



NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Publication Date

Our Ref Cabinet Panel on the
Environment/Meeting Date
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillor Amy Allen and Councillor Steve Jarvis (Chair), (Vice-Chair), Councillor Carol Stanier, Councillor Chris Hinchliff, Councillor George Davies, Councillor Gerald Morris, Councillor Juan Cowell, Councillor Michael Muir and Councillor Val Bryant

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

to be held

REMOTELY

On

WEDNESDAY, 19TH OCTOBER, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Community

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda Part I

Item	Page
<p>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting.</p> <p>Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.</p>	
<p>2. MINUTES - 20 JULY 2022 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 20 July 2022.</p>	(Pages 5 - 10)
<p>3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.</p>	
<p>4. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency.</p> <p>The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.</p>	
<p>5. CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT - INFORMATION NOTE OCTOBER 2022 This note highlights proposed items scheduled in the work programme for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment for 2022/23, agreed at the initial meeting. The Work Programme/Action Tracker at Appendix A allow the scene to be set for evaluation of such actions, and the agreement of topics for 2022/23 civic year.</p>	(Pages 11 - 18)
<p>6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.</p>	

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

MEETING HELD IN THE REMOTE MEETING
ON WEDNESDAY, 20TH JULY, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Steve Jarvis (Chair), Amy Allen (Vice-Chair), Carol Stanier, Chris Hinchliff, George Davies, Gerald Morris and Michael Muir*

In Attendance:

Reuben Ayavoo (Policy and Community Engagement Manager), Georgina Chapman (Policy Officer), Andrew Mills (Service Manager – Greenspace), Aimee Flack (Assistant Community Engagement Officer) and Louis Mutter (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)

Also Present:

At the commencement of the meeting approximately 15 members of the public, including registered speakers.

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1:38

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Val Bryant.

43 MINUTES - 22 FEBRUARY 2022

Audio Recording – 1:48

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 22 February 2022 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

44 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2:13

(1) The Chair outlined that this Cabinet Panel meeting was about the Environment and welcomed all those who were participating this evening;

(2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy, this 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 North Herts Council YouTube channel;

(3) Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item, the detailed reminder about this and speaking rights was set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda.

45 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2:43

There was no other business notified.

46 INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER FOR 2022/23

Audio Recording: 2:49

The Policy Officer gave a quick update on the work the Policy Team have been involved in and highlighted the following key points:

- Are continuing to work within the HCCSP and have been involved in developing a countywide biodiversity baseline;
- Have rated the action plan of the HCCSP using Green, Amber and Red indicators to show how North Herts are progressing individually with those plans;
- The Behaviour Change Sub-Group, which the team sit on, have produced a draft strategic action plan; having prioritised three key themes;
- Have signed up to participate in a solar bulk purchasing scheme, allowing residents of Hertfordshire to register their interest in getting solar panels and battery storage; launching in August;
- Had a large amount of the carbon emissions assessment done;
- Work is being done on a 'Roadmap To Net Zero' showing how net zero can be reached by the 2030 target;
- Still reviewing the Council's carbon emissions in 2021, each year will be reviewed to show a decrease in emissions;
- Hitchin had an Eco Fest on 14th May and NHC was represented by a stall there;
- Formed a Climate Change and Sustainability Officer Group, trying to draw together all of the work related to climate and sustainability.

The Communities and Policy Manager then presented the information note entitled Work Programme and Action Tracker for 2022/23 and highlighted the following points:

- Page 13 outlines the work programme for the rest of the year;
- Page 14 & 15 shows the action tracker, the majority being on hold or on-going with 1 action completed so far.

RESOLVED: That the information note entitled Work Programme and Action Tracker for 2022 was noted.

