

# **Title of report: Review of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Review**

**Meeting: Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee**

**Meeting date: Thursday 19 January 2023**

**Report by: Head of environment, climate emergency and waste services,  
Sustainability & Climate Change Manager**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

This is not an executive decision

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

To provide an update to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on the implementation of the Executive Response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Review Scrutiny Report and Recommendations carried out in 2021.

## **Recommendation(s)**

That:

- a) **The Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee note the update provided in Appendix 1 which provides an update on the actions following the executive response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Task & Finish Group, and**
- b) **The committee determine any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive to consider.**

## **Alternative options**

1. None identified, this report provides an update to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.

## **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. On 26 September 2019, Cabinet approved the executive's response to these resolutions, setting out a number of actions and policy commitments including:
  - a. An accelerated reduction of the Council's own carbon emissions and the aspiration to become net carbon neutral by 2030/31.
  - b. 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.
  - c. 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.
5. General scrutiny committee established a Task and Finish Group on 20 January 2020 to carry out a climate emergency review. The general scrutiny committee met on 25 January 2021 to agree the report and made 58 recommendations, on 26 April 2021 and made a further 11 recommendations and on 19 July 2021 and made a further 3 recommendations.
6. This report provides an update on the progress against the executive response to the 72(total) recommendations to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.
7. Of the 72 total recommendations 24 are complete, 47 are in progress and one is to commence.
8. Following the Climate Citizens Assembly, which was a direct recommendation of the Task & Finish group, £1.33m has been allocated to deliver the consequential action.

## **Community impact**

9. As a result of the work that has been carried out from the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group the following community impacts can be considered:
  - a. 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.'

- b. Flooding was a focus of the Task and Finish Groups work throughout the year with recommendations in the report made to lessen the impact of flooding and to support those that have been the victims of flooding in Herefordshire.
- c. 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**

10. The objective of the 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. The work carried out by the Council guided by the Group supports the Council's following priorities:
  - a. Improve and extend active travel options throughout the county (EN2)
  - b. Understand and support sustainable living (EN3)
  - c. Invest in low carbon projects (EN4)
  - d. Identify climate change actions in all aspects of the Council's operations (EN5)
  - e. Seek strong stewardship of the county's natural resources (EN6)
  - f. Protect & enhance the county's biodiversity, value nature and uphold environmental standards (EN7)
  - g. Develop environmentally sound infrastructure that attracts investment (EC6)
11. The executive response and associated actions also contribute towards the following County Plan ambitions for Herefordshire to:
  - a. Protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live
  - b. Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources.

## **Equality duty**

12. 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.

13. 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. As this is a decision on back office functions, we do not believe that it will have an impact on our equality duty.

### **Resource implications**

14. There are no resource implications associated with providing this progress update to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.

### **Legal implications**

15. The Council is required to deliver a scrutiny function. The development of a work programme which is focused and reflects those priorities facing Herefordshire will assist the committee and the Council to deliver a scrutiny function.
16. The Scrutiny Rules in Part 4 Section 5 of the Council's constitution provide for the setting of a work programme, the reporting of recommendations to the executive and the establishment of task and finish groups within the committee's agreed work programme.
17. Whilst this is an update on the work of the scrutiny committees and will in itself have minimal legal implications, consideration has been made in the consideration of Executive decisions and the Executive Responses provided by the Cabinet.

### **Risk management**

18. There are no risks associated with providing a progress update to the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee.

### **Consultees**

- None.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1, Implementation update.

### **Background papers**

- The Climate and Ecological Emergency Review report by General Scrutiny Committee, Task and Finish Group.
  - <https://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50086309/Appendix%20A%20for%20Climate%20Emergency%20Review.pdf>

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

**Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published**

Governance	John Coleman	Date 20/12/2022
Finance	Louise Devlin	Date 19/12/2022
Legal	Sharon Bennett-Matthews	Date 16/12/2022
Communications	Luenne featherstone	Date 19/12/2022
Equality Duty	Carol Trachonitis	Date 16/12/2022
Procurement	Carrie Deeley	Date 19/12/2022
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 19/12/2022

**Approved by**                      **Ross Cook**                      **Date 22/12/2022**

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