

**Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses**  
**Scrutiny Committee: Environment and Sustainability**  
**Date: 24-03-2025**

**Agenda item title: Energy Efficiency and Retrofitting**

That Herefordshire Council:

<b>Recommendation 1</b>	develops a plan to deliver progress on energy efficiency and retrofitting across Herefordshire, including targets, in line with their ambitions on net zero, to include the co-benefits that flow from this, including public health, wellbeing, and the cost of living			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Accept The Sustainability and Climate Change Team will draft a retrofit strategy for Herefordshire outlining how the council will directly and indirectly support, facilitate and encourage retrofit in the county. The ESSC will be consulted on a draft of the document once produced.			
<b>Action –</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
To draft Retrofit Strategy	Sustainability & Climate Change Manager	Jan 2026	To share draft with ESSC committee in early 2026	To begin

<b>Recommendation 2</b>	appoints a skills champion on the cabinet to drive forward upskilling across key business sectors, including energy efficiency and retrofitting, to support their growth ambitions for Herefordshire			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Developing skills across the county is a key priority for the council. Part of Councillor Graham Biggs role as Cabinet Member Economy and Growth is acting as the councils skills champion. There is a skills board in place chaired by David Williams principal of Herefordshire, Ludlow and North Shropshire College. Councillor Biggs sits on this board alongside council officers. All of the main colleges and training providers in the county are also members of this board. There is a collective effort between the skills board and business board to host an event bringing a number of Herefordshire businesses together to discuss and make provision for workforce planning, skills gaps and future skills needs. In addition £400,000 of UKSPF funding has been allocated to support employment and skills. Retrofit is a key part of the above as a key sector in the environmental economy.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>

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The Council has appointed a skills champion, Cabinet Member Economy and Growth.	Cabinet Member Economy and Growth	Complete	Skills champion in place	Complete
Actively participate in the Herefordshire Skills Board	Cabinet Member Economy and Growth	Ongoing	Continued participation	Ongoing
Host workforce planning, skills gaps and future skills needs event	Economic Development Manager & Senior Adviser Post 16 Learning and Skills	September	Event hosted	Planning stages

<b>Recommendation 3</b>	promotes the Publicly Available Specification 2035 (PAS 2035) standard for council-funded retrofit delivery and investigates equivalent standards for private schemes to consider			
<b>Response</b>	<p>Accept</p> <p>The next retrofit programme the council is gearing up to deliver is called Warm Homes: Local Grant which incorporates the use of PAS2035. This gives homeowners confidence the work is delivered to nationally recognised specifications and standards to ensure a high quality of work on their home.</p> <p>Through the creation of the Herefordshire Retrofit Strategy we will investigate what equivalent and alternative standards private homeowners could utilise instead of PAS 2035 and present the benefits and/or disbenefits of these alternative options.</p>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>

Delivery of Warm Homes: Local Grant from April 2025 to March 2028 incorporates PAS2035.	Sustainability & Climate Change Manager	August 2025	PAS2035 is incorporated into service delivery	Complete
Investigate equivalent and alternative standards to PAS 2035 private homeowners could utilise.	Sustainability & Climate Change Manager	Jan 2026	To share draft with ESSC committee in early 2026	To begin

<b>Recommendation 4</b>	arranges a summit of interest groups of landlords and tenants, to explore how to implement the Renters Right (Reform) Bill, when in force, with a focus on energy efficiency and retrofitting and a goal of improving living conditions for renters			
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>Accept</p> <p>The Housing Team are considering the implications for housing services. The changes should give renters properties that meet standards giving better quality of housing, security and better rights. For Landlords it will highlight obligations they need to sustain in a longer tenancy agreement. However, it may decrease the number of properties that are available to rent due to the more onerous obligations and thus financial burden placed on landlords to meet standards. Landlords also may decide to sell to their properties due to this factor – which could reduce the supply of private rental stock, making it more difficult to secure a rental.</p> <p>The Housing Team will create a webpage with information for landlords and tenants – this can be a repository of information for both stakeholders.</p> <p>The Housing Team in conjunction with Environmental Health will look to hold a landlord forum with the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) to facilitate landlord training and accreditation. The Forum will take place once the Bill has been enacted.</p>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
To hold a landlord forum after the Renters Right Reform Bill has been enacted	Environmental health / Housing Team	March 2026	Forum held	
To create a webpage explaining Renters Reform Rights, MEES, Future Homes Standards	Housing Team	Jan 2026	New webpage live	

<b>Recommendation 5</b>	develops an able-to-pay market strategy which will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify the key barriers to able-to-pay investment</li> <li>• work with partners to overcome these barriers and</li> <li>• use the evidence of the growing market to encourage supplier investment in the retrofit market</li> </ul>			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Accept We are currently exploring options available to the public to access private finance in support of domestic energy retrofit. Through the development of a retrofit strategy for the county we will explore the key barriers to 'able-to-pay' investment. Through the delivery of the strategy we will work with partners to overcome barriers that have been identified and look to stimulate private investment in the retrofit market as appropriate.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
To draft Retrofit Strategy	Sustainability & Climate Change Manager	Jan 2026	To share draft with ESSC committee in early 2026	To begin

