

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

**MEETING HELD AS A REMOTE MEETING.
ON TUESDAY, 6TH JULY, 2021 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Steve Jarvis and Amy Allen (Co-Chairs), George Davies, Keith Hoskins, Mike Hughson, Gerald Morris and Michael Muir*

In Attendance: *Reuben Ayavoo (Policy and Community Engagement Manager), Georgina Chapman (Policy Officer), William Edwards (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Darryl Simmonds (CSC – IT Support)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 4 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 50 seconds.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Val Bryant and Adem Ruggiero-Cakir.

Having given due notice Councillor Mike Hughson advised he would be substituting for Councillor Adem Ruggiero-Cakir.

10 MINUTES - 8 JUNE

Audio Recording – 3 minutes.

The Minutes of the Meeting on 8 June 2021 were attached for Members' attention.

11 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio Recording – 3 minutes 31 seconds.

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recordings would be available to view on Mod.Gov and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel.
- (3) The Chair drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

12 INFORMATION NOTE - WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER FOR 2021/22

Audio Recording – 4 minutes.

The Policy & Community Engagement Manager presented the information note entitled Work Programme and Actin Tracker for 2021/22 along with Appendix A and drew attention to points including:

- Appendix A included a draft of suggested topics for the coming year;
- This meeting was themed around Leadership and Behaviour Change;
- The meeting in September would be themed around renewable energy generation, November on waste minimisation, and February next year would focus on adaptation to climate change;
- On EP35 regarding litter awareness, Councillor Jarvis had led the successful 'Don't be a Tossler,' campaign in 2020;
- On EP38: a statement of licensing policy produced in November 2020 to be adopted in 2021 included environmental considerations such as encouraging biodegradable materials at events, waste management plans and recycling schemes, and vehicle use reduction;
- EP40 highlighting details to help residents reuse and recycle furniture and household items had been completed; details were published on the Council's website;
- On EP41 the Council now had a shared Waste Awareness Officer who was undertaking work on education campaigns;
- On EP46 taxis were now encouraged to use cleaner and low emissions vehicles with a subsidised licensing fee and all new vehicles and those replaced in 2028 onwards in the Council's vehicle fleet would be ultra-low emissions vehicles;
- On EP47 the Transport Policy Officer was investigating the use of smart cards for busses in the District as part of the emerging national bus strategy;
- On Ep50 & 51 work on a draft local infrastructure plan for cycling networks was beginning and there was to be a public stakeholder event taking place in the summer.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Gerald Morris

In response to questions the Policy and Community Engagement Manager advised that while licensing policy was primarily determined by the four licensing objectives set by statute, measures such as those in the Statement of Licensing Policy could strongly encourage license holders to consider their ecological impact.

Julia Sonander, Transition Town Letchworth, advised that there was a meeting on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan on 15th July to which community groups were invited.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Information note entitled Work Programme and Action Tracker for 2021/22 be noted;
- (2) That the Programme for Future Cabinet Panel on the Environment Meetings 2021-22 at Appendix A be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure the Cabinet Panel on the Environment is able to plan its workload and monitor actions.

13 LEADERSHIP AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE: NORTH HERTS AND THE HCCSP

Audio Recording – 13 minutes.

The Policy Officer gave a presentation on Climate Leadership and Behaviour Change policies in the NHDC Climate Change Strategy and the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership.

Points raised included:

