

19 June 2026

Our Ref. Cabinet Panel on the Environment 1 July
2026
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillors Amy Allen (Chair), Emma Fernandes, Joe Graziano, Bryony May, Caroline McDonnell, Claire Strong, Paul Ward and Daniel Wright-Mason

Substitutes: Councillors Tina Bhartwas, Val Bryant, Sam Collins, Dominic Griffiths and Donna Wright

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

to be held

VIA ZOOM

On

WEDNESDAY, 1ST JULY, 2026 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Isabelle Alajooz
Director – Governance

****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
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting. 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.	
2.	MINUTES - 1 APRIL 2026 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 1 April 2026.	(Pages 5 - 10)
3.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS <u>Climate Emergency</u> The Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to achieving a target of zero carbon emissions by 2030 and helping local people and businesses to reduce their own carbon emissions. A Cabinet Panel on the Environment has been established to engage with local people on matters relating to the climate emergency and advise the council on how to achieve these climate change objectives. A Climate Change Implementation group of councillors and council officers meets regularly to produce plans and monitor progress. Actions taken or currently underway include switching to green energy, incentives for low emission taxis, expanding tree planting and working to cut food waste. In addition the council is a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership, working with other councils across Hertfordshire to reduce the county's carbon emissions and climate impact. The Council's dedicated webpage on Climate Change includes details of the council's climate change strategy, the work of the Cabinet Panel on the Environment and a monthly briefing on progress. <u>Ecological Emergency</u> The Council has declared an ecological emergency and is committed to addressing the ecological emergency and nature recovery by identifying appropriate areas for habitat restoration and biodiversity net gain whilst ensuring that development limits impact on existing habitats in its process.	

The Council has set out to do that by a) setting measurable targets and standards for biodiversity increase, in both species and quantities, seeking to increase community engagement, b) to work with our partners to establish a Local Nature Partnership for Hertfordshire and to develop Nature Recovery Networks and Nature Recovery Strategy for Hertfordshire and c) to investigate new approaches to nature recovery such as habitat banking that deliver biodiversity objectives and provide new investment opportunities.

Declaration of Interest

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.

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.

The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public.

(Pages
11 - 12)

6. INFORMATION NOTE - COUNCIL ACTIVITY UPDATE AND ACTION TRACKER

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE DIRECTOR – ENVIRONMENT

(Pages
13 - 18)

This note highlights the topic for this Panel meeting as well as a Council Activity Update, and Action Tracker Review (at Appendix A) for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment.

7. PRESENTATIONS

To receive presentations from the following:

- 1) Abbie Robinson – How Volunteering Can Help to Support Biodiversity
- 2) MP Chris Hinchliff – Biodiversity and Chalk Streams
- 3) Heidi Hutton – Hertfordshire County Council Country Management Service (CMS) and Successful CMS Volunteer Projects

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM
ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST APRIL, 2026 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Amy Allen (Chair), Emma Fernandes, Joe Graziano, Caroline McDonnell and Claire Strong.*

In Attendance: *Robert Filby (Trainee Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer), Daisy Harris (Business Admin Apprentice - Policy), Ellie Hollingsworth (Policy & Strategy Officer), Louise Overington (Service Development and Support Manager), Amber Smith-Howell (National Graduate - Management Trainee) and Kate Yiannacou (Shared Waste Communication Officer).*

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

Councillor Daniel Allen was also in attendance.

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 24 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dominic Griffiths.

26 MINUTES - 11 FEBRUARY 2026

Audio Recording – 2 minutes 40 seconds

Councillor Amy Allen, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Emma Fernandes seconded and, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 11 February 2026 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

27 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 6 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be recorded.
- (2) 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.
- (3) The Chair reminded Members that the Council had declared both a Climate Emergency and an Ecological Emergency, and that Officers and Members should have this in mind when carrying out their various roles and tasks for the District. More details on this could be found on the Agenda front sheet.

- (4) The Chair informed those present that the theme for this Panel meeting was 'Waste and Recycling' and that Officers from the Waste Team, as well as speakers from Veolia, Timberpak Pearce and Biogen were in attendance to present on this topic at Agenda Item 6.
- (5) The Chair clarified the procedure for asking questions.
- (6) The Chair advised of a change to the order of Agenda and Agenda Item 6 would be taken before Agenda Item 5.