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

47 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 14:05

Georgina Chapman, Policy Officer at North Herts Council gave a visual presentation on the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan. Some of the main points were:

- HCCSP contains all Hertfordshire local authorities;
- Progress so far includes: minimising or excluding the use of peat compost, conducting an audit of local authority green space, identify opportunities for grass verge and other grasslands management and developing a biodiversity baseline to quantify levels of biodiversity;
- Upcoming actions include: reviewing how biodiversity is considered within the procurement processes, capturing ecological data from planning applications, developing

a good practice ecological design guidance and engaging with the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

The following Members, officers and members of public asked questions:

- Councillor Michael Muir
- Aimee Flack
- Diane Ketcher
- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Chris Hinchliff
- John Webb
- Deolinda Eltringham

In response to questions, the Policy Officer advised:

- That she wasn't sure why Parish Councils were not involved with the HCCSP but she would raise it at the next meeting;
- An officer at Hertfordshire County Council has the plan for where the ponds will be located;
- The 5 ponds per year figure was county-wide; there has been no consultation with The Wildlife Trust but they work closely with the HCCSP so they will be aware;
- Members of the County Farmers Estate are part of the Rural Sustainability Network Group, some of which are situated in North Herts;
- Have started reduced mowing regimes on roadside verges; the hedgerows that are maintained are mainly in urban areas and will continue to be cut to maintain footpaths for pedestrians and sight lines of drivers; the Council cuts those hedgerows only twice a year;
- Historical data sets have been used when looking at the biodiversity baseline but more information will be provided on this outside of the meeting.

The Chair thanked Georgina Chapman for her presentation.

Andrew Mills, Service Manager - Greenspace then gave a verbal presentation on the Council's Actions on Biodiversity and highlighted the following key points:

- As part of the contract review with John O'Conner the Council discovered 600 square metres of seasonal bedding that was not sponsored, nor part of a cemetery or memorial; and have subsequently taken those areas out; this has decreased the amount of carbon the Council is producing in maintaining and transporting plants;
- Ensured that pots from plant nurseries are returned and recycled rather than disposed;
- Vehicles and machinery contributed to the carbon production a large amount, these polices have been reviewed and have taken out 2 vehicles driving around the district;
- The Greenspace team have received compliments and queries from the public over the decision to allow grass verges to grow more than usual;
- Parks Herts is a forum of officers across the district which originated from an opportunity for benchmarking and sharing best practice between the 10 Districts & Boroughs; the group has been in existence for 20 years;
- NHC & St. Albans were the first local authority to begin allowing local parks and open spaces to be wilded;
- The team have been provided with a budget to work with Countryside Management Services to start planning for the wilding work to take place across key sites across the District as highlighted in the audits.

The following Members, officers and members of public asked questions:

- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Chris Hinchliff

- Deolinda Eltringham

In response to questions, Andrew Mills advised:

- The species of trees being replanted are all indigenous to the UK; trying to make sure they are indigenous to the County as well. Picking out species that are suitable for the geology and soil type across the District; the ground conditions are different and can be a constraint on the tree species we have;
- Lots more blue infrastructure in proposed developments going forward; those ponds are going to be sustainable drainage systems – the ponds will take the surface water runoff from hard surfaces.

The Chair thanked Andrew Mills for the presentation.

Jill Saunders gave a visual presentation on Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity in Our Region and highlighted the following key points:

- Highlighted Strategic Policies contained in the emerging Local Plan that promote biodiversity;
- Good intentions in the emerging Local Plan are at risk of being undermined if construction companies ignore the policies and are not challenged;
- Ms. Saunders then provided an example of this, in which planning permission was given to a site which objectors claimed to be a corridor for badgers and other species;
- Provided pictures of trees with no root protection on the boundary of a proposed development;
- Understands that there has to be an increase in housing provisions and that greenbelt land will have to be used; but that there must be ways to properly require developers to protect habitats.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Gerald Morris
- Councillor Michael Muir
- John Webb

In response to questions Jill Saunders advised:

- She is not representing an organisation, but is a concerned member of the public.

The Chair thanked Jill Saunders for the presentation.

