

Appendix A - Climate Change Update Report

6.11.24



Photo credit – James Wilding “*Spring Sun in Hatfield Town Centre Park*”

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Introduction

In line with our Transition to Net Zero Strategy, it is important to monitor progress being within the specific impact areas.

The Climate Action Plan has approximately 100 actions designed to help deliver the aims of the TTNZS.

Key updates are provided for a number of actions within the CAP.

Progress

Action 37 – Relating to the Local Plan and sustainable policies

- Sustainability SPD has been written by the planning team, which was approved at CPPP on 17th October. It will go onto Cabinet on 5th November, and then out for public consultation for six weeks.
- The Sustainability SPD has been prepared to provide additional information on sustainability expectations for development proposals within the borough and encourage higher standards for planning applications.
- The SPD sets out, in a number of thematic areas such as design, water management and active and sustainable travel, three levels of measures those applying for permission might pursue:
 - What proposals **MUST** do, as a minimum requirement stated in policy or legislation;
 - What proposals **SHOULD** do, as something which is widely accepted as best practice; and
 - What proposals **COULD** do, as something which is more aspirational and can be seen as an exemplary example of sustainability
- Efforts to go beyond policy, such as meeting the **SHOULD** and **COULD**, will be given a positive consideration during the planning application process. It is important to note however that this will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the decision maker.
- Following the consultation and consideration of responses, it is intended to bring the SPD back to CPPP and Cabinet in the new year for adoption.

Action 97 – Relating to the Transition to Net Zero Strategy

- After being approved at the last Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel in September, we launched the public consultation, which closed on 11th October. A separate report has been provided outlining key findings and relevant feedback.
- We will be incorporating any pertinent comments into the report, but it has not changed drastically so will be publishing the strategy in the coming days.

Action 100 - Relating to air quality

- As part of the mandatory reporting process to DEFRA, the annual air quality status report, which outlines our yearly monitoring results, has been sent and is awaiting approval. (This is different to the Air Quality Strategy that the Environmental Protection Officer presented at the cabinet meeting in July).
- High level overview is that we have 51 diffusion tubes and 2 automatic air quality analysers across the borough.
- The air quality levels generally reduce year on year due to people being more aware of pollution issues and the increasing development of greener transport and cleaner fuels.
- This year's annual report demonstrates a further improvement in air quality across the borough and more importantly, levels have not returned to the levels measured prior to the pandemic.

Actions 95 and 96 – regarding carbon literacy training

- A separate report has been provided in another item on the agenda to outline our recommended approach to delivering this training for members, staff and residents.
- If the draw down of funds is approved, we will work with Meritec to develop our bespoke training course and hope to roll it out in the New Year.

Action 5 – Relating to funding

- Three new central government schemes were recently launched;
 - Warmer Home: Social Housing Fund – this replaces the social housing decarbonisation fund. Colleagues are working with Morgan Sindall, who we partnered with to deliver previous schemes, to put in an application. The team

commented “We are in a great position to put forward an ambitious bid proposal”.

- Warmer Homes: Local Grant – this replaces other iterations funding schemes to target privately owned or rented properties. There are a number of approaches to applying for and delivering this programme, and we are working with districts and boroughs within Hertfordshire to decide the most efficient route given most local authorities will struggle for capacity to deliver this on their own. Greater South East Net Zero Hub are being included in conversations as they may assist in any consortium agreed (as they have done for other schemes such as HUG 2)
- Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund – which targets the decarbonisation of commercial properties. Meetings were held internally and due to the short deadline we have decided not to submit an application in this round but will reconsider in next rounds of funding.

Action 15 - regarding engagement and involving residents in our climate action

- We had a stall in the Howard Centre on Tuesday 15th October, to celebrate National Recycling week.
- The aim was to engage, educate and support residents around the theme of recycling, particularly focusing on what can and can't be recycled in the borough.
- We gave away some recycling themed freebies alongside educational flyers.
- We had a small interactive game to test residents' knowledge on some of the more trickier items that we are often unsure if they can and can't be recycled.
- We had some colouring materials available for small children out shopping with their adult mid-week, to ensure they were entertained.
- We also offered Wall-e in the films for a fiver deal at Campus West on 19th and 20th October. Before the movie started, we streamed Cllr Holloway's short clip highlighting some projects around the borough to demonstrate climate action.

Action 64 in relation to the stock condition surveys of our domestic portfolio

- Since early spring 2024 Savills surveyors have been undertaking Stock Condition Surveys of the WelHat residential portfolio as part of a project to enable the authority to plan future property expenditure and maintenance programmes in consideration of net zero targets and wider climate agenda.

- Majority of the surveys have been completed and the results will be used to inform the council's Social Housing Fund bid.

General info

Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership annual in person event

Save the date. 19th November 9-4.30 – at Hertfordshire Development Centre, Stevenage.