28 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 4 minutes 1 second

There was no other business notified.

29 PRESENTATIONS

Audio recording – 4 minutes 6 seconds

The Chair invited Luke Ford from Biogen to give a presentation, supported by slides and images, on Food Waste Recycling. They thanked the Chair for the opportunity to present and advised that:

- Biogen operated 12 food waste plants, 12 food transfer stations, and 7 agricultural waste plants in the UK.
- Organic food waste material was pre-processed and treated to produce biogas, which was used to produce renewable electricity for the national grid.
- 691KG of carbon was offset by every tonne of food waste that they treated.
- Biogen treated 500,000 tonnes of food waste annually across the UK and had over 180 employees.
- Two of their food waste plants were in Hertfordshire, with one in Baldock, which treated the food waste collected in North Herts.
- Fertiliser was also produced from the food waste treatment process, and this was supplied to local farms and displaced the use of carbon intensive, artificial fertilisers.
- One tonne of food waste produced 450 kilowatt-hours of electricity and 900KG of fertiliser.
- They worked with more than 40 local authorities, national retailers such as Asda, Aldi and Ocado, in addition to national manufacturers and total waste management providers.
- Campaigns had been carried out with local authorities to encourage residents to segregate their waste to prevent contamination and increase recycling rates.
- They had also worked with local authorities to change the way that they reported waste data in terms of carbon savings.
- 15,000 tonnes of food waste was processed by Biogen in Hertfordshire per annum, which powered 2,500 homes.
- Educational visits were made to local schools to provide social value.
- Biogas production was projected to reach at least 50 terawatt-hours (TWH) by 2050 to help increase energy security.
- Three of their facilities generated biogas, with a fourth under construction and a fifth granted planning permission.
- Biogas would start to be used for sustainable aviation fuel under the Sustainable Aviation Fuel Mandate.
- The Government had also created a Renewable Transport Fuel Certificate, which would encourage the use of biogas in vehicles.

- 26.4 TWH would be required to power UK data centres annually by 2030, and biogas could offer more flexibility than other renewable energy sources to match the peaks of energy demand associated with these.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Claire Strong
- Councillor Daniel Allen

In response to questions, Luke Ford advised that:

- The Baldock site was not open for the public to visit on an impromptu basis, but organised visits were accommodated when interest was raised.
- Garden waste could not be processed at food waste plants, but they had trialled grass trimmings and crops at their agricultural waste plants.
- The smell associated with the Baldock site was likely to come from the spreading of digestate across nearby fields rather than the anaerobic digestion process itself.

The Chair thanked Luke Ford for his presentation and invited the Shared Waste Communication Officer and Victoria Cooper from Veolia to give a presentation, supported by slides and images, on the New Waste Service Provision. They thanked the Chair for the opportunity to present and advised that:

- Weekly food waste collections had been introduced in East Herts and continued in North Herts.
- A blue lidded bin for cardboard and paper recycling had been introduced to replace the previous paper recycling boxes, which meant that the black lidded bin was repurposed for glass, metal and plastic recycling, with the addition of plastic bag and wrapping recycling.
- The purple lidded bin for non-recyclables had remained and collections for this and the black and blue lidded bins had changed to three-weekly.
- Bi-weekly garden waste bin collections remained the same.
- Following public consultation, 84% of respondents agreed that the Council should encourage residents to recycle more, and 49% detailed that their non-recyclables bin was only half or a quarter full when collected.
- The changes to bins and their collection frequencies had been made to motivate residents to recycle more in response to the consultation, and to meet new government legislation.
- Both districts had seen a 37% drop in non-recyclable waste since the service change when compared with the previous year, which equated to 6,000 tonnes less.
- An increase in the food waste tonnage in North Herts on the previous year highlighted the promotion on this as part of the service change.
- Strong engagement had been received from East Herts residents in response to the introduction of food waste recycling.
- Waste tonnage in the black lidded bin had decreased as cardboard was being collected in the blue lidded bin instead, and both plastic bags and wrappings did not contribute substantially to the data as they were lightweight.
- There had been approximately a 20% increase in cardboard and paper recycled across both districts.
- Initial backlash from some residents had been balanced out by others recognising the positive impacts of the change.
- Bin day confusion had been alleviated by the Council app that had been launched in November.
- The Council had considered how the waste contract with Veolia could deliver social value through contributing to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area.