Aimee Flack - Assistant Community Engagement Officer, Diane Ketcher and Sue Lines gave a verbal presentation, supported by images of a number of topics including:

- Green and Growing Network Group;
- The Waysbrook Project;
- Transition Town Letchworth's Family Learning Allotment
- Aimee coordinates the Green and Growing Network Group; a network for organisation groups who work with greenspaces to help support communities live healthier and sustainable lifestyles;
- Helping communities grow their own food or start their own garden;
- The network meets every six weeks to two months;
- Diane Ketcher explained that the Wildlife Trust's Action for Insects campaign was very important;

Wednesday, 20th July, 2022

- Performed a quadrat survey on a grass area near Waysbrook, comparing the population of insects between cut and uncut grass;
- Many more flowers found in the unmaintained grass; 2 insects in the maintained grass and 20 in the unmaintained;
- In 2021, a year later, the test was performed again – the Council had left the entire grass area unmaintained and as a result showed a larger amount of flowers and insects;
- Transition Town Letchworth obtained an allotment plot, with the intention of teaching families how to grow food in an organic way;
- By August 2021 there were 3 families using the site;
- Sue Lines explained that some planters placed outside Gardensquare Shopping Centre had been left bare; Sue asked to take them over; through the Letchworth District Garden Association and Letchworth Organic Gardeners to help;
- Also got together a team to improve the small area opposite the cinema which has needed maintenance.

The Chair thanked Aimee Flack, Sue Lines and Diane Ketcher for their contributions.

The meeting closed at 9:27 pm

Chair

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CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT
19th October 2022

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER FOR 2022/23

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS – Environment and Leisure Executive member and Recycling and Waste Management

PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY / A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This note highlights proposed items scheduled in the work programme for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment for 2022/23, agreed at the initial meeting. The Work Programme/Action Tracker at Appendix A allow the scene to be set for evaluation of such actions, and the agreement of topics for 2022/23 civic year.

The Cabinet Panel aims to set a work programme which will enable open discussion that may lead to recommendations to Cabinet /the relevant Executive Members or Service Director, regarding actions that they believe that the Council should be taking to address climate and environmental issues.

2. STEPS TO DATE

2.1 Cabinet approved the establishment of the Cabinet Panel for the Environment at the 27th June 2019 meeting. The amended terms of reference were tabled for the Full Council meeting on the 4th June:

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/documents/s10892/Appendix%20C%20-%20Revised%20Terms%20of%20Reference%20for%20Cabinet%20Panel%20on%20Community%20Engagement%20Enterprise%20and%20C.pdf>

2.2 By way of update to the Panel, the Corporate Policy Team have been involved in the following work:

Contributions to the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)

The policy team have been involved in the work around developing the county-wide biodiversity baseline. The finalised dataset and report are now complete and have been shared with each authority and their relevant officers.

HCCSP members have asked officers to work through each of the current action plans (Water; Biodiversity; Carbon Reduction; and Transport) to present revised versions which take into account action to date, clarified targets, and changed context/funding/priorities. As such, the subgroups for each area will be reconvened to work on this, and the policy team are working to refresh the biodiversity subgroup.

The Solar Together Scheme launched in August and remained open for expressions of interest until 27th September. The scheme allows residents to have solar panels and/or battery storage installed at a below-market rate through community buying power. Hertfordshire has had around

10% more expressions of interest than was expected, taking the total to just over 13,000. An auction for the installation contract has occurred and iChoosr are now completing final bid validation with the installer. Residents can expect to receive their offers around mid-October and will have around five weeks to decide whether or not to accept the offer. The local authorities will be kept up to date with acceptance rates on a weekly basis and will update the panel at the next meeting on the final figures.

The Policy Team continue to be a part of the Behaviour Change Subgroup, which is finishing the incorporation of the stakeholder engagement comments into their Action Plan.

We also continue to be a part of the Adaptation Subgroup and are working with colleagues within North Herts Council and across the other local authorities on the creation of climate risk assessments which identify risks posed by climate change to council services and mitigative actions.

