

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT
1st April 2026

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: Council Activity Update and Action Tracker

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR: Environment

PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

1. SUMMARY

Panel Overview 2025/26

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

Panel Meeting: 1st April 2026

- 1.3 This Panel meeting will include an update on the progress of the new waste service provision, with presentations from the Council and Veolia, our waste contractor. There will also be presentations from Timberpak Pearce about their mixed recycling facilities, and from Biogen, our food waste recycling service provider.

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:

3. COUNCIL ACTIVITY

- 3.1 **Contributions to the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)**
- 3.2 The third round of **Solar Together** has closed. Over 650 North Herts residents registered interest and 113 have accepted offers for Solar PV. North Herts also has one business accepted for battery storage. 73 solar installations have so far been completed in North Herts, totalling 773 panels. 69 batteries have also been installed. From the installations completed so far, it is estimated that 64,107kg of CO₂ will be saved per year.

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

- 3.2 Hertfordshire County Council are expanding on Hertfordshire's first **Flood Kit Pilot Scheme**. The scheme was set up to support communities to become more resilient and prepared for future flooding. Communities across Hertfordshire has been selected as areas that recently experienced flooding. Each flood kit has been tailored to meet the local risk profile and community needs including equipment such as hydrosacks, high-vis jackets, puddle pumps and much more to help in the event of flooding. The kits are to be placed in a storage unit on land with public liability insurance and suitable for local access, quickly and efficiently. Kimpton and Hitchin are already involved in the scheme for North Herts and Hertfordshire County Council is inviting other communities who have experienced flooding and would benefit from a shared kit and plan to register their interest. You can find our more on eligibility of your area and complete an application form on the County Council's website: [Flooding and water | Hertfordshire County Council](#)
- 3.3 Retrofit**
- 3.4 The council are working with HCCSP to support the delivery of the retrofit strategy - [Building Retrofit](#).
- 3.5 Your Tree Our Future scheme**
- 3.6 The 'Your Tree Our Future' initiative has been extremely popular in North Herts, with 14,739 free trees claimed and planted across the district this year. Thousands of residents took part by collecting free saplings to plant in gardens, community spaces, schools, and green areas. These trees will help create a greener, more sustainable Hertfordshire for future generations by boosting habitats, improving air quality, and strengthening climate resilience.
- 3.7 Local Nature Recovery Strategy**
- 3.8 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are statutory spatial strategies which agree priorities for nature recovery and propose actions to achieve these priorities. The Strategy contains a local habitat map and a written statement of biodiversity priorities, as well as agreed actions. Public consultation was open throughout summer 2025. The Strategy has now been published. [Local Nature Recovery Strategy | Hertfordshire County Council](#) Residents can do their part in their own gardens by planting bee-friendly wildflowers, avoiding astroturf, or agreeing with your neighbour to build 'hedgehog fence holes'.
- 3.9 Two Hitchin streets given clean air clearance**
- 3.10 Stevenage Road and Payne's Park in Hitchin are no longer Air Quality Management Areas, after more than five years of air-quality levels remaining well below national limits. Local improvements and sustainability trends, including cleaner vehicle technology and the gradual shift towards low- and zero-emission transport have made this possible. The council will continue monitoring air quality with its 42 nitrogen-dioxide sampling points and particulate-matter stations in Hitchin.
- 3.11 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)**
- 3.12 The project to decarbonise our leisure facilities is progressing well with Royston scheduled to be finished by April and North Herts and Royston estimated to be finished by the summer. Design work for decarbonisation of Hitchin Town Hall and North Herts Museum, and the learner pool at North Herts Leisure Centre is progressing as part of the council's decarbonisation phase 2 project, with the aim to submit a planning application in the early part of the 26/27 financial year.

3.13 Council Emissions

3.14 A report on North Herts Councils' greenhouse gas emissions has now been published on our website which covers progress in reducing the council's own emissions and summarises progress on district wide emissions. The report uses 2021-22 as the baseline year for the council's operational emissions and reports progress annually to 2024-25. Available at: [Reducing emissions | North Herts Council](#)

3.15 Climate Engagement

3.16 The North Herts engagement hub for climate change and sustainability, the Climate Hive, now has 1080 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 council activity.