- These were categorised by Veolia by their theme, outcome and measure, also known as the National TOMs indicators.
- Veolia had made several contract commitments such as providing sustainable employment to local disadvantaged cohorts, career progression and upskilling to staff, business advice, financial contributions to different communities, and a reduction in on-site emissions and single use plastics.
- All social value activities were recorded through their social value portal, and they had provided £23,323 of social value since May 2025.
- They worked with Step2Skills to integrate individuals into the workplace.
- £15,014 had been given to 21 community groups and grassroots projects from the Veolia Sustainability Fund.
- 16 different schools had been given fruit trees through the Veolia Orchards Project.
- A forum for managing agents and landlords had been created to encourage recycling by residents at communal properties.
- Work had been carried out with local groups to safeguard the environment through participation in events for Food Waste Action Week and Repair Week.
- Equipment had been supplied to volunteers for local litter picks.
- An annual report on the social value provided by Veolia would be made available after the first year of the contract had concluded.

The following members of the public and Members asked questions:

- Diane Ketcher
- Councillor Claire Strong

In response to questions, the Shared Waste Communication Officer advised that:

- Residents should refer to the Council website for recycling guidelines rather than product packaging.
- Residents were always encouraged to recycle plastics even if they were unsure whether it was recyclable, but it was acknowledged that this might lead to some contamination.
- Focus would be put on increasing food waste recycling as its rate was plateauing.
- They would continue to push the 'Recycle Right' message to residents to reduce non-recyclable waste and encourage the repurposing of items where possible.
- They were awaiting the completion of waste composition analysis in Hertfordshire, which would provide data for food contamination rates within the non-recyclables waste stream and inform their next steps on communications with residents.

In response to questions, Duncan Jones advised that:

- It was impossible to achieve a 100% purity for recycled plastics as there were 40-50 different polymers and not all of them were recyclable.
- Biodegradable and recyclable plastics supplied by businesses would be modulated through the Extended Producer Responsibility framework, and penalties would be imposed based on how recyclable the plastics were under the framework.
- There was a small amount of contamination caused by putting a non-recyclable item into a recycling bin, but this would not contaminate an entire load.
- The contamination rate of recycling in Hertfordshire was roughly 5%, which was low compared to London where the percentage varied from 15-30%.

In response to questions, the Chair advised that:

- Families with three or more children qualified for a larger non-recyclable waste bin.
- The change to three-weekly collections had encouraged recycling behavioural changes, but it was recognised that promotion might need to be done on food waste caddies to encourage more residents to participate in food waste recycling.

- Letchworth Garden Shed allowed residents to rent communal items.

The Chair thanked the Shared Waste Communication Officer and Victoria Cooper for their presentation and invited Duncan Jones from Timberpak Pearce to give a presentation, supported by slides and images, on Material Recovery Facilities. They thanked the Chair for the opportunity to present and advised that:

- Egger Timberpak and Pearce Recycling had entered a 50/50 joint venture in November 2023 to form Timberpak Pearce.
- Their operations focused on recovery rather than recycling, which involved the conversion of mixed materials into single stream materials that were ready for recycling.
- The facility in St Albans had a capacity to process 150,000 tonnes of waste per year, and approximately 50,000 tonnes of wood was also processed at this facility.
- Operation hours were 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- 5 optical sortation units were operational at St Albans to separate recyclable materials from the Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) they received from various local authorities. AI would be implemented into the units to allow them to work in tandem more effectively.
- Each pellenc optical sorter was programmed to sort a specific material within the process to produce clean glass, films, cardboard, fibre, plastics and aluminium cans at the end.
- 'Project Aluminium' would introduce eddy current and electro magnetic separators that would improve the capture of aluminium and steel cans.
- Out of 86,000 tonnes of DMR received from local authorities, 79,000 tonnes of recyclables were recovered, which equated to a 92% recycling rate.
- Fibre from North and East Herts as a percentage of DMR received had dropped significantly as another company processed the cardboard and paper recycling.
- A change to three-weekly bin collections has not cause DMR contamination rates to spike significantly.
- There had been an upward trend in soft plastics received.
- They had 6 wood recycling facilities across the UK, which aimed to process 400,000 tonnes of wood per annum.
- The recycled wood material was sent to their chipboard production facilities to produce chipboard, which was sold to the commercial sector.
- £180M had been self-invested into their wood processing facilities.
- They had 22 plants in 11 countries around the world, with 11,000 employees.

