

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT
27th September 2023

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2023/24

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR: Environment and Leisure & 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 2023/24, agreed at the initial meeting. The Work Programme at Appendix A highlights the agreed topics.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 This meeting will focus on the topic of Sustainable Development, including a progress update on the council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on Sustainability, and an update on what is being done to support Biodiversity Net Gain implementation at a county-level.
- 1.4 The Action Tracker has been reviewed and amended with a view to improving its effectiveness and clarifying the areas and ways in which the Council can have a meaningful influence.
- 1.5 The Work Programme for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment Meetings 2023-24 is as follows:

Meeting 1. 19th July 2023	Setting the Work Programme; Water
Meeting 2. 27th September 2023	Sustainable Development
Meeting 3. 6th December 2023	Waste
Meeting 4. 20th March 2024	Achievements

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 is the only remaining panel for 2023.

2.2 By way of update to the Panel, we have been involved in the following work:

2.3 Contributions to the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)

We have led the Biodiversity Subgroup in revising the Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan, which was then approved by HCCSP in July. We are now developing metrics for the top priority actions.

The second round of Solar Together is now open. A targeted maildrop has been delivered to households, and we have sent out communications to Community Centres and Town and Parish Councils who may wish to participate in the scheme. We are also doing general promotion of the scheme via social media and the Climate Hive. The webpage has been updated with details of the scheme. The window for applications will close on the 27th October.

We have compiled a draft climate-related risks log. This identifies risks to council services and to the district from climate impacts (extreme heat; flooding; drought; storms). This is part of the Adaptation subgroup work to ensure there is a log of climate risks across the county. Officers will be checking that the draft log reflects the risks to their service area and any mitigative actions that they have in place over the coming months.

2.4 Home Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG2)

The Home Upgrade Grant phase 2 is due to launch and we are awaiting confirmation from the Energy Hub that we can begin the marketing plan that we have developed. The scheme is only available for off-gas properties. Those who live in a property EPC rated D,E,F, or G and who have a household income of below £31,000 per year are eligible to sign up for home energy efficiency improvements. Our marketing plan involves targeting the wards with the highest numbers of eligible households including Hitchwood, Offa, and Hoo; Ermine; and Weston and Sandon. Eligible residents from any ward are able to sign-up however, and we will also do general promotion of our scheme on our website and social media.

2.5 Luton Airport Expansion

Work has re-commenced on reviewing the Luton Airport Expansion Documents. Documents on several areas including climate resilience, green controlled growth, biodiversity, infrastructure, and air quality have been reviewed by officers to ascertain whether previous concerns raised have been addressed, and remaining concerns incorporated into required documents such as the Principle Areas of Disagreement Summary Statement (PADSS).

2.6 Engagement and Eco-festivals

The Council continue to provide relevant updates on the Climate Hive engagement page and attended the recent Baldock and Hitchin eco-festivals.

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 \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

2.7 Heat Decarbonisation Plans and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)

We are working to get heat decarbonisation plans created for the three leisure centres, as these are our highest energy-using and carbon emitting sites. These decarbonisation plans will allow us to make an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme which will open in October.

2.8 Community Investment Fund

The council's Community Investment Fund is due to open for applications. Community groups can apply to the fund for capacity building projects which will ultimately enable the delivery of community value. We have included climate/environment/sustainability projects as an example of what community value could entail.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

3.1 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

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 – Work Programme and Action Tracker 2023/24

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

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