

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**MEETING HELD AS A REMOTE MEETING**  
**ON TUESDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER, 2021 AT 7.30 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Councillors: Amy Allen (Co-Chair), Steve Jarvis (Co-Chair), George Davies, Sarah Dingley, Keith Hoskins, Gerald Morris, Adem Ruggiero-Cakir and Sean Prendergast*

**In Attendance:** *Reuben Ayavoo (Policy and Community Engagement Manager), Alice Sims (Trainee Policy Officer) and Penny Copestake (PA to Service Director – Legal and Community)*

**Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 5 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

**18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 10 seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Val Bryant and Michael Muir.

**19 MINUTES - 23 FEBRUARY 2021, 8 JUNE 2021, 6 JULY 2021**

*Audio Recording – 2 minutes 23 seconds*

Councillor Amy Allen proposed, Councillor Steve Jarvis seconded, and it was:

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Cabinet Panel held on 23 February, 8 June and 6 July 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

**20 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio recording – 2 minutes 57 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 was being 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.

**21 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

*Audio recording – 3 minutes 26 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

**22 INFORMATION NOTE - WORK PROGRAMME & ACTION TRACKER**

*Audio recording - 3 minutes 40 seconds*

The Policy and Community Engagement Manager presented the Information Note entitled Work Programme and Action Tracker for 2021/22 and drew attention to the following:

- The Corporate Policy Team have been involved in the Biodiversity Sub-group and NHDC is the Bio-Diversity Lead;
- The Team had been reviewing various Carbon Footprint calculators;
- There was a Greenfest in Letchworth on 11 September and NHDC would have a stand – posters with QR codes would be displayed to reduce paper usage.

The following Members, Officers and members of the public took part in a discussion regarding the Policy and Community Engagement Manager's update.

- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Sarah Dingley;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Amy Allen;
- Councillor George Davies;
- Christine Watson;
- Reuben Ayavoo.

The discussion covered various points including:

- Update on adopt a tree;
- Similar festivals to Greenfest in Letchworth taking place in Baldock and Royston in October ;
- Community Composting;
- Brown Bins;
- Making sure the Carbon Footprint Calculators give roughly the same information.

**RESOLVED:** That the Information Note entitled Work Programme and Action Tracker for 2021/22 be updated.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure the Cabinet Panel on the Environment can plan its workload and monitor actions.

## 23 RENEWABLE ENERGY GENERATION - BEOND GROUP PRESENTATION

*Audio recording – 15 minutes 34 seconds*

Mr Gavin McCormick from Beond Group gave a presentation on renewable energy generation.

Some key points from the presentation were:

- The Government wants a 75% reduction in emission by 2035, with a goal to achieve Net Zero by 2050;
- Smart homes and buildings are required to make this possible;
- Need to change the way people make choices and move away from carbon intensive activities;
- Is Hydrogen a solution?

The Chair lead a discussion following the presentation.

The following Members and members of the public took part:

- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- John Somerville
- Christine Watson
- Gavin McCormick

The discussion covered a range of points including:

- The Port of Dover and Solar power – will it reach a saturation point?
- The life of Solar Panels – warranty for 25 years, but will degrade every year, it is possible to get an additional 10 years from them. What is not realised is the need to swop out the Inverters every 12 years;
- The different types of Hydrogen, the cost, and the mixture with gas;
- Renewable energy / heat pumps / retro fitting houses;
- Battery storage – expensive and not an economic investment;
- Large scale solar farms;
- Council plans for building Smart Homes.

The Chair thanked Mr McCormick for attending to give this useful and informative presentation.

## 24 WEST SUFFOLK COUNCIL SOLAR ENERGY GENERATION SCHEME PRESENTATION

*Audio recording – 1 hour 0 minutes 40 seconds*

Mr Luke Simpkin from West Suffolk Council gave a presentation on their solar energy generation schemes.

The presentation provided a high-level view to West Suffolk Council's approach to renewable energy. Some of the main points were:

- West Suffolk has a history of Energy and Strategy plans going back to 1998;
- West Suffolk is working towards a sustainable plan which ensures the residents are less reliant on fossil fuel and provides a revenue for the Council;

- West Suffolk Council own a Solar Farm – this was built by an external organisation (who took all the risk), and then the Farm and business were purchased by the Council;
- West Suffolk have an action plan to become Carbon neutral by 2030.

The Chair lead a discussion following the presentation.

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

- Councillor Keith Hoskins;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- John Somerville;
- Roger Lovegrove;
- Luke Simpkin.

The discussion covered a range of points including:

- Large scale Solar installations and connection to the Grid;
- The number of staff West Suffolk have working on their renewable energy schemes;
- Letchworth Leisure Centre being a good candidate for Council-funded Solar Panels.

The Chair thanked Mr Simpkin for the interesting and impressive presentation.

The Trainee Policy Officer was requested to circulate the presentation to Members.

## **25 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*Audio recording – 1 hour 40 minutes 01 seconds*

The Chair invited Ms Diane Ketcher from Transition Town Letchworth and Ms Sue Lines to speak about Letchworth Greenfest taking place on 11 September 2021.

A history of the festival was provided and confirmation of what was taking place.

Next, Mr Roger Lovegrove and Mr John Webb, Transition Town Letchworth presented on Hydrogen as a fuel for heating and transport, Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage.

Mr Roger Lovegrove spoke about the need to get the atmosphere and greenhouse gases back to pre-industrialisation levels. Some of the main points were:

- The Council needs to aim for tighter targets than the Government is enforcing;
- Hydrogen and how it could be used to replace natural gas;
- The different colours of hydrogen, and the fact the colours based on how the hydrogen is extracted from the air;
- Currently hydrogen takes more energy to create than what is produced;
- Hydrogen is easy to store, so likely to be used for transport in the future;
- Discussion around heat pumps and the expense, and electric boilers using too many amps to currently make them viable;
- Bricks are poor insulators / new estates need to be eco-friendly.

Mr John Webb then presented on Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS). Some of the main points were:

- Three types of Carbon Capture;
- The amount of energy required;
- The practicalities of Carbon Storage.

The Chair thanked all four members of the public for their contributions to the meeting.

The slides would be made available to Members for reference.

## **26 DISCUSSION REGARDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MEETING**

*Audio recording – 2 hours 16 minutes 28 seconds*

The Chair led a discussion / question time regarding the contributions to the meeting. The following Members and members of the public took part.

- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Councillor Amy Allen
- Sue Lines
- Roger Lovegrove
- John Somerville

Some of the points discussed included:

- Building houses that required less energy;
- Making existing houses more energy efficient;
- “39 ways to save the planet”;
- The use of Helium from 2050;
- NHDC to look at some of the projects West Suffolk are working on, so that the Council can produce a plan that is Environmentally and Financially beneficial to the Council and is beneficial for local businesses.

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm

Chair