

**CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25**

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: 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025

- 1.3 This Panel meeting will review achievements and progress on projects from the last year, as well as providing an opportunity to feedback on our draft Sustainability Strategy actions.
- 1.4 It should be noted that the Sustainability Strategy Actions at Appendix B are draft, and subject to change based on the consultation feedback.

**2. STEPS TO DATE**

- 2.1 Cabinet approved the establishment of the Cabinet Panel for the Environment at the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019 meeting. The amended terms of reference were tabled for the Full Council meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> June<sup>1</sup>. The Constitutional Amendment Report of the 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023<sup>2</sup> 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 third round of Solar Together is now open and will remain open to expressions of interest until 4<sup>th</sup> April. As of Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March, there have been 488 expressions of interest from residents of North Herts.
- 2.5 The Partnership have been working with MCS to develop a Retrofit Strategy for Hertfordshire as part of the Local Authority Retrofit Accelerator (LARA). We have participated in workshops to aid development of the Strategy and are now reviewing the draft.

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<sup>1</sup> [Appendix B - Revised Terms of Reference for Cabinet Panel on the Environment.pdf \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Constitutional amendment report 18.4.23.docx \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](#)

## **2.6 Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

- 2.7 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. Engagement events were held during 2024, and the most recent engagement events were held in February 2025 to discuss the first draft. A recording is available to watch [here](#). There has also been engagement with landowners, farmers, and environmental experts on the draft. Work is ongoing to improve the first draft and public consultation will open later this year.

## **2.8 Eco Flex Scheme**

- 2.9 We launched our ECO (Energy Company Obligation) Flex scheme in mid-January. We are working with the National Energy Foundation (NEF) to support lower income and vulnerable households to make their homes more energy efficient. So far we have had three applications.

## **2.10 Warm Homes**

- 2.11 We have been successful in our bid for funding from the new Warm Homes: Local Grant scheme. The scheme involves funding installation of energy efficiency measures (i.e. insulation) and low carbon heating (i.e. replacing old gas boilers with air source heat pumps) for low-income households living in hard to heat, poorly insulated homes. There will be a broader number of homes eligible for this scheme compared to HUG2 or ECO Flex. We have been allocated £1.5m over 3 years.

## **2.12 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)**

- 2.13 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.

## **2.14 Climate Engagement**

- 2.15 The North Herts engagement hub for climate change and sustainability, the Climate Hive, now has 407 subscribers, we continue to keep residents up to date on the latest surveys and consultations, eco events, national environment days, the Cabinet Panel for the Environment, and ongoing Local Nature Reserve Sites (LNRS) engagement.
- 2.16 From April, the Climate Hive will be provided on a different platform. Those subscribed will not need to re-subscribe to the new platform as this information will be transferred across, however anyone currently accessing the Climate Hive via a bookmarked webpage link should be aware that the link will change. We will notify subscribers of this on the current platform and the hyperlink on our [Climate Change](#) page will also be updated. The Climate Hive 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](mailto: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 Action Tracker 2024/25
- 5.2 Appendix B – Sustainability Strategy Draft Actions
- 5.3 Appendix C – Achievements 2024/25 (to follow as a supplementary document)

### **6. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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