

## Appendix 3 Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

The Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee, as detailed in Section 4 of this report, met on 26 July 2022, 21 September 2022, 18 November 2022 and 19 January 2023. The following is an overview of the items reviewed by the committee.

### **ITEM: Restoration of the River Wye – Cabinet Phosphates Commission**

The Committee noted the proposal by Cabinet to establish a Commission with the aim of bringing key stakeholders together to address a number of long standing issues.

- The Committee questioned how the Commission would achieve buy-in from partners, given that the Council was one of numerous stakeholders and there was no authority to compel participation.
- Given the existence of cross-boundary issues, the Committee suggested that further consideration be given as to how the working relationship between partners is best shaped.
- The Committee raised concerns in relation to capacity of the proposed Commission to deliver upon its objectives, particularly as it indicated that Cabinet members would be serving on it, adding to their already considerable responsibilities.
- The Committee felt that whilst understanding of the Cabinet's rationale for taking political ownership, there were members of the Council with more knowledge of the area than some serving on the Cabinet, and it was felt that the membership of the Commission should be based on subject knowledge rather than seniority.
- It was felt that involving other members of the Council would also help to maintain political consensus and momentum.

#### **The following recommendations were submitted to the executive:**

- That the proposed Cabinet Phosphates Commission on the Restoration of the River Wye include in its membership councillors from across the Council who have a particular knowledge of the subject matter; and
- That the Cabinet ensure that every effort is made to promote active participation from neighbouring local authorities in the work of the proposed Commission.

Following an update from the Executive on how Restoration of the River Wye was being progressed the Committee made the following information requests:

- Clarification of the commission's terms of reference with regards to the relationship between the Phosphates Commission and the Nutrient Management Board, so as to be clear as to what directives may be given to the Nutrient Management Board by the commission, including any legal implications arising from the proposed rewriting of the board's strategy;
- Clarity on how the executive will find ways to involve expertise from across the membership of the Council in the work of the commission; and
- Further reports be requested to the committee to provide updates on the progress of the commission, including a progress report provided to the meeting scheduled for 10 March 2023 (which was cancelled due to pre-election period activity).

**Status: Ongoing**

### **ITEM: The Herefordshire Local Plan: Environment and Sustainability**

The committee considered the extent to which the preparation of the Herefordshire Local Plan would look to deliver the objectives for environment and sustainability, as outlined in the County Plan 2020-2024, Herefordshire Climate Change Emergency resolutions and Executive Response, and other

relevant council strategies and policies, including the success measures provided in the council's County Plan 2020-2024.

**The committee resolved that:**

- A summary scrutiny report [A review of the development of a new Local Plan for Herefordshire](#) was drafted and then approved by the committee, setting out the evidence considered, key observations and any recommendations. The committee's report was received by the executive at its meeting on 26 January 2023.

**Status: Ongoing**

**ITEM: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Action Plan**

The Committee considered the Herefordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy action plan, which identified a programme of work for reducing local flood risk within Herefordshire.

The following representatives attended the meeting:

- Chief Fire Officer, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
- Assistant Director - Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
- Senior Drainage Engineer, Balfour Beatty
- Assets and Waterways Manager, Environment Agency
- Environment Planning Specialist, Environment Agency

A set of recommendations and findings [ESSC Findings on the Herefordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) relating to the flooding risk action plan was drafted and then approved at the ESSC meeting of 19 January 2023 and presented to the Executive on 26 January 2023.

**Status: Ongoing**

**ITEM: Waste and Recycling**

The Committee received an update on the implementation of the Waste Management Review and the Executive Response to the Waste Management Review Scrutiny Report and Recommendations carried out in 2021.

At its meeting on 19 January 2023, the committee made the following recommendations, which have yet to be received by the Executive:

- There should be additional information provided at, via the self-serve booking system and located within, local recycling centres identifying additional opportunities to re-use and repair items that would otherwise be sent to waste or re-cycling.
- As part of this, working with charitable sector partners to expand and communicate the diversity of options for re-use.
- Strengthened communications is provided on the opportunities available to reduce, repair re-use and recycle locally - targeted at those who do not currently process their waste in this method.
- That the Executive set in place a reporting and a communications campaign to ensure that the public are made aware about how each of our waste streams are used (recycling, waste for energy recovery and for disposal to landfill), and explains where each waste stream is directed to and how each stream is re-processed.

- That Smart KPIs are agreed with our contractors responsible for recycling, waste for energy recovery and disposal to landfill.
- Infrastructure is provided at recycling centres to enable and maximise opportunity to allocate their items for re-use.
- Measures are taken to ensure that when local food outlets are inspected by environment health information is provided about the opportunities and additional options available to them to recycle their waste.
- Development of the business cases within the proposed capital programme should ensure consistent criteria relating to environmental and sustainability measures applied to their fullest extent in relation to reaching carbon neutrality, and repair and re-use of redundant equipment and buildings.
- Alongside this, development of a carbon scoring system to be able assess how specific projects contribute to carbon reduction targets in relation to other options.

**Status: Ongoing**

**ITEM: Review of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Review**

The Committee received and update on the implementation of the Executive Response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency Review Scrutiny Report and Recommendations carried out in 2021.

At the meeting of 19 January 2023 the Committee made the following recommendations and amendment:

- That the ESSC would like to see included on the service delivery dashboard for planning, a performance measure encompassing a timeline for the creation of a local planning list, including environmental and ecology compliance checklists at the pre-validation stage of the planning application.
- A climate and ecological emergency 'champion' is appointed to look at what practices other local authorities are leading on with a view to informing and influencing the work of Herefordshire Council.

**Amendment:**

- Herefordshire Council reviews the water course consent form and involves the ecology team and looks at the connections and linkages between the flood risk management and the nature strategy and the Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA).

**Status: Ongoing**