- There were two main ways the Council influenced action on climate change; the Climate Change Strategy (CCS) and membership of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP);
- The CCS recognised that the Council's own estate was small and that leadership was key to achieving the Net 0 target in the District;
- The CCS had three strategic priorities: reducing carbon emissions from NHDC's own estate, enabling carbon savings, and inspiring community action.
- Measures around enabling carbon savings included implementation of better cycle networks and masterplans on active travel and walkable neighbourhoods, and improving provision for electric vehicle charging;
- Measures on inspiring the community to take action included providing tools to enable residents to assess their carbon emissions, encouraging positive changes by highlighting monthly eco actions, and the food waste awareness programme with the Waste Awareness Officer and the Reducing Waste Together group.
- The HCCSP was made up of officers and representatives from 10 Districts in Hertfordshire, Herts County Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership;
- The HCCSP enabled stakeholders to take action on issues where it was difficult for individual authorities to make an impact;
- The HCCSP identified 4 key priorities of water, biodiversity, carbon reduction and transport and formed subgroups on these topics with each being led by a member authority;
- NHDC led the Biodiversity working group;
- Each working group produced a strategic priority action plan on their topic which covered actions within the remit of local authorities to deliver, with action plans going through a process of consultation and stakeholder engagement before presentation and adoption;
- The governance and policy generation structure of the HCCSP was explained;
- Strategic Action Plans (SAP) focussed on actions that local authorities could deliver themselves or via influence with community groups, business and the voluntary sector;
- The Biodiversity SAP included: developing communications on No Mow Campaigns, encouraging wildlife friendly gardens, encouraging District allotments to grow peat- and pesticide-free, and identifying whether actions were best delivered in-house or by engaging external organisations, creating a biodiversity scoring system and baseline units for the District, and auditing local authority green spaces to identify areas where biodiversity could be enhanced;
- The Transport SAP included: working with employers to deliver low carbon travel plans, highlighting the health and environmental benefits of active travel and developing information for the public on the risks of poor air quality;
- The Carbon Reduction SAP included: launching a county wide campaign to encourage reduction of carbon emissions in everyday life with a carbon reduction pledge;
- The Water SAP included: delivering education on saving water and the importance of chalk streams and fixing leaks.
- The draft Biodiversity SAP was presented to the HCCSP in March and approved, and stakeholder engagement was run through April and May; the policy team was now making any relevant changes to the action plan and identifying appropriate monitors for each point before presenting it to the HCCSP for final adoption.

The Chair advised that different Councils in the HCCSP were at different stages on their environmental plans and while the HCCSP allowed group collaboration there were areas where it was valuable for the District Council to proceed by itself.

The following Members and members of the public asked questions and took part in discussion:

- Councillor Michael Muir
- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Keith Hoskins
- John Webb
- Sue Lines

In response to questions the Policy Officer advised that the NHDC policy team were the main officer participants from the Council on the HCCSP.

In response to questions the Policy and Community Engagement Manager advised:

- The HCCSP was established when Hertfordshire County Council declared a climate emergency and the 4 subgroups were chosen by HCC based on their strategic climate priorities;
- Work on the parking strategy including electric vehicle charging was undertaken before the pandemic by the Transport Policy Officer.

In response to questions the Chair advised:

- Due to the crosscutting nature of ecological issues there were a range of parts of the NHDC organisation that needed to be engaged in actions;
- Work had been undertaken on assessing electric vehicle charging availability in public spaces but not in private areas;
- Work needed to be undertaken to assess how EV charging could be made available to a larger section of the population;
- In simplistic terms mowing in towns was undertaken by NHDC sometimes on its own behalf and sometimes for other owners; HCC mowed outside of urban areas;
- Conservation cutting by HCC was only undertaken in select areas;
- This year due to environmental conditions and other factors the overall length of grass had disrupted mowing schedules.

The Chair thanked the Policy Officer for their presentation.

14 HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BEHAVIOUR CHANGE UNIT PRESENTATION

Audio Recording – 40 minutes.

Ludovico Nocco, Hertfordshire County Council Behaviour Change Unit, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Panel and gave a presentation on behavioural science and behaviour change policies including:

- Behavioural Science was the study of human behaviour and decision-making;
- Changing behaviour was the key to getting people to do things; equipping people with information alone was often not enough to create change;
- The start of any behavioural change project was to define the behaviour to be changed, identifying whose behaviour, what the behaviour was, when it was performed, and how often it was performed;
- The COM-B model (Capability, Motivation, Opportunity – Behaviour) of factors was explained;
- The physical, psychological, social and reflective vs automatic dimensions of the different factors in shaping behaviour were explored;

- The Behaviour Unit at HCC started by examining the outcomes desired and working backwards, identifying what behaviours were necessary, what influences there were over those behaviours, to allow policies to target the correct influences for maximum effectiveness.

The following Members and members of the public asked questions and contributed to discussion:

- Councillor Amy Allen
- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Mike Hughson
- John Webb

In response to questions, Ludovico Nocco highlighted:

- Best policy integrated 'hard' and 'soft' measures to create behaviour change, addressing both material and psychological factors;
- The behaviour change unit at HCC was founded in 2019 and a lot of the projects it examined had not reached the delivery stage; the unit was adopting a test/learn/adapt model to the success of its ongoing projects;
- The COM-B model can be applied to many contexts and the subjects imagined by its behavioural analysis can include a variety of features and characteristics e.g neurodiversity;
- Behavioural analysis identified barriers to behaviour change which were always context and group specific which made the process of analysis central;
- Behavioural scientists were often surprised by the 'trivial,' reasons people have for doing things.

