

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

**MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING
ON TUESDAY, 7TH JULY, 2020 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

- Present:** *Councillors: Steve Jarvis (Chair), Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg (Chair), Val Bryant, Ian Moody, Gerald Morris, Michael Muir, Claire Strong, Mike Hughson (In place of Kay Tart) and Carol Stanier (In place of Sam Collins)*
- In Attendance:** *Reuben Ayavoo (Policy and Community Engagement Manager), Georgina Chapman (Trainee Policy Officer), Daniel Washington (Transport Policy Officer) and Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager).*
- Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting 2 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Audio Recording – 17 seconds

The Chair, Councillor Steve Jarvis. welcomed everyone to this Virtual meeting of the Cabinet Panel on the Environment.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager explained the procedures for this meeting as follows:

Attendance

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager undertook a roll call to ensure that all Members and officers could hear and be heard.

Live Streaming

The meeting was being streamed live on the Council's You Tube channel. If live streaming failed the meeting would adjourn. If the live stream could not be restored within a reasonable period then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

Please stay in view at all times

If for any reason the meeting was not quorate an Officer would notify attendees by interjecting the meeting. The meeting would adjourn immediately. Once the meeting was quorate the meeting would resume. If connection could not be restored within a reasonable period, then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

Noise interference

Electronic devices should be muted and all present should have the mute button on their tablet or computer activated when not speaking.

Debate

The raise hand button (located under participants) should be used to alert the Chair that you wish to speak. Please wait for the Chair to invite you to speak before doing so.

Voting.

If the Panel decided to take a vote this would be undertaken using the Green tick for "Yes", Red Cross for "No" and Blue Raise Hand for "abstain", located in the participants section at the bottom of the screen. To enable the votes to be counted, votes should not be cleared until requested to do so.

Details of how Members voted will not be kept or minuted unless a Recorded Vote was requested or an individual requests that their vote be recorded, and it will not be heard or seen on the audio and YouTube recordings of the meeting.

The Chair, Councillor Steve Jarvis, started the meeting proper.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 3 minutes 35 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sam Collins and Kay Tart.

Having given due notice Councillor Carol Stanier advised that she would be substituting for Councillor Sam Collins.

Having given due notice Councillor Mike Hughson advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Kay Tart.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 48 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy, this 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;
- (2) 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.

4 ITEMS REFERRED FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Audio recording – 4 minutes 13 seconds

The Committee considered the referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 June 2020 that:

"The Cabinet Panel on the Environment be requested to consider air quality in the District, in particular the effect that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on areas of poor air quality.

The Chair advised that this would be considered when looking at the work programme.

5 INFORMATION NOTE - WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER FOR 2019/20

Audio Recording – 6 minutes 1 second

The Policy and Community Engagement Manager presented the information note entitled Work Programme and Action Tracker for 2020/21 together with the following appendices:

- Appendix A - Work Programme and Action Tracker;
- Appendix B - Terms of Reference for Cabinet Panel on Environment (attached for information only).

He drew Members attention to the following:

- There was now a dedicated email address for the Panel:
EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk
- It was suggested in the Work Programme that future meetings consider the following subjects:
 - 9 September 2020 -The New 'Normal': Recovering from a Pandemic - (Including bio diversity, air quality, council operations moving forward);
 - 17 November 2020 - Food Waste, Waste, and Recycling (Including food waste reduction, and capture from the residual stream);
 - 23 February 2021 - Round-up Meeting (Including review of achievements and Climate Change Strategy)
- The Action Tracker shows
 - Actions completed – 16;
 - Ongoing actions – 24;
 - Outstanding actions – 5.
- The Covid-19 pandemic had impacted on moving actions forward.

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

- Councillor Elizabeth Dennis-Harburg;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Carol Stanier;
- Councillor Michael Muir;

Members made the following comments:

- Every action in respect of recycling and waste had been discussed with officers;
- That actions should be prioritised taking into account what is achievable, that a column should be added to indicate when an action was expected to progress and that, where possible updates are given on particular projects;
- That there had been some significant opportunities due to Covid-19 as well as some significant issues;
- It was important to consider environmental impact when considering the new normal.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Information note entitled Work Programme and Action Tracker for 2019/20 be noted:
- (2) That the Policy and Community Engagement Manager be requested to amend the Action Tracker as follows:

- Prioritise the actions listed taking into account what is achievable;
- A column be added to indicate when an action was expected to progress;
- Wherever possible updates be provided on particular projects;

- (3) That the referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet Panel on the Environment, due to be held on 9 September 2020.

