the covid pandemic.
3. There is a huge amount of which everyone in local government can be extremely proud when we reflect on the role councils up and down the country have played in responding

to the covid-19 pandemic and supporting communities. As the country emerges from restrictions and the work of the council shifts from emergency to reset and recover it is important to capture learning from the unprecedented situation.

4. Appendix 1 sets out the executive response to the 16 recommendations made by the scrutiny committee.

Community impact

5. 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.

Environmental Impact

6. 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.

Equality duty

7. 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.
8. 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.
 9. 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

10. There are no additional cost implications as a result of these recommendations. All actions will be met from existing budgets. If further decisions are required upon completion of the recommendations, these decisions will consider any resource requirements in future reports.

Legal implications

11. 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 to be taken by the leader as it covers a number of cabinet portfolio's.
12. There are no legal problems in doing what is proposed.

Risk management

13. 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

14. None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Executive Response to General Scrutiny Recommendations

Background papers

- None identified