

Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership

Terms of Reference

1. Overall Mission of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership and its Relationship with the Hertfordshire Leaders Group

The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) shall have a strategic remit. Its overarching mission is to be the lead partnership organisation through which Hertfordshire's local authorities and the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) can work collaboratively on environmental, climate change and wider sustainability issues.

In order to maximise its strategic influence:

- the HCCSP will work to support outcomes identified by the Hertfordshire Leaders Group (HLG). The HLG may, therefore, issue requests and instructions to the HCCSP including commissioning work directly that requires HCCSP input or requesting the HCCSP commissions work on the HLG's behalf and
- the HCCSP can promote its aims by escalating issues to the HLG which need to be addressed and resolved at the highest level within the local authority family across Hertfordshire. When doing so, the HCCSP can propose work and actions to the HLG to progress through its other various constituent groups.

2. Objectives and Way of Working

The HCCSP provides a means to discuss and develop a shared view between authorities and the Hertfordshire LEP and identify joint work programmes on environmental, climate change and wider sustainability issues of common concern across Hertfordshire and, where appropriate and desirable, across county borders.

More specifically, the HCCSP will:

- enable local authorities across the county and the Hertfordshire LEP to work together effectively to promote and maximise sustainable development in Hertfordshire, where sustainable development is defined as development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- work with a wider body of organisations to identify, share and publicise good and leading edge practice and in doing so identify opportunities to encourage and maximise such practice in Hertfordshire through, though not limited to, at least twice yearly Hertfordshire Sustainability Forum consultative conferences
- promote sustainability, provide advice and expertise and raise awareness and understanding of the potential impacts of climate change in Hertfordshire
- identify and encourage measures to retain and increase biodiversity across Hertfordshire by through providing advice, sharing expertise and raising awareness

and understanding

- promote reference to, and guidance concerning, climate change, sustainability and biodiversity in existing and emerging local plans including, though not limited to, taking action to promote consistently high aspirations and clarity of guidance across Hertfordshire
- encourage, provide expertise, guidance and strategies/delivery plans or programmes to mitigate and adapt to climate change, all the while seeking buy-in from HLG at the earliest opportunity
- champion a better and more resilient natural environment for the people of Hertfordshire.

The HCCSP will work with appropriate cross-boundary, multi-agencies groups and partnerships to further its aims, including though not limited to working with the Hertfordshire Sustainability Forum (see below for more details), district-based environmental sustainability forums, Hertfordshire Forward, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Local Transport Body for Hertfordshire, the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership, the Local Nature Partnership and other appropriate organisations with areas of shared interest.

The HCCSP will work to highlight the potential for climate change, environmental and wider sustainability issues to be promoted through greater coordination between emerging and established joint strategic plans in the county. The HCCSP commits to undertake actions, in accordance with the decisions of the HLG and through its constituent members, to support this emerging work.

The HCCSP will not be a formal decision making-body and will not fetter the decision making processes of individual authorities, the LEP or the HLG. It is recognised that different HCCSP members will, from time-to-time, have different emphases regarding the climate change, biodiversity, environmental and wider sustainability agendas and may wish to establish sub-countywide initiatives. This is not counter to the aims of the HCCSP so long as the overall direction is the betterment of climate change, biodiversity, environmental and wider sustainability outcomes across the whole county. If individual HCCSP members come to a different view from any collective Hertfordshire position they will always ensure that all the other members are duly notified.

The HCCSP may from time-to-time form time-limited working groups consisting of representatives from some or all of the HCCSP members.

Appendix 1 provides a governance diagram.

Hertfordshire Sustainability Forum

The Hertfordshire Sustainability Forum (HSF) is an existing grouping of local authorities, other statutory bodies, third sector bodies and community groups. It provides a valuable way of ensuring different partners can share ideas and experience.

The HSF will help ensure that the HCCSP engages with a wider group of interested bodies and so, no less than twice a year, the HCCSP will work with the HSF (recognising that many HCCSP members will also be members of the HSF) to convene a consultative conference. At these consultative conferences, members of the HCCSP and HSF shall

come together with a wider group of invitees to, among other things, review local, regional and national issues related to climate change, biodiversity, environmental and wider sustainability matters, discuss the work of the HCCSP and consider potential new areas of activity for the HCCSP.

Hertfordshire Sustainability Officers Group

The HCCSP shall establish and maintain a Hertfordshire Sustainability Officers Group (HSOG). This shall be composed of at least one officer from each of Hertfordshire's eleven local authorities and the Hertfordshire LEP. The HSOG shall:

- carry out operational work under the direction of the HCCSP
- bring matters and proposals to the attention of HCCSP
- endeavour to keep an up-to-date view on local, regional, national and international key issues concerning the remit of the HCCSP
- provide representatives to participate in the HCCSP's work and/or meetings as required by the HCCSP.