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

6 PRESENTATION BY THE TRANSPORT POLICY OFFICER

Audio Recording – 26 minutes 55 seconds

The Transport Policy Officer gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding transport, focussing on reduction of emissions.

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

- Councillor Michael Muir;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Mike Hughson;
- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Val Bryant;
- Councillor Sam Collins (as a member of the public);
- Councillor Carol Stanier;
- Councillor Val Bryant;
- Councillor Michael Muir.

In response to questions the Transport Policy Officer advised:

- Once the Electric Vehicle Strategy had been adopted by the Council a programme could be developed;
- There were funding streams available for projects, however the timescales for completion were extremely tight;
- Schemes for cycleways were being presented to HCC and it was for them to put schemes for potential funding;
- The Greater Cambridge Partnership had given the go ahead for the Melbourn Greenway;
- Consideration was being given to working with schools to prevent engine idling outside school gates;
- S106 funding ranged in amount from area to area within the District.

Members comments included:

- That some progress had been made on projects in Royston and Hitchin;
- That NHDC needed to press HCC to be more ambitious in and around town centres;
- In respect of new developments, entry and exit points for cyclists should be considered at the planning stage;
- There may be an opportunities to make more of the pedestrianisation and consider ways in which vehicles enter and exit town centres.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Transport Policy Officer be thanked for his informative presentation;
- (2) That NHDC press HCC to be more ambitious regarding their plans in around town centres for instance consider pedestrianisation and entry and exit routes for town centres;
- (3) That, in respect of new developments, entry and exit points for cyclists be considered at the planning stage.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Environment Panel to consider the issues around reduction of emissions from transport.

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - JULIA SONANDER

Audio recording – 1 hour 4 minutes 16 seconds

Julia Sonander thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Panel as follows:

- It was difficult as a Member of the public to get feedback on projects;
- It was frustrating that the County Council was writing a cycling strategy for the District;
- There should be a plan for a network of cycleways even of that took years to complete;
- Children will only be able to cycle to school if safe cycleways were provided;
- With shops opening after the lockdown it was possibly time to consider pedestrianisation in town centres;
- HCC only received 75 percent of the funding available to them, they should have been more adventurous in the schemes they put forward.

In response the Transport Policy Officer advised:

- That a cycle network was needed and schemes were being submitted to HCC that could be joined up into a network at a later date;
- There were some routes that needed little more than cutting back of foliage and painting;
- Most schemes presented to HCC came from NHDC, but HCC would make the decision as to which schemes would be put forward for funding.

The Chair thanked Julia Sonander for her presentation.

8 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - JOHN WEBB

Audio Recording – 1 hour 13 minutes 42 seconds

John Webb thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Panel as follows:

- The Environment Panel should provide a window into the Council and demonstrate where difference had been made. Better use of the Action Plan could achieve this;
- More notification of meetings was required to increase public participation;
- Public consultation was lacking on the Sustainable Travel Plan and DFT funding streams;
- It was easy for the public to confuse the Transport Forum with this Panel;

- There were some vehicles that required the engines to run constantly such as refrigerated vehicles;
- The Panel's Action Plan could be sub-divided into actions that were administrative and actions that were demonstrable.

The Chair thanked John Webb for his presentation.

9 PANEL DISCUSSION

Audio Recording – 1 hour 20minutes 2 seconds

The Chair led a discussion regarding the presentations from the Transport Policy Officer and members of the public and any other matters that Members wished to raise.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Steve Jarvis;
- Councillor Gerald Morris;
- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Carol Stanier.

Members made the following observations:

- The plans for the expansion of Luton Airport were currently on hold;
- The Transport Users Forum was focussed on the practical elements of transport including cycling;
- That the Planning stage should include details of cycle routes and cycle entry and exit routes to new developments.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Joint Chairs of the Panel be requested to engage with the Executive Member for Planning and Transport to discuss actions required to develop a plan for a cycle network in North Herts;
- (2) That the Executive Member for Planning and Transport be requested to engage with community groups and members of the public in the process for developing a plan for a cycle network in North Herts.

REASON FOR DECISION: For the Panel to be apprised of the actions and plans regarding the reduction of emissions from travel and transport in North Herts.

The meeting closed at 9.08 pm

Chair