Appendix B: Response to comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Comment from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Reasons from the Committee	Comment by the Executive Member for Environmental Sustainability	Recommended Action
Can there be a direct referral to the re-writing/refresh of the District Plan in 2023 and inclusion of the Sustainable Planning SPD into the district plan?	To demonstrate the importance of planning to the sustainability agenda.	This was already included, albeit a little obliquely, in draft strategy.	Replace the action to, by 2026: • *Adopt and implement planning policies in the District Plan that address sustainability and help mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change* with • *Fully update, adopt and implement planning policies forming the District Plan so as to further the sustainability of the district and help mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.* When discussing the role of the council's regulatory planning powers, add the sentence: • *Further strengthening our planning policies within the framework of national guidance is a crucial way in which we can increase district-wide sustainability and so we will use the Sustainability Action Plan to drive forward the climate change and sustainability agenda during revisions to the District Plan.*

Can the sentence which states that we only account for 0.4% of the carbon emissions across the district be removed?	This could be read as defeatist and a way of downplaying the council's role.	This figure has been included to make the point that tackling climate change goes far beyond what the council does about its own services.	Replace the text reading: • *The council's own emissions only account for around 0.4% of emissions across the whole district. Thus, everyone living in, working in or visiting East Herts has an important role to play in helping as part of a collective effort to achieve carbon neutrality across the district as a whole* with • *The council's emissions form an integral part of the total emissions across the district. The fact that the council's own emissions only account for around 0.4% of all emissions underlines that the council must do more than just managing its own behaviour. The council must support everyone living in, working in or visiting East Herts to play their role in the collective effort to achieve carbon neutrality across the whole.*
Why do we need boxes stating what we have achieved?	This has no bearing on what we plan to do in the future.	We have included the 'We have a track record of success!' boxes in an attempt to demonstrate that when we set ourselves goals, we achieve them. We have seen that other authorities' strategies are very aspirational without indicating that the council has any history of achievement.	It would be helpful to make the reason for including the boxes clearer and so the following sentence has been added at the beginning of section 3: • *We have included details of successes to date throughout this section of the strategy so as to emphasise that we mean business and demonstrate that we can achieve our goals if we make sufficient plans.*

Have we looked at other similar district councils' climate strategies when developing ours and if so how does our strategy compare to theirs?	To ensure we are following best practice.	Officers reviewed other Hertfordshire districts' strategies, notably North Herts' and Broxbourne's and looked further afield, including accessing the strategies of districts which were rated highly in the Climate Coalition's recent review, such as East Devon's strategy. Unlike other strategies, East Herts' strategy: • sets out a route map for the actions the council will need to consider year-by-year to become carbon neutral by 2030 • is explicit about the co-benefits for residents' health of tackling climate change • makes clear how residents and partners can feed into the governance of the sustainability agenda.	No amendments to the strategy proposed
Can we incorporate advice and schemes for councillors into the strategy, to help reduce our contributions to emissions?	To maximise impact of the strategy.	Providing training to members is already included in our Sustainability Action Plan. We can add the timescale for this, and the key points for the training to cover, to the Action Plan.	Sustainability Action Plan to be amended

The responses to the consultation suggest that the strategy is perceived as a mere PR exercise. What is underpinning this?	To maximise impact of the strategy.	Only one of the 35 respondents made a specific comment that the Climate Change Strategy appeared to be a PR exercise, this being, in their opinion, an attempt to mask inaction on protecting trees and wildlife in the Lee Valley Authority area. In addition, two respondents mentioned the term 'green washing', with both particularly keen to see action to take cars off the road.	No amendments to the strategy proposed
Is there any plan to replace the EV Car Club and if so, can this be written into the strategy?	To maximise impact of the strategy.	The council is in the process of replacing its diesel vans with e-vehicles. These will operate as a e-car pool within the council. The opportunity to open up use of the vehicles as a public e-car club will be considered as part of the Sustainability Action Plan.	Sustainability Action Plan to be amended
Should emphasise what others, rather than just the council, can do.	To demonstrate the importance of joined up action to the sustainability agenda.	The strategy already includes a considerable level of detail about how the council can influence others. The strategy also includes a governance diagram showing how residents and community groups can input.	No amendments to the strategy proposed