3.17 Bee Part of it Event

3.18 As part of the Bee Part of it project, our greenspace contractors, John O'Conner are holding a community bee event in Baldock on the 4th April 2026 to expand the Bee Corridor in North Herts. The event will take place at Avenue Park in Baldock between 10am and 2pm. There will be a range of activities for those of all ages including a community seed bomb colour throw at 1pm to help create a wildflower haven for pollinators. More information on the Bee Corridor at: [Bee corridors | North Herts Council](#).

3.19 Community Energy Event – Film Screening

3.20 The Council are partnering with the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to host a community energy event at the Broadway Cinema in Letchworth. The event will include a showing of the film 'Power Station' followed by a Q&A session with the Co-Director of the film, on the 10th June. Tickets available: [Power Station: Q&A Co-Director Dan Edelstyn - Broadway Cinema & Theatre, Letchworth](#).

3.21 Sustainability Briefings

3.22 The latest Sustainability briefings are available to view on the website at: [Latest updates on Sustainability | North Herts Council](#). They include information on available funding, upcoming events, and council activity.

4 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2025-2030 UPDATES

4.1 The Sustainability Strategy 2025-2030 is available here: [Sustainability strategy | North Herts Council](#). Actions are being monitored by our Climate and Sustainability Officer Group and Political Liaison Board which is comprised of Cabinet Members and our Leadership Team. Key progress made so far includes:

- Ongoing progress on-site at our leisure centres as part of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Project. Royston Leisure Centre is due to be completed in April, Letchworth in June and Hitchin in July.
- Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) use in refuse vehicles has saved 368 tonnes of carbon (CO₂e) between May and November 2025. Electric Vehicles are now in operation for the waste collection service for further reductions in carbon emissions.
- Our aim to train staff on climate change issues has progressed, with 81% of staff having completed the tailored Sustainability eLearning module. 11 officers became certified as [Carbon Literate](#) by attending 2-day training sessions facilitated by Hertfordshire County Council.

- We continue to deliver the government funded Warm Homes Local Grant scheme aimed at supporting homes in fuel poverty in North Herts with insulation, solar panels and clean heating. For year 1, we will deliver installations at 12 homes, with a further 10 surveyed for delivery in year 2.
- The North Herts Council app has gone live, with additional guidance on recycling which is part of the effort to improve recycling rates. The app currently has over 17,000 downloads.
- Process now in place to record and monitor the impacts of extreme weather events on our services.
- Wild areas including a wild meadow are now in place at Wilbury Hills Cemetery.
- The action on publishing the annual report of progress towards the council's emissions targets has been completed with the upload of the report to the website as stated above.
- An EV salary sacrifice scheme has been launched for staff at the council to help them invest in lower emission vehicles, supporting a reduction in staff commuting emissions.

5 INFORMATION TO NOTE

- 5.1 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
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 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 5.2 will only be placed on the work programme if agreed by the Chair or at a meeting of the Panel.
- 5.4 Attendance from external bodies and members of the public is actively encouraged.
- 5.5 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.

6 NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 Other topics for consideration and inclusion in the Panel's work programme can be suggested at each meeting, and also by emailing EnvironmentPanel@north-herts.gov.uk

7 APPENDICES

- 7.1 Appendix A – Work Programme and Action Tracker 2025/26

8 CONTACT OFFICERS

- 8.1 Georgina Chapman, Policy & Strategy Team Leader, 01462 474121
Georgina.Chapman@north-herts.gov.uk
- 8.2 Reuben Ayavoo, Policy & Community Manager, 01462 474212
Reuben.Ayavoo@north-herts.gov.uk
- 8.3 Ellie Hollingsworth, Policy & Strategy Officer, 01462 474220
Ellie.Hollingsworth@north-herts.gov.uk
- 8.4 Daisy Harris, Policy & Strategy Apprentice
Daisy.Harris@north-herts.gov.uk
- 8.5 Amber Smith-Howell, Policy & Strategy Graduate
Amber.Smith-Howell@north-herts.gov.uk