In response to questions the Chair noted that behavioural analysis recognised that populations were not homogenous and that it was useful to understand the scope of the topic as a tool for shaping the direction of policy.

The Chair thanked Ludovico Nocco for his presentation.

15 CAMBRIDGE CARBON FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR AND CHARTER PRESENTATION

Audio Recording – 1 hour 10 minutes.

Anni Sander, Cambridge Carbon Footprint, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Panel and gave a presentation on the Cambridge Carbon Footprint Charter and Carbon Calculator tool highlighting:

- Cambridge Carbon Footprint (CCF) was a small charity based in Cambridgeshire;
- The Cambridge Climate Change Charter was designed to raise awareness of climate change and help people to take action;
- The brief from Cambridge City Council as partner to the project was to create a charter to revitalise a historical project that had fallen out of use;
- CCF delivered an online charter which individuals or businesses and organisations could sign up to featuring actions to take and pledges to reduce their carbon footprint, alongside a programme of events to raise awareness about the pledge and support signatories in their ongoing efforts to reduce their carbon footprint;
- CCF had quantitative and qualitative means of assessing the success of the charter in recording the number of signatories and estimating the carbon savings from pledged actions;

- Alongside the charter there was a Carbon Footprint Calculator available for individuals to input information about their housing, travel and day to day habits to help them understand their carbon footprint;
- Businesses and organisations were signposted to other calculators and resources to help them assess their carbon contribution;
- The charter included sections on measuring and reducing carbon output and indicated to the user which actions would have the most influence based on the sources of their carbon footprint;
- Actions on the charter were supported with resources and information on their importance and effectiveness;
- A total of 72 individuals and 14 businesses were signed up;
- Limited events and marketing had been possible under pandemic conditions and take-up was not as high as had hoped, but CCF was ready to step up engagement efforts as restrictions eased;
- Residents and businesses pledged so far had undertaken to save 25 tonnes of CO2.

The following Members and participants asked questions and took part in discussion:

- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Amy Allen
- Councillor Mike Hughson
- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Councillor Michael Muir
- John Webb

In response to questions Anni Sander noted:

- There was a 'work from home,' action in the Charter and working from home made a difference to carbon output in areas such as North Herts and Cambridgeshire where people often commute by car;
- A business sustainability plan should include making facility for home working;
- The 25 tonnes of CO2 saved was an estimate based on actions pledged by signatories to the charter;
- The charter was open to everybody to sign, and relevant to residents of North Herts, particularly in Royston or areas close to Cambridgeshire;
- Data collected by the charter was shared with Cambridge City Council as a partner organisation but it may be possible to differentiate between Cambridgeshire- and Hertfordshire- based signatories;
- Some of the charters' values and actions were specific to Cambridge but most of them were applicable to all residents of the south east of England;
- The charter collected email addresses to onboard residents to newsletters and to allow CCF to check on progress on pledges and ask for feedback;
- The calculator allowed you to record your results and resubmit answers to allow residents to measure any change in their output;
- There were other calculators around e.g a WWF tool and other charters/pledges had been produced but to their knowledge CCF's offer was the first time a calculator and charter had been presented by a Local Authority;
- There was a balance to be struck between providing accurate and detailed calculation tools and maximising engagement.

The Chair thanked Anni Sander for her presentation.

16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 1 hour 38 minutes.

Tuesday, 6th July, 2021

The Chair thanked participants at the meeting who had asked questions and contributed to discussions around the three presentations received.

17 DISCUSSION REGARDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MEETING

Audio Recording – 1 hour 39 minutes.

The Chair led a discussion regarding contributions to the meeting.

The following Members asked questions and took part in the discussion:

- Councillor Michael Muir
- Councillor Mike Hughson
- Councillor Steve Jarvis

Topics raised included:

- The possibility of a Climate Change Charter & Carbon Calculator for North Hertfordshire;
- Collaboration with the carbon subgroup of HCCSP;
- NHDC as a leader in the county on a charter and calculator project;
- The council's procurement rules.

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm

Chair