

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT
8 June 2021

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER FOR 2021/22

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

PRIORITY: RESPONSIVE AND EFFICIENT

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This note highlights the proposed course of the Environment Panel meeting on 8th June and the proposed methods of scheduling the work programme for 2021/22.

The meeting will refresh the chairs and panel as to the role and format of the Environment Panel, and receive presentation from the Waste Awareness Officer on waste-related initiatives. The meeting will also include a discussion of potential topics for the rest of the year's meetings. A proposed schedule for the year will then be presented to the panel in July. This is to allow for a dialogue on proposed topics, once chairs and panel members have been confirmed at the meeting of Full Council on 26th May. 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. 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 2021/22 year.

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)

As lead of the Biodiversity Subgroup, we are currently engaging with stakeholders to receive comment on the Biodiversity Action Plan which was approved at the March HCCSP meeting, and to further develop it. Stakeholders engaged with thus far include The Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Herts Ecology, Herts Greenspace Managers, Herts Planners, and Butterfly Conservation. The deadline for comment is the end of May.

Countryside Management Services (CMS) are continuing work to secure a county-wide biodiversity baseline and are currently engaging in pre-tender market engagement to get a preliminary sense of costings. CMS will manage the procurement process on HCCSP's behalf.

CMS' work on a wilding audit for each of the Hertfordshire district councils continues.

Monthly Eco-Actions

In February, the corporate policy team started a new initiative to encourage council staff to adopt eco-friendly habits by publishing a themed article each month in the staff newsletter with five easy suggestions on how to be more environmentally friendly.

This has now been expanded to the council's publications for residents including NH Insight and NH Now in order to reach and engage residents on these topics as well. The recycling and waste email bulletin has also been adapted in order to include these monthly suggestions. The email bulletin alone is sent to over 11,000 members of the public.

Furthermore, these articles have also been modified in order to be published as shorter, weekly posts on social media, linking to the overall theme for each month. In order to increase engagement, these posts have been further developed and include interesting environmental facts, polls, links to helpful websites and resources, quizzes and a themed image has now been designed for each month in order to make the posts recognisable and familiar.

Monthly topics so far have covered: 'Heating Habits', Electricity, Water, 'Nature and Biodiversity' and 'Eating for the Environment'.

Climate Change Strategy

The updated Climate Change Strategy 2021-26 was approved at the March Cabinet meeting and is now available on NHDC's Climate Change webpage, along with the Appendices which outline the Completed and Proposed Actions. We are preparing to make available a more reader-friendly and visually appealing version of the Strategy which encompasses the completed and proposed actions in one document.

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 Programme of meetings and Action Tracker

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix A Action Tracker