

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 21 MAY 2024

Present:

Councillor Caroline Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)
Councillor Frank Adlington-Stringer (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Lilian Deighton
Councillor Fran Petersen

Councillor Tony Lacey

Also Present:

A Bashir	Improvement Officer
G Halliwell	Service Manager - Commercial & Environment
P Denton	Team Manager - Environmental Protection
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer

ESC/ Apologies for Absence

1/24-

25 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Baxter MBE, R Beech and A Dale.

ESC/ Declarations of Interest

2/24-

25 There were no Declarations of Interest.

ESC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

3/24-

25 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 19 February 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair.

ESC/ Air Quality Monitoring

4/24-

25 The Service Manager (Commercial & Environment) and the Team Manager (Environmental Protection) informed Members of the Council's current position on air quality, and what the Council would be doing to monitor air quality in the District in the future. This information was delivered via a presentation and the 2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report, which was circulated to the Committee before the meeting.

The presentation informed the Committee on types/sources of air pollution, Environmental legislation and the work already taking place to monitor Nitrogen Dioxide levels.

Members referred to the roads set out in the Air Quality Annual Status report, and enquired why the roads with air quality receptors were all A roads. Members were informed that if you place receptors on busier roads the figures would be skewed

due to fumes from HGV's and standing traffic, also Government have set guidance and that includes having one receptor on every A road, as A roads had more pollution to measure due to increased vehicles.

Members suggested putting receptors near schools, since these areas would see increased pollution. The Team Manager (Environmental Protection) explained that this would not be necessary because the Government were observing the air quality around schools.

Members enquired if the two officers felt as if use of polluting vehicles was decreasing. The Team Manager (Environmental Protection) stated that the general trend for usage was decreasing, because of the increase in electronic vehicles.

Members asked when the 2024 Air Quality Annual Status Report would be available. The Team Manager (Environmental Protection) explained that the 2024 report would have to be submitted to the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs by 29 June 2024, with a view to being published around November 2024. The Chair requested that the 2024 data is reported back to the Committee once it is available.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

ESC/ **Performance Management**

**5/24-
25**

The Improvement Officer presented a report which gave progress on the strategies underpinning the Council Plan objective 'A great place that cares for the environment' for the period ending 31 March 2024.

The Improvement Officer explained some of the progress areas in Appendix 1 relating to the sub-categories of 'Increase biodiversity across the District' and 'Reduce carbon emissions and pollution across the District'.

RESOLVED – That progress against the Council Plan "A great place that cares for the environment" objective be noted.

ESC/ **Cabinet Business**

**6/24-
25**

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since 29 February 2024. The digest set out key information for each decision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that the digest was now presented in a new format, so that Members are now only seeing decisions made since the last round of Scrutiny meetings.

ESC/ **Policy Development**

**7/24-
25**

The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that at present, there were no developing policies to make Members aware of, but Directors would continue to be regularly asked about policies that would require the input of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

ESC/ Work Programme

**8/24-
25**

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2023/24 for the Committee to consider. The Work Programme had now come to the end of the municipal year, and the Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that the Committee must confirm the Programme has been completed.

Members were informed that at the end of the Work Programme document, there were a list of suggested topics for the Committee to include in its new Work Programme, which will be discussed further with the Chair and Vice Chair, and then presented to the Committee for approval.

RESOLVED – That the 2023/24 Environment Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be signed off as complete.

ESC/ Briefing Paper - 100% Plant Based Council Review

**9/24-
25**

Following a spotlight review on “Becoming a 100% Plant-Based Council” that had been undertaken at the previous meeting, the Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a briefing paper to the Committee outlining the findings and proposing three recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet. The three recommendations read as follows:

1. That as part of the annual Leisure survey, measure the demand for specific foodstuffs, and in particular for plant-based vegan food.
2. That the findings of the surveys be assessed and responded to by the leisure team in consultation with the Portfolio Holder i.e. Do we need a new approach as a consequence of growing public demand for vegan food, and if so, what should it be?
3. That the outcome of this survey work be shared with the Environment Scrutiny Committee as appropriate, and that the Committee be informed of and consulted on any proposed changes.

The Committee felt that the recommendations accurately captured the spotlight review and agreed to submit them to Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That the three recommendations in the 100% Plant-Based Council Review briefing paper be submitted to Cabinet.

ESC/ Additional Urgent Items

**10/2
4-25**

None.

ESC/ Date of Next Meeting

**11/2
4-25**

The next meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place in the new Municipal Year.