<b>Recommendation 6</b>	investigates models of partnership with funders to offer private low interest finance to support the able to pay sector to retrofit within an able-to-pay strategy			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Accept Research has identified that a significant barrier to increasing finance for retrofit is the difficulty for lenders to prove that implemented measures will result in better energy efficiency. Currently there are a number of finance mechanisms and low cost loans but negative perceptions of borrowing, complex applications and uncertainty over eligibility are all hampering take-up. We will carry out further research into finance models that are available to residents to enable domestic retrofit.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Research private finance offers	Principal Sustainability	Jan 2026	Research concluded	

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<b>Recommendation 7</b>	looks at ways to encourage small improvements and easy wins that would bring a disproportionate improvement to a property's energy efficiency			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Accept We will explore this idea through our partner Keep Herefordshire Warm as well as via the Greener Footprints initiative in a similar way to the promotion of domestic energy retrofit last year <a href="#">Make your home more energy efficient - Herefordshire Zero Carbon and Nature Rich</a>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Promote quick wins for residents via Greener Footprints	Sustainability & Climate Change Team	Throughout Summer/Autumn 2025	8 posts from August – December	Pulling out snippets from heat pump webinar for use on social media; working with Low Carbon Technology Centre to produce questions residents should ask installers when getting quotes etc.

<b>Recommendation 8</b>	ensures that council funding towards intervention on retrofit skills continues to be used for projects that are appropriate for and reaching all retrofit-related companies in Herefordshire and focusing on existing people working in the industry as well as current students			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Accept For any future council funded projects that support retrofit skills we will ensure that the projects are appropriate for and targeted at all retrofit-related companies in Herefordshire where possible within the terms and conditions of the funding source.			

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Ensure that Herefordshire Council funded retrofit skills projects are appropriate for and targeted at all retrofit-related companies in Herefordshire.	Sustainability & Climate Change Team	Ongoing	Upcoming retrofit skills projects fit this criteria where possible	Initial conversations held with Economic Development Manager

<b>Recommendation 9</b>	considers promoting a summary of all the sources of advice, help, and finance more widely			
<b>Executive Response</b>	<p>Accept</p> <p>The Herefordshire Council website acts as a single repository for all of the useful links residents need in respect of home energy. <a href="#">Home energy – Herefordshire Council</a></p> <p>This includes links to the Keep Herefordshire Warm advice service which acts as a one stop shop for residents who want to pick up the phone for advice or send an email asking for help. Keep Herefordshire Warm promotes its services via a marketing strategy that has resulted in all Herefordshire Households receiving a flyer in March 2025. Days such as Fuel Poverty Awareness day help to further promote the service.</p>			

<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Continue to keep the Home Energy pages of the council website up to date	Sustainability & Climate Change Team	Ongoing	Herefordshire Council webpages on Home Energy are up to date	Complete and ongoing
Research private finance offers to add to the information repository on the council pages if appropriate	Principal Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	Jan 2026	Research concluded and suitable mechanisms identified	

<b>Recommendation 10</b>	analyses what it would take to bring all private rented accommodation up to the EPC C standard and identify what the council would do to help as soon as the EPC C announcement is made			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Accept The private rented sector (PRS) accounts for 9,294 properties (approximately 11.1% of total). Currently 2,043 households have an EPC C or higher. The majority are in Band D (3,570) and Band E (2,192), Band F (711) and Band G (178). The government is reviewing the Private Rented Sector EPC band C by 2030. To bring these Herefordshire properties up to Band C the investment required is estimated at £367 million. This estimate has been calculated using the Parity Pathways tool.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
To promote ECO4 due to run to March 2026. This places the obligation to increase energy efficiency of homes onto utility suppliers utilising their investment.	S&CC Team	Ongoing	PRS EPC bands increase and exemptions to MEES do not increase	We are currently promoting ECO4 through Keep Herefordshire Warm and directly to Warm Homes: Local Grant applicants.
To increase Energy Performance of homes via the Warm Homes: Local Grant (WH:LG) Scheme.	S&CC Team	Ongoing	PRS homes are upgraded.	The WH:LG scheme has launched and assessments are being arranged with residents.

<b>Recommendation 11</b>	writes and further petitions the Government to demand that the EPC C standard is introduced for the private rented sector			
<b>Executive Response</b>	Decline The government has recently consulted on the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) reform and the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES). The government is consulting on proposals to further raise the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard for rented buildings to an EPC band rating of 'C' by 2027 and to a Band rating of B by 2030.			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Target/Success Criteria</b>	<b>Progress</b>
To review the EPC reform and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards once in force to ensure this is in line with EPC band C.	Principal Sustainability & Climate Change Officer	2026	Review complete	Awaiting outcome of EPC/MEES reform.

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