

# Cabinet

10 December 2020

## Review of Warwickshire County Council's Environmental Management System

### Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1) Endorse the continuation of WCC's certified environmental management system to ISO 14001:2015 following an appraisal of the work undertaken in the previous year.
- 2) Note the environmental risks and objectives noted in this report and confirm that they are suitable.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Maintaining an environmental management system (EMS) to ISO 14001:2015 supports the organisation in managing the environmental impacts and risks associated with its services and estate to an acceptable level, along with determining potential opportunities for improvement. It also helps to identify and mitigate environmental impacts and risks posed by external environmental conditions on the organisation.
- 1.2 At a strategic level changes regarding national and global environmental conditions along with motions within the Council Plan 2020-2025 have led to a review of WCC's strategic environmental risks and environmental management system objectives.
- 1.3 At an operational level over the financial year 2019-2020:
  - Current environmental objectives are generally being attained;
  - Compliance with environmental legislation is reasonable in most areas;
  - Provision of waste data received is improved;
  - Energy use (and associated carbon emissions) continues to fall;
  - The cost of business mileage has decreased continuing an overall downward trend; and
  - The quantity of nonconformities raised at internal environmental audits has risen slightly reflecting a more targeted approach within the environmental audit programme.

- 1.4 Warwickshire County Council is one of a handful of County Councils that employs a certified EMS to help manage its environmental performance. (Other County Councils having a certified EMS are Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Kent). In the commercial world the implementation of a certified EMS is common practice for the majority of larger organisations (+250 FTE). Examples of commercial organisations in Warwickshire include Aga Rangemaster, Cemex, Jaguar Land Rover and National Grid)

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 Warwickshire County Council's EMS is certified by a UKAS accredited organisation (currently the British Standards Institution) which provides assurance that it is robust, effective and that it conforms to the requirement of the international environmental standard ISO 14001:2015
- 2.2 The cost of certification, which is currently undertaken bi-annually over 7 assessment days per year is approximately £9,000 representing excellent value for environmental compliance assurance.

## **3. Environmental Implications**

- 3.1 WCC's environmental management system, which is certified to ISO 14001:2015 supports climate change objectives within the Council Plan 2025. It also provides a mechanism to track and report progress against various environmental performance requirements, including adherence to environmental legal requirements throughout all services and estate.
- 3.2 Our current assessment body (The British Standards Organisation) rates Warwickshire County Council as having a medium environmental risk.
- 3.3 The current scope of the certification of Warwickshire County Council's EMS is '*The services and activities delivered by Warwickshire County Council in relation to the built and natural resources of Warwickshire delivered directly or by wholly owned companies*'.

## **4. Supporting Information**

### **4.1 Strategic Environmental Risks**

Documented below are the strategic environmental risks determined through discussions with Senior Management and investigations via the internal environmental audit programme.

#### **4.1.1 Climate Change**

Impacts include increased risk of severe weather events including flooding. An increase in the cost of maintaining WCC estate and highways. Adverse

impacts on natural environment and biodiversity. Potential impact on farming and food production.

#### 4.1.2 **Increased growth of businesses and housing within Warwickshire**

Impacts include air pollution, congestion with the associated impacts on health. Potential lack of sufficient energy connectivity (grid capacity) and security. Loss of natural habitat and biodiversity along with potential impacts on flood plains noting WCC's limited role in the planning decision making process.

#### 4.1.3 **HS2**

Impacts from the construction of HS2 in Warwickshire include the loss of habitat and biodiversity including ancient woodlands and impacts on both Kingsbury and Pooley Country Parks. Adverse impacts on local towns, in particular increased heavy traffic and road diversions during the construction phase.

#### 4.1.4 **Waste**

Dealing with increased waste from both residential and business development with an aging waste infrastructure and uncertain markets for recycling.

#### 4.1.5 **Financial Savings**

The continued need to make savings potentially impacting on front-line environmental services.

#### 4.1.6 **Pandemic Virus (Covid 19)**

Although primarily a health and economic risk there are also adverse environmental impacts. These include an increase in unrecyclable PPE waste and potential fly-tipping of waste. Also, an increase in carbon emissions from people working from home during the winter and adopting single vehicle travel rather than using public transport or car-sharing.

### 4.2 **Environmental objectives**

The objectives and associated targets for the EMS have been formulated from the actions on climate change documented in the Council Plan 2025 and current approved environmental / energy policies. For ease here they have been set out using 8 different themes relating to different aspects of the organisation.

#### 4.2.1 **Built and Natural Environment**

- We will seek to achieve net gain for habitat, benefiting climate change mitigation and adaptation
- We will seek to prevent the degradation of our natural estate and enhance where opportunities arise

#### 4.2.2 **Energy and Water Use**

- We will reduce our energy consumption by improving the energy efficiency of our buildings and make our corporate buildings carbon neutral.
- We will substantially increase our renewable energy generation, continue to

purchase 100% green electricity and support residents to procure cheaper energy

#### **4.2.3 Policy, Legislation, Risk and Opportunity**

- We will maintain certification to ISO 14001:2015 for all services

#### **4.2.4 Procurement and Contract Management**

- We will develop our plans to reduce carbon emissions from our third-party contracts for highways, property and social services
- We will reduce the significant adverse environmental impacts from higher cost procurement contracts where feasible

#### **4.2.5 Skills, Awareness, Training and Communication**

- We will ensure our staff, contractors, customers and visitors are clear how they contribute to minimising the Council's carbon impact.
- We will employ staff with the necessary skills and competence to manage the environmental impacts of their work and provide training for environmental aspects of their work as required.

#### **4.2.6 Travel and Transport**

- We will seek to make the Council's transport fleet carbon neutral.
- We will embrace new ways of working to reduce both business travel and commuting
- We will support and encourage low carbon and carbon neutral methods of travel for staff
- We will review and agree a new local transport plan to encourage sustainable travel and reduce transport related carbon emissions

#### **4.2.7 Waste and Recycling**

- We will reduce, recycle and compost more of our office waste, and reduce our use of paper and single use plastic.
- We will develop and implement a new joint waste strategy for Warwickshire working in partnership with the district and borough councils to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost and recover more of our household waste

#### **4.2.8 Working in Partnership**

- We will partner with our communities to plant a tree for every Warwickshire resident.
- We will work with local businesses and communities to help them reduce their carbon emissions and become more sustainable.

Robust realistic targets will be determined with Senior WCC Management

## **5. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps**

5.1 Warwickshire County Council's re-certification to the ISO14001:2015 standard will be assessed in December 2020. If successful, this will deliver the opportunity to continue the external assessment process over the next 3 years through the organisation.

## Appendix

The Annual Review of the Environmental Management System

### Background Papers

None

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
Report Author	Julie Burton – EMS Manager	julieburton@warwickshire.gov.uk
Assistant Director	Craig Cusack	craigcusack@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Director	Strategic Director for Resources	robpowell@warwickshire.gov.uk
Lead Member	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Heritage & Culture	cllrtimms@warwickshire.gov.uk

The report was shared with Councillor Timms prior to publication.