In response to a question from Councillor Claire Strong, Duncan Jones advised that 20,000 tonnes of wood was received from household waste recycling centres in Hertfordshire, and a further 30,000 tonnes from the commercial sector in the county.

The Chair thanked Duncan Jones for his presentation.

30 INFORMATION NOTE: COUNCIL ACTIVITY UPDATE AND ACTION TRACKER

Audio recording – 1 hour 22 minutes 11 seconds

Officers from the Policy and Strategy Team provided a verbal update on the Information Note entitled 'Council Activity Update and Action Tracker' and advised that:

- There were no new actions on the Action Tracker, but this would be reviewed ahead of the next meeting in the new Civic Year.
- The third round of Solar Together had closed and installations for this would be ending soon. Of the 650 interests registered, 73 solar installations and 69 battery installations had been made.
- Hertfordshire County Council Flood Pilot Scheme to support communities become more resilient and prepared for future flooding remained open to applications.

- The Council were working with the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership to support the delivery of a Retrofit Strategy.
- 15,000 trees had been claimed across the district this year from the 'Your Tree Our Future' initiative.
- The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Hertfordshire was available to view on the Hertfordshire County Council website and residents could help by planting bee-friendly wildflowers, avoiding astroturf and building fence holes for hedgehogs.
- Two areas in Hitchin were no longer Air Quality Management Areas as air quality had remained below national limits for 5 years. However, air quality would continue to be monitored in these areas.
- Decarbonisation works at Royston Leisure Centre had been complete with works at other leisure centres in the district due to be finished by the summer.
- Design work for the decarbonisation of Hitchin Town Hall, North Herts Museum and North Herts Leisure Centre learner pool was progressing.
- A report on greenhouse gas emissions for the Council and the wider district had been published on the Council website.
- John O'Connor would be holding a community bee event in Baldock on 4 April 2026 to expand the Bee Corridor in North Herts and more information about this could be found on the Council website and Climate Hive.
- The Council were partnering with Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to host a community energy event at Broadway Cinema in Letchworth in June and tickets were available for this on the Broadway Cinema website.
- Work on delivering the actions within the Sustainability Strategy had continued.
- Use of hydrogenated vegetable oil in refuse vehicles had saved 368KG of carbon from May to November 2025 and new electric refuse vehicles would enable further reductions.
- 81% of staff had completed the Sustainability e-learning module and 11 staff were now certified as Carbon Literate.
- 12 installations had been made through the Warm Homes Local Grant scheme in the first year, and a further 10 properties had been surveyed for the second year.
- The Council app now had over 17,000 downloads.
- A process had been put in place to record and monitor the impact of extreme weather events on Council services.
- More wild areas had been established across the district, including a wild meadow at Wilbury Hills Cemetery.
- A salary sacrifice scheme had been launched for staff to help them invest in lower emission vehicles and support a reduction in commuting emissions.

The Chair thanked Members, officers and speakers for their participation at the Cabinet Panel during the Civic Year.

31 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 1 hour 29 minutes 44 seconds

It was advised that there was no specific participation from members of the public at this meeting, but that public participants had been included as part of discussions on Agenda Items 5 and 6.

The meeting closed at 9.02 pm

Chair

**CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT
1 JULY 2026**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

In accordance with Standing Order 4.8.10(c), one question was submitted by a member of the public by the deadline date for questions set out in the Council's Constitution.

