

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 collective 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

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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix A - Environment Panel Work Programme and Action Tracker