

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT
22 January 2025

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE POLICY AND STRATEGY TEAM LEADER

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS FOR: Environment and Leisure & Recycling and Waste Management

PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

1. SUMMARY

Panel Overview 2024/25

- 1.1 This note highlights the topic for this Panel meeting as well as a Work Programme and Action Tracker (at Appendix A) for the Cabinet Panel on the Environment for 2024/25.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Panel aims to set a work programme which will enable open discussion that may lead to recommendations to Cabinet from the relevant Executive Members or Service Director, regarding actions that they believe the Council should be taking to address climate and environmental issues.

Panel Meeting: 22nd January 2025

- 1.3 This Panel meeting will provide an update on the new risk added to the Council's Corporate Risk Register: Climate Change Adaptation. As of November, a new risk covering Climate Change Adaptation has been added to the Council's Corporate Risk management system. The system enables the council to record, monitor and report corporate performance indicators, improvement actions and risks.
- 1.4 There will also be a presentation on recent flooding in North Hertfordshire, particularly in the Hitchin Walsworth Area, from the Operations Manager: Flood Risk and Adaptation at Hertfordshire County Council. The presentation will also touch on the work around climate adaptation that is currently taking place.

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 be the only remaining panel going forward.
- 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)**
- 2.4 The second round of Solar Together is now closed. 185 households in North Herts accepted their solar pv recommendation. The price achieved for the average 14-panel

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

system within this scheme is 34% cheaper than the typical market price for an equivalent system according to iChoosr's market research. As of December 2024, 1,665 Solar PV Installations across Hertfordshire have been completed.

2.5 A third round has been agreed for Solar Together and further information will be shared in due course. A query was raised at the previous meeting of the panel about being able to use power from installations during power cuts, and types of inverter used to enable this. We have raised this with iChoosr who have explained that inverters do not allow or prevent an individual from using electricity during a power blackout, as that is not their function. However, it is possible to have an emergency power supply (EPS) attached to a solar battery which will allow for use of stored power during a blackout. The type of inverter used in the system will not impact whether an EPS can be installed. Customers of the Solar Together Scheme can contact their installer or iChoosr to find out more about getting an EPS installed. We have updated the Frequently Asked Questions section of the [webpage](#) to reflect this.

2.6 The Hertfordshire Growth Board have now launched their missions, one of which is Sustainable County. Sustainability is also mentioned within several of the other missions. The HCCSP is referred to in the missions and given a specific remit around developing a local area energy plan for Hertfordshire. A working group will be formed for this shortly.

2.7 **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are statutory spatial strategies which will agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions to achieve these priorities. These strategies are legislated for in The Environment Act 2021. Development of the LNRS for Hertfordshire is being led by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), working in conjunction with the district councils and other stakeholders. The Strategy will contain a local habitat map and a written statement of biodiversity priorities. Key identified stakeholders are helping develop specific strategic priorities for Hertfordshire's urban areas. These priorities aim to join up fragmented habitats, provide wildlife corridors, improve greenspaces, and help improve air quality. North Herts are currently assisting in providing information to help shape these urban priorities and incorporate the priorities into the LNRS map. The first draft of the web platform for the finished LNRS is completed and is going through refinement to make it easy-to-use for all, with user testing beginning in the new year. Further details on future engagement opportunities will be available under on the HNRP website under 'Get involved'.

2.8 **Eco Flex Scheme**

2.9 We will be launching our ECO (Energy Company Obligation) Flex scheme during the week commencing 13th January. We will be working with the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to support lower income and vulnerable households to make their homes more energy efficient. More details including the eligibility criteria will be published during the week commencing the 13th January.

2.10 **Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)**

2.11 The council has submitted an application for PSDS phase 4, for funding to decarbonise the District Council Offices, Hitchin Town Hall, and North Herts Museum. We expect to hear back if we are successful by May 2025.

2.12 **Climate Engagement**

- 2.13 The North Herts engagement hub for climate change and sustainability, the Climate Hive now has 402 subscribers, we continue to keep residents up to date on the latest surveys, eco events, national environment days, the Cabinet Panel for the Environment, ongoing Local Nature Reserve Sites (LNRS) engagement, sustainable Christmas tips and surveys/consultations. We ran a Q&A engagement with the Exec Member for Recycling and Waste Management throughout the month of November and received a lot of questions, answers have been posted on the Climate Hive.
- 2.14 We will continue to keep residents updated on action the council is taking and provide information on how residents can help towards our sustainability targets.

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. Discussion will help ensure that the most appropriate items are taken forward to the work programme.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix A – Work Programme and new Action Tracker Template 2024/25
- 5.2 Appendix B – Climate Adaptation Risk

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

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