(A) SEWAGE DISCHARGE POINT INTO NORTON COMMON

Jessica Crighton to Councillor Amy Allen (Executive Member for Environment):

"There appears to be a Sewage Discharge point within Norton Common into the Pix Brook with sewage discharges by Anglian Water. Will the council investigate why sewage is allowed to be discharged into a public park and if there's anything that can be done to stop it?"

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CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

1st July 2026

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: Council Activity Update and Action Tracker

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR: Environment

PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

1. SUMMARY

Panel Overview 2026/27

- 1.1 This note highlights the topic for this Panel meeting as well as a Council Activity Update, and Action Tracker Review (at Appendix A) for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Panel aims to select topics which will enable open discussion that may lead to recommendations to Cabinet from the relevant Executive Members or Director, regarding actions that they believe the Council should be taking to address climate and environmental issues.

Panel Meeting: 1st July 2026

- 1.3 This Panel meeting will include presentations on the subject of Biodiversity and Volunteering. Chris Hinchliff MP will give a policy update on chalk streams, Abbie Robinson will present her biodiversity improvement project, and Heidi Hutton will showcase recent volunteer successes in the Countryside Management Service.

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 June¹. The Constitutional Amendment Report of the 18th April 2023² recommended that this Panel be the only remaining panel going forward.
- 2.2 By way of update to the Panel, we have been involved in the following work:

3. COUNCIL ACTIVITY

- 3.1 **Contributions to the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)**
- 3.2 Officers have been attending and supporting conversations with the Hertfordshire Sustainability Officers Group (HSOG) on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). These conversations are helping shape best practice to be carried forward in Hertfordshire on various aspects of Sustainability.

¹ [Appendix B - Revised Terms of Reference for Cabinet Panel on the Environment.pdf \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

² [Constitutional amendment report 18.4.23.docx \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

3.3 Your Tree Our Future scheme

3.4 The 'Your Tree Our Future' initiative has been extremely popular in North Herts, with 14,739 free trees claimed and planted across the district last year. Thousands of residents took part by collecting free saplings to plant in gardens, community spaces, schools, and green areas. These trees will help create a greener, more sustainable Hertfordshire for future generations by boosting habitats, improving air quality, and strengthening climate resilience. The scheme has reopened as of the 22nd June. More information can be found on the Hertfordshire County Council website: [Your Tree Our Future | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

3.5 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)

3.6 Decarbonisation of Royston Leisure Centre is complete (completed 23 March)! Estimated completion for Hitchin Swimming and Fitness centre and North Herts Leisure Centre (Letchworth) is October. Design work for decarbonisation of Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum is progressing as part of the council's decarbonisation phase 2 project, with the aim to submit a planning application in the early part of the 26/27 financial year. The planning application for the decarbonisation of the learner pool at NHLC has been submitted.

3.7 Council Emissions

3.8 A report on North Herts Councils' greenhouse gas emissions has now been published on our website which covers progress in reducing the council's own emissions and summarises progress on district wide emissions. The report uses 2021-22 as the baseline year for the council's operational emissions and reports progress annually to 2024-25. Available at: [Reducing emissions | North Herts Council](#)

3.9 Climate Engagement

3.10 The North Herts engagement hub for climate change and sustainability, the Climate Hive, now has over 1200 subscribers. We continue to keep residents up to date on the latest surveys and consultations, eco events, national environment days, the Cabinet Panel for the Environment, and council activity.

3.11 Volunteer Meadow Monitoring Programme

3.12 As part of our ongoing work to enhance biodiversity across the district, we are launching a volunteer meadow monitoring programme, beginning with Rapid Grassland Assessment training for community volunteers (Friday 12th July). The training teaches how to monitor and assess the condition of the wildflower meadows being established across our green spaces in Letchworth, Hitchin, Royston and Baldock. Volunteers will monitor record plant diversity and identifying how these habitats are supporting wildlife. The project will not only provide valuable data to help guide future management of our meadows but also encourage community involvement, learning, and stewardship of local green spaces.

