

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT
22 February 2022

***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 items scheduled in the work programme for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment for 2021/22 following 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 2021/22 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)

Changes that were made to The Biodiversity Action Plan as a result of the stakeholder engagement process were presented to HCCSP on the 24th November. The Plan is therefore now considered to be adopted. Work will continue to assign actions to officers for implementation and monitoring when the Projects Leads Officer begins their role in the new year.

We continue to attend the fortnightly meetings with WSP around the county-wide biodiversity baseline. All of the data has now been analysed and they are currently completing a quality assessment exercise to validate the accuracy of the data and their results. So far, the results of this assessment have been very encouraging. We are on track for completion around the end of the financial year and WSP will be presenting to HCCSP in April on how the baseline can be used within the local authorities.

Having completed the delegated decision for a County-wide Solar Bulk Purchase Scheme, we are now awaiting final approval of the scheme by HCCSP. This was meant to take place in January but has been delayed due to internal authority approval processes.

We continue to attend meetings of and contribute to the Behaviour Change subgroup who are drafting an action plan currently and working to identify a key action to take forth from each of the other priority areas.

The HEAT Herts Energy Advice Tool, an energy saving app for residents, has now been launched. This is now available on apple and android app stores and is accessible to residents throughout Hertfordshire. The app is designed to take residents through their home and fill in a survey to identify how they can reduce their energy usage in order to save money on bills and help the environment. The comms team have been alerted and will be posting about the app over the next few weeks and across the year to continue raising awareness that it is available for our residents to use.

A session on Engaging the Public on Climate Change was organised by Hertfordshire Sustainability Officers Group for any relevant officers to attend. The session covered 'Do's and Don'ts' for climate related communications and provided useful advice on how to engage best with residents on climate and environmental matters.

Climate Change Communication Plan

The policy team has worked with the communications team to produce a climate change communication plan for the next calendar year. The plan will focus on local and national environmental events and days and include information and behaviour change suggestions related to these events. The new communication plan will achieve a number of proposed actions from the Climate Change Strategy which sit under the priority of 'Inspiring the Community'.

Climate and Environment Presentation for Councillors

The Policy Team held two information sessions for Councillors on the council's climate and environment work. The presentation gave an overview of COP26 and The Environment Act 2021 and their implications for local authorities; the work that the council do as part of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership; the council's Climate Change Strategy including achieved actions; the council's carbon footprint; and upcoming projects.

The sessions were attended by Councillors from all three parties and received positive feedback. Suggestions included sharing the climate achievements infographic with Councillors to push out on their own channels, as well as more widely publicising the infographic by putting up posters of it in the town centre information centres. The Policy team have also requested that the infographic be added to the scrolling information on the CSC receptions screens.

Greenspace Management Strategy

The policy team are involved in reviewing the upcoming Greenspace Management Strategy, to ensure that this aligns with the environment and climate change agenda. Written sections have been produced to ensure the strategy ties with the Climate Change Strategy and the HCCSP Biodiversity Action Plan.

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