

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2025

Present:

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

Councillor Graham Baxter MBE
Councillor Alex Dale
Councillor Fran Petersen

Councillor Richard Beech
Councillor Tony Lacey

Also Present:

J Redfern	Assistant Director of Streetscene
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
C Harris	Streetscene Coordinator
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Fuller	Governance Officer

ESC/ Apologies for Absence

38/2

4-25 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Renwick and L Deighton.

ESC/ Declarations of Interest

39/2

4-25 None.

ESC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

40/2

4-25 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 11 November 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.

ESC/ Performance Management

41/2

4-25 The Improvement Officer presented a report to the Committee summarising progress on the strategies underpinning the Council Plan objective 'A great place that cares for the environment' for the period ending 31 December 2024.

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

ESC/ Re-Wilding and Wildlife Corridors/Verges and Planting to improve Biodiversity

42/2

4-25 Committee received a report that provided an overview of the work the Streetscene team were doing to improve biodiversity across the district. The report included an explanation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, as well as a summary of current actions and plans in sustainability strategy.

Committee considered the report. Some Members had questions around the benefits of the No Mow May initiative and how sites had been chosen. The benefits of the initiative were shared, and Members heard that the focus was on sites with low footfall. It was revealed that the approach taken by the Council was reflective of the national approach, which explained why expansion of the scheme was relatively slow. Some Members requested that a figure for the No Mow May sites as a percentage of the total available sites was shared. The difficulties in obtaining this figure were discussed, but it was agreed that officers would look into it.

Some Members had questions over Wingerworth Lido being taken over as a bio-diversity site. It was clarified that this was not a decision against angling but around environmental issues and a number of breaches that had taken place, however it was suggested that the Assistant Director of Property, Estates and Assets was contacted about this issue should further information be required. Further questions were raised over the extent of the Councils involvement in Parish owned flower beds and the width of verges in the district.

Committee discussed the benefits of prioritising perennial plants over seasonal flowers. Members agreed that investing in perennial plants represented a benefit to the environment and saved money over time. Members heard that expansion into perennials was limited by high initial costs and the necessity for certain areas to have seasonal plants. In this context, some Members suggested that the Council looks into developing its own plant nursery. The benefits and constraints of this idea were discussed, it was felt that it was something worth considering but mass-produced plants would be likely to remain the cheaper option. It was agreed that the Council should continue to invest in perennials, so long as it is affordable and feasible.

RESOLVED – That the report was noted.

ESC/ New Legislation for Waste Management and Disposal

43/2

4-25

Committee received a presentation which provided an overview of the new legislation for waste management and disposal. The presentation detailed the new national strategy, including the legislative reforms, and the projected benefits of the new legislation. The presentation also included potential waste management options to consider, the rough estimates of the costs associated with those options, and a breakdown of issues to consider. Members were updated on the amount of money set to be received as a result of the Enhanced Producer Responsibility (EPR) legislation and the funding that had been mistakenly sent to Derbyshire County Council instead NEDDC.

Committee considered the presentation. Members welcomed the reforms as a positive change but agreed that there needs to be consideration given to their implementation. Members raised questions relating to the recycling of glass, the size of new food waste caddies, and the likelihood of standardised bin colours being introduced.

Members were informed that given the changes to legislation this would require new vehicles, mainly to deal with the food waste, and additional staffing is needed

to undertake the extra work required.

Committee discussed the potential options laid out in the presentation. It was clarified that the costs associated with the options did not take into account EPR funding as the amount that would be received was not known long term. Some Members had questions around how EPR funding was calculated. It was revealed that it was calculated using a model that officers did not have access to, but a Freedom of Information request had been submitted in this regard. The limited understanding of how funding was calculated was shared and discussed.

Some Members queried whether it would be beneficial to collect garden waste in the same weekly collection as food waste. It was shared that this was not seen as efficient and the reasons behind this were highlighted. The process for composting food waste was explained, Members heard that all food waste was compostable, and the new process would allow for it to be used as compost. In this context, Members discussed the benefits of home composting.

Committee were reminded that a motion to improve bin collection services had been submitted at the Council meeting on 27 January 2025 and had been referred to scrutiny for consideration. It was agreed that, as a result of the waste management reforms there was no need to progress the motion at this moment in time as it was likely that the Reforms and changes in the processes going forward would cover the elements raised within the motion. Some Members queried the progress on providing real time updates on bin collections. Members heard Streetscene were working with ICT to develop a new system that provides a solution in this regard. The way the new system collects data on missed bins was clarified, Members welcomed the solution and discussed the benefits of the new system.

RESOLVED – That the presentation was noted.

ESC/ Cabinet Business

44/2

4-25 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since the last Committee meeting in November 2024. The digest set out key information for each decision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer also presented Members with the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions for the period up to 15 February 2025.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

ESC/ Policy Development

45/2

4-25 The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that there were no major policies for Members to consider.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

ESC/ 'Horizon Scanning'

46/2

4-25 The Senior Scrutiny Officer updated Members on potential significant changes in

the Council's operating environment, including changes to national legislation and regulation.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that there was nothing to bring to the attention of Members.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

**ESC/
47/2** **Work Programme**

4-25 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2024/25 for the Committee to consider.

Committee considered the survey that had taken place at leisure centres across the district to assess the demand for plant-based food, as a result of the plant-based food review that had been conducted by Environment Scrutiny Committee. It was shared that there was dissatisfaction with the contents of the survey as it led to inconclusive results. As a result, Members felt that it would be beneficial if the Senior Scrutiny Office can speak to the Assistant Director for Leisure about expanding the questions in future and having a questionnaire more specific on plant-based food.

Committee noted that there was a need to