

Part I

Item No.

Main author: Kelly Murphy

Executive Member: Cllr Max Holloway

All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CLIMATE BIODIVERSITY CABINET PANEL – 10 JULY 2024
REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESIDENT SERVICES AND CLIMATE
CHANGE)

**WEWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – MEMBERSHIP TO HERTFORDSHIRE
CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY PARTNERSHIP**

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report outlines the request for the Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel to approve the draw down of funds from the climate reserves to pay for Welwyn Hatfield Council's membership of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP).

1.2 An overview of the benefits and importance of HCCSP is provided below.

2 Recommendations

2.1 That the Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel approve the request to use money from the climate change earmarked reserve to pay for Welwyn Hatfield Council's membership of the HCCSP over the next three years.

3.0 Explanation

3.1 As part of the climate emergency which WHBC declared in 2019, and in support of our pledge to be net zero as an organisation by 2030 and a borough by 2050, WHBC signed up to become members of the HCCSP.

3.2 HCCSP was established in 2020 as a partnership between the 10 districts and boroughs, County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

3.3 The main remit is for partners to collaborate and identify joint work programmes on environmental, climate change and wider sustainability issues.

3.4 HCCSP has member representation which meet every 6 weeks to discuss and approve initiatives.

3.5 A subsidiary group of HCCSP is the Hertfordshire Sustainability Officers Group (HSOG) that meet every 6 weeks in between HCCSP meetings. During these meetings officers share and explore ideas of collaborative work programmes and initiatives.

- 3.6 There are 6 sub-groups of HCCSP, namely, Adaptation, behavioural change, biodiversity, carbon, transport and water. They each have individual strategic action plans.
- 3.7 The membership fee has historically come from the climate reserves, however we wanted to formalise this moving forward.
- 3.8 The subscription fee for the next three years (2024/25, 2025/26 and 2027/28) each year is £9,735.
- 3.9 Benefits to be members of HCCSP include;
- Saving of officer time to implement projects; sharing comms, templates, guidance etc.
 - Financial savings as a result of the collaborative approach and sharing of costs.
 - Sharing of ideas and opportunities.
 - Broader impact, as projects span the whole county not just districts and boroughs.
 - Collaborative approach means we do not miss out on opportunities that we could not take advantage of on our own.
 - Aligned goals across the county ensures we are all working collectively.
- 3.10 Recent projects delivered;
- Solar together (2nd cohort)
 - Adaptation training workshop facilitated by WSP
 - HCC biodiversity net gain matching service
 - HEAT app
 - New webpage
 - In person event (focus on water, biodiversity, carbon and transport)
 - Hertfordshire tree giveaway
 - 'Let's clear the air day'
 - HS2 site visit
 - TCPA training session 'Planning for Climate Change'
 - LEVI funding and support (on street charge points)
 - LCWIP funding for bike maintenance stands and DR Bike sessions
 - Creation of the sustainability guide for residents
 - University of Hertfordshire Insetting research paper
 - Communication Strategy
 - Discounted training - Estu and Sustainability Management Training (HSOG)
 - Retrofit workshop (HSOG) and development of guidance document for residents
 - Coordinating LNRS
 - Collaborative procurement of Hertfordshire-wide Biodiversity Baseline; coordinated communications and officer support on Biodiversity Net Gain

Implications

4. Legal Implications

4.1 There will be no legal implications associated the membership of HCCSP.

5. Financial Implication(s)

5.1 The total cost of the three-year subscription will be £29,205, to be funded from the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve.

5.2 An additional top up of £50k was made to the climate change earmarked reserve as part of the 2023/24 out-turn, which exceeds the cost of membership for three years and the balance will be able to be utilised for wider activities and projects to support the climate change priority.

5.3 As set out in the council's medium term financial strategy, the Climate Change Panel has delegated authority to approve the use of this earmarked reserve in consultation with the Council's S151 Officer. The S151 Officer has been consulted and input into this report.

6. Risk Management Implications

6.1 There would be a risk if the climate reserves could not fund the membership of HCCSP and provide future budget for future years. WHBC would miss opportunities of joint work programmes, which often save officer time and cost.

7. Communication

7.1 There would be no communication implications associated with maintaining membership of HCCSP.

8. Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

8.1 There are likely to be no security and terrorism implications associated with the membership fee of HCCSP.

9. Procurement Implication(s)

9.1 There are likely to be no procurement implications associated with the membership fee of HCCSP.

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

10.1 As per above in section 3.

11. Human Resources Implication(s)

11.1 There are likely to be no implications to HR associated with the membership fee of HCCSP.

12. Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

12.1 There are likely to be no implications to health and wellbeing with the membership fee of HCCSP.

13. Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 Membership of HCCSP links to the corporate priorities in the following ways;

- Action on climate change
 - Renew our commitments to be a net zero Council by 2030 (and as a borough by 2050)
 - Step up climate change adaptation and mitigation measures
 - Lead by Example and encourage others to make positive change
 - Increase and promote biodiversity

The membership to HCCSP supports all these things.

14. **Equalities and Diversity**

14.1 There are likely to be no implications to equalities and diversity associated with maintaining membership of HCCSP.

Name of author: Kelly Murphy
Title: Climate Change Officer

Date: 11.6.24