The HCCSP may from time-to-time form time-limited working groups consisting of representatives from some or all of the authorities and the LEP.

3. Membership

The core membership of the HCCSP shall be:

- one elected member (and named substitute) of each of Hertfordshire's eleven local authorities; preferably a member with executive responsibility for climate change, environmental and wider sustainability matters although it shall be the decision of each authority which member to nominate to the HCCSP
- a Hertfordshire LEP Board Member (and named substitute) who shall not be an elected member of a Hertfordshire local authority already nominated to the HCCSP by their authority
- a senior officer with decision-making authority regarding the remit of the HCCSP from each of Hertfordshire's eleven local authorities and the Hertfordshire LEP.

Local authorities and the LEP may choose to send more than one elected member / board member and/or officer to any particular meeting, although the LEP and each local authority shall only have one vote when present at the meeting.

4. Chairing Arrangements

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the HCCSP will be local authority elected members and/or LEP board members, nominated by the Partnership. The Chair and Vice Chair will be subject to selection on an annual basis.

The Chair, or their deputy, will represent the HCCSP as appropriate on external bodies, including the HLG.

5. Funding and Financial Procedures

On an annual basis, the HCCSP shall draw up a costed work programme to deliver the HLG's sustainability priorities that it shall put to the HLG at an appropriate point within the civic year so as to enable partner authorities and the LEP to assign monies within their annual budgets if/as required.

The HCCSP shall not hold a budget other than any monies delegated to it in connection with the annual costed work programme and/or for expenditure on specific projects or activities identified by the HLG in-year outside of the costed work programme. Any monies made available shall be held by one or more of the member local authorities or the LEP as determined by the HCCSP. There is no expectation that a single lead body will hold all monies although the HCCSP may choose to adopt this approach.

6. Meetings and Decision Making

Meetings of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership will be held every six weeks or at any frequency so determined by the Partnership.

Each meeting will be chaired by the elected Chair, or the Vice Chair in their absence. If neither the Chair nor Vice Chair is present a chair for that meeting will be elected by those present. For the remainder of this section, 'Chair' should be taken to mean the person chairing the meeting, whether HCCSP's Chair, Vice Chair or member chairing the meeting in both these post-holders' absences.

For a quorum there must be at least seven elected members / board members (or their substitutes) present representing separate local authorities/the LEP. For avoidance of doubt, any combination of local authorities with or without a LEP representative may constitute a quorum so long as seven different bodies are represented. For purposes of assessing whether a quorum has been achieved, an officer may represent an authority/the LEP in a member's absence, and thus contribute to the quorum, so long as, if so asked, the officer can demonstrate the authority to represent the authority's / LEP's member at the meeting.

The aim shall be to reach decisions through discussion and consensus-building, however, votes may be taken. Any member may ask for a vote to be taken and it shall be for the Chair to decide whether a vote shall be taken. If a vote is agreed by the Chair, a recorded vote shall be held if requested by at least one HCCSP member (or officer representing a member who is not present).

Matters may be discussed, agreed and/or voted on by the local authorities present and:

- each local authority and the LEP only has one vote regardless of the number of representatives present
- votes shall be cast by elected members/board members, not officers, unless only an officer is present and can, if so asked, demonstrate the authority to cast a vote for that HCCSP member
- the Chair and Vice Chair shall cast votes for their authorities/LEP and neither shall have a casting vote.

Any authority that disagrees with the outcome of a vote may present a minority report.

The order of business shall be as indicated on the agenda, or as otherwise prescribed by the Chair.

The Chair will control the conduct of the meeting. There will be no time limit on speeches and the number of times that individuals can speak. The Chair will use discretion to ensure that meetings are conducted in an open, transparent and constructive manner and will act impartially in seeking all views and summarising the views of those present prior to any vote.

The ruling of the Chair on any point of order shall be final.

The meetings will not be open to the public or press.

The HCCSP Co-ordinator shall take minutes or make arrangements for minutes to be taken. The minutes of the previous meeting will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting and will be discussed and agreed at the start of each meeting.

7. Venues

Meetings will be held throughout Hertfordshire at venues determined by the HCCSP members or virtually by Zoom or any other means agreed by Partnership members. The host organisation of an in-person meeting will be responsible for organising the meeting room and refreshments.

8. Officer support

Prior to HCCSP meetings, officers of individual authorities/the LEP will be expected to provide support and briefings for their own elected member/board member representatives.

There is an expectation that officers from all HCCSP members will actively contribute to delivery of the work programme and any other actions of the HCCSP.

9. Agreement of Terms of Reference

The terms of reference will be reviewed and revised by the HCCSP as necessary.

Version: approved by HCCSP on 10 June 2021

Appendix 1: Governance Structure