3.13 Community Energy Event – Film Screening

The Council partnered with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to host a community energy event at the Broadway Cinema in Letchworth on the 10th July. The event included a showing of the film 'Power Station' followed by a Q&A session with the Co-Director of the film. <https://www.broadway-lechworth.com/cinema/whats-on/power-station-qa-co-director-dan-edelstyn/> A recording of the Q&A portion will be made available soon on the North Herts Council YouTube channel.

3.14 Sustainability Briefings

- 3.15 The latest Sustainability briefings are available to view on the website at: [Latest updates on Sustainability | North Herts Council](#). They include information on available funding, upcoming events, and council activity.

4 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2025-2030 UPDATES

- 4.1 The Sustainability Strategy 2025-2030 is available here: [Sustainability strategy | North Herts Council](#). Actions are being monitored by our Climate and Sustainability Officer Group and Political Liaison Board which is comprised of Cabinet Members and our Leadership Team. Key progress made so far includes:

- Ongoing progress on-site at our leisure centres as part of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Project. Royston Leisure Centre is complete and Hitchin and Letchworth will be complete in the Autumn time.
- Electric Vehicles are now in operation for the waste collection service. This will result in carbon emissions reductions further to the nearly 400 tonnes saved (between May and November 2025) through the use of HVO.
- Our aim to train staff on climate change issues has progressed well, with 93% of staff having completed the tailored Sustainability eLearning module. Internal comms are being shared to staff to raise awareness of environmental issues. <https://carbonliteracy.com/>
- We continue to deliver the government funded Warm Homes Local Grant scheme aimed at supporting homes in fuel poverty in North Herts with insulation, solar panels and clean heating. For year 1, we delivered installations at 12 homes. In year 2, we are planning installations in up to 30 homes.
- The North Herts Council app is continuing to grow, with additional guidance on recycling which is part of the effort to improve recycling rates. The app currently has over 20,000 downloads.
- An EV salary sacrifice scheme has been launched for staff at the council to help them invest in lower emission vehicles, supporting a reduction in staff commuting emissions.
- We have launched a mandatory Green Procurement Checklist internally for officers to utilise in higher value procurements (over £100,000 for goods & services and over £500,000 for works). The checklist is intended to help officers consider how they can best embed sustainability into their procurement.
- Work continues on supporting Community Energy in the District. Last month we organised an event in collaboration with Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to show the film Power Station. The event brought together multiple Community Energy groups and environmentally minded individuals to promote the growth of Community Energy in the area. A webpage to promote Community Energy groups and initiatives in North Herts is in progress.
- The Green space team reported increased use of electric equipment and progress on wildlife monitoring with volunteers and partners.

5 INFORMATION TO NOTE

- 5.1 Our Environment inbox is a means for members of the public or organisations to provide suggestions/presentations for the panel's consideration. The address is - EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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 5.2 will only be placed on the work programme if agreed by the Chair or at a meeting of the Panel.
- 5.4 Attendance from external bodies and members of the public is actively encouraged.
- 5.5 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.

6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Other topics for consideration and inclusion in the Panel's work programme can be suggested at each meeting, and also by emailing EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix A – Work Programme and Action Tracker 2026/27

8 CONTACT OFFICERS

- 8.1 Reuben Ayavoo, Policy & Community Manager, 01462 474212
Reuben.Ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk
- 8.2 Ellie Hollingsworth, Policy & Strategy Team Leader, 01462 474220
Ellie.Hollingsworth@north-herts.gov.uk
- 8.4 Daisy Harris, Policy & Strategy Officer
Daisy.Harris@north-herts.gov.uk
- 8.5 Amber Smith-Howell, Policy & Strategy Officer
Amber.Smith-Howell@north-herts.gov.uk

APPENDIX A – WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER 2026/27

PROGRAMME FOR CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT MEETINGS 2026-27

<p>Meeting 1 1st July 2026</p>	<p>Presentations on the subject of Biodiversity and Volunteering. Chris Hinchliffe MP with a policy update on chalk streams. Abbie Robinson presenting her biodiversity improvement project. Heidi Hutton to showcase recent volunteer successes in the Countryside Management Service.</p>
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CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT – ACTION TRACKER

Action Number	Action	Objective	Team/Individual Responsible	Timeframe	Measurable	Status
Page 18						