Carbon Emissions Assessment

We are now working to produce a summary of the carbon emissions reports that we have received. This summary will be reported to the panel once complete.

Road Map to Net Zero

We have received our Roadmap to Net Zero which indicates the impact that grid decarbonisation will have on our carbon footprint, and highlights opportunities for renewable energy to reduce our emissions and help us achieve our net zero target.

Review of the Council's 2021 Carbon Emissions and Climate Actions

The Policy Team has been collating data to estimate the Council's carbon emissions in 2021 and produce a document detailing what the Council achieved in 2021 against the Climate Change Strategy's Proposed Actions. This work is ongoing.

Letchworth Green Festival and Royston Sustain-Ability Event. Hitchin Eco-Fair, Saturday 14th May

The Letchworth Green Festival was held on Saturday 10th September and Royston's Sustain-Ability event was held on Sunday 2nd October. North Herts Council was represented at both events. Materials were displayed to promote some of the climate-related work that the Council has done and is doing. This included the North Herts climate change infographic; posters to promote the HEAT energy app and the WWF carbon calculator.

Climate Change Officers Group

The Climate Change and Sustainability Officers Group most recently met on Monday 12th September, and discussed potential solar projects that the council could pursue, and climate change risk assessments.

North Hertfordshire Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan

Walking and cycling improvements are being proposed by the County Council in Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Royston, and Knebworth as part of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

The LCWIP sets out priorities for future investment to make the built environment safer and more attractive for people walking, cycling, using a wheelchair or mobility scooter, or (subject to new legislation) e-scooter (collectively referred to as 'active travel').

Schemes set out in the draft LCWIP can expect to be funded over the next several years by Active Travel England (a funding body and inspectorate set up by Government) and Section 106 contributions from developers following approval of their planning applications.

The relevant committee report can be found here: <https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/documents/s20351/CONSULTATION%20ON%20NORTH%20HERTFORDSHIRE%20DISTRICT%20LOCAL%20CYCLING%20AND%20WALKING%20INFRASTRUCTURE%20PLAN.pdf>

Numerous engagement events have already been held. Those still to occur are:

Hitchin: Town Talk – Tuesday 11 October, 6.30-7.15pm, at Christchurch, Bedford Road

Royston: Town Talk – Wednesday 12 October, 6.30-7.15pm, at Royston Town Hall (Hardwicke Room)

Engagement event – Monday 17 October, 3:15–7pm, at Royston Town Hall (Committee Room)

Letchworth: Councillors' Community Surgery – Saturday 15 October, 10.30am-12pm, at Garden Square Shopping Centre

Knebworth: Engagement event – Thursday 20 October, 3.15-7.30pm, at St Martin's Parish Centre

Baldock: Town Talk – Monday 31 October, 6.30-7.15pm, at Baldock Community Centre (Youth Wing)

Engagement event – Thursday 3 November, 3:15–7pm, at Baldock Community Centre (Youth Wing)

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

3.1 An Environment inbox has been set up to allow members of the public or organisations to provide suggestions/presentations for the panel's consideration. The address is - EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk. The Policy and Community Engagement Manager will also provide a verbal update to the Panel.

3.2 The Panel could choose to accept suggestions from outside the meeting including:

- Suggestions by Members of the public or organisations either at the meeting or by email;
- Recommendations from Council, Cabinet or any other Committee;
- Suggestions by any Member of the Council;
- Suggestions by any Officer of the Council.

3.3 The Panel will seek to ensure that consideration of agenda items minimises additional burdens on staff resources. Wherever possible, requests are made for the presentation of documents already in existence rather than the production of new documents specifically for the Panel. Suggestions from outside sources, as detailed in paragraph 3.2 will only be placed on the work programme if agreed by one of the alternating Chairs or at a meeting of the Panel.

