

CABINET PANEL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

16th September 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 2026/27

- 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: 16th September 2026

- 1.3 This Panel meeting will include presentations on the People's Emergency Briefing & Take The Jump, North & East Herts Community Resilience Group and Food Security and Local Preparedness. Presented by Gilly Chegwyn, Sue Lines and Vicky Wyr.

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 Officers have been attending and supporting conversations with the Hertfordshire Sustainability Officers Group (HSOG) on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). Most recently, 24 proformas have been produced by sustainability officers across the Hertfordshire councils. These documents lay out the challenges, ambitions and priorities of 24 different areas of sustainability, in order to shape best practice in the new unitary authorities from 2028.

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

3.3 Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS)

- 3.4 Decarbonisation of Royston Leisure Centre was completed on 23 March 2026. The estimated completion date for the decarbonisation projects at Hitchin Swimming and Fitness Centre and North Herts Leisure Centre (Letchworth) has been delayed to April 2027 due to ongoing delays in securing the necessary legal agreements with third-party landowners and UK Power Networks for new electricity supplies, substations, and connections to the UKPN High Voltage network.

3.5 One year since the new Waste service

- 3.6 We are now one year on from the waste service change, and the figures show the impressive difference that moving to three-weekly collections and providing additional recycling capacity have made for East and North Herts!
- 36% reduction in non-recyclable waste over the first year across both districts
 - 325 tonnes of plastic bags and wrapping collected over both districts in the first year.
 - 19% increase in cardboard and paper recycling.

3.7 People's Emergency Briefing

- 3.8 There have been screenings of the People's Emergency Briefing all over the district over the summer. The council has plans to put on a showing of the film to staff and councillors to improve understanding of the impacts and risks of the climate crisis. For residents looking to attend a screening of the briefing, go to the interactive screening map at: [National Emergency Briefing](#).

3.9 Climate Engagement

- 3.10 The North Herts engagement hub for climate change and sustainability, the Climate Hive, now has over 1300 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. Since the last panel, we have shared posts specifically surrounding the recent heatwaves. Among them have been information on staying safe and cool, reducing wildfire risk, sustainable cooling, and community cool spaces.

3.11 Local Plan consultation

- 3.12 The Local Plan team will be consulting on its Content and Evidence Base between 13 October and 24 November 2026. Its purpose is to present the Council's emerging policy approach across a range of thematic areas and set out what evidence has been or will be collected to support the [New Local Plan | North Herts Council](#). Included in the consultation will be a map of the sites that have been submitted for consideration for site allocations for the new draft Local Plan.

3.13 Green Space consultation

- 3.14 The Greenspace team want to hear from residents about our parks and green spaces. They are consulting on which green spaces are used, and what's important to users in order to preserve and improve facilities. Feedback will inform the next Greenspace Management Strategy and future service design ([previous strategy here](#)). The survey will close on the 28th September – [participate digitally in the consultation here](#). Find out

more information and how you can have your say in person at Baldock, Royston or Letchworth Community Forums [in this article](#).

3.15 Water Preservation in our Allotments

- 3.16 The council's Greenspace team are exploring a project to reduce the use of water at allotments through water harvesting and recycling. This would allow allotments to adapt better to the changing climate and save water!

3.17 Community Energy

- 3.18 Following the success of the [Power Station Community Energy Event in June](#), NHC have launched a new [Community Energy webpage](#) encouraging our residents to get involved. The page gives information and contact details about local community energy groups and shows those interested how they can get involved.

3.19 Sustainability Briefings

- 3.20 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:

- An EV salary sacrifice scheme is now in place to help staff invest in lower emission vehicles and reduce staff commuting emissions. This has generated quite a lot of interest with a high number of registrations. A staff commuting survey was launched in July to understand staff commuting behaviours and identify possible actions that can be taken.
- A mandatory green procurement checklist is in place, and we have been working through multiple procurements to use the checklist to identify proportional ways to embed sustainability into NHC projects. Further work ongoing to identify other ways to implement sustainability further into the procurement process.
- 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 delivered installations at 12 homes. In year 2, we are targeting installations in up to 30 homes.
- The [North Herts Design Code SPD](#) has been launched on the NHC website and incorporates biodiversity, climate adaptation and low emissions travel.
- Internal communications around sustainability continue to be promoted, to help inform NHC staff about climate change and their role within it, as a Council officer and in their personal lives. We continue to promote carbon literacy training and the internal sustainability module, which sits at 93% completion as of June 2026.

- The new waste service has now been in place for one year, and the waste team continue to engage with residents and implement new waste campaigns to increase resident participation and increase recycling rates.

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 2026/27

8 CONTACT OFFICERS

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