3.4 Attendance from external bodies and members of the public is actively encouraged.

3.5 This is a non decision-making advisory body and therefore this or any notes/reports to the Panel do not include a recommendation on a key Executive decision and have not been referred to in the Forward Plan. However, recommendations for action from the Panel for consideration by Cabinet may do so. This will therefore need to be borne in mind for any recommendations of the Panel.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 Other topics for consideration and inclusion in the Panel's work programme will be considered at each meeting. When considering additional topics, their risk assessment and prioritisation will ensure that the most appropriate items are taken forward to the work programme.

5. APPENDICES

5.1 Appendix A Environment Panel Work Programme and Action Tracker

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

Reuben Ayavoo, Policy and Communities Manager, 01462 474212
Reuben.ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk

Louis Mutter, Member, Committee and Scrutiny Officer, 01465 474514
Louis.mutter@north-herts.gov.uk

Georgina Chapman, Policy Officer, 01462 474121
Georgina.chapman@north-gov.uk

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix A - Environment Panel Work Programme and Action Tracker

APPENDIX A – WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER 2022/23

PROGRAMME FOR FUTURE CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT MEETINGS 2022-23

<p>Meeting 1. 20th July 2022</p>	<p>Biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCCSP biodiversity action plan • Council actions on biodiversity (How can the community support the actions in the plan) • Green and Growing Network Group (what does community action look like for climate change and how can the Council support this. • Finalising topics for upcoming meetings.
<p>Meeting 2. 19th October 2022</p>	<p>Carbon Reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Enterprise Partnership - Clean Growth Strategy in Hertfordshire - Helen Pollock (Clean Growth Manager) • HCCSP/NHC Carbon Reduction updates – Georgina Chapman • Anni Sander – Local Carbon reduction initiatives
<p>Meeting 3. 11th January 2023</p>	<p>Air Quality</p>
<p>Meeting 4. 22nd February 2023</p>	<p>Achievements</p>

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT – ACTION TRACKER: July 2022

Date and Min No	Action/Resolutions	Action/Response/Outcome	Status (Complete/in progress)	Deadline for Implementation	Additional commentary
11092019 EP8	Proposal of surveying clients at Best Before Café/Hitchin Food Rescue to assess needs/client base	Policy and Communities Manager/Community Engagement Team	On-going		Initial survey results received. Further action to refine information once the demand on services has diminished after the pandemic.
06012020 EP27	NHDC publicised activity of schools in recycling	Executive member for Recycling and Waste	On hold		Actions to be placed on hold until the outcomes of the consultation on the National Waste Strategy and subsequent actions for Local Authorities are finalised
06012020 EP34	Establish a 'Eco- credentials' of food outlets(Similar to food hygiene scoring)	Executive member for Recycling and Waste	On hold		As EP27
06012020 EP37	Investigate the service change of 4 weekly collections/smaller bins/incentivise better recycling habits	Executive member for Recycling and Waste	On hold		As EP 27
06012020 EP38	Encourage the use of recyclable cups at district events	Executive member for Recycling and Waste	On hold		As EP 27
05032020 EP46	Anti-idling policy development.	NHDC Legal team/ Environmental Health	On-going		To be further developed as part of the Sustainable North Herts programme/Taxi Licencing Policy. HCCSP and Public Health have developed a microsite to inform, assist and keep residents updated on the

Date and Min No	Action/Resolutions	Action/Response/Outcome	Status (Complete/in progress)	Deadline for Implementation	Additional commentary
					latest developments, including local pollution alerts. Let's clear the air (hertfordshire.gov.uk)
05032020 EP47	Smart Card option bus use in district	Transport officer	On-going		The Bus Service Improvement Plan from HCC outlines the development of Smart Tickets as part to the plan. The plan has been recently been approved by the DfT. (introduction date unknown). Funds have yet to be allocated to the County Council.
05032020 EP49	Consider the instituting of car free days in Hitchin	HCC highways/Transport officer	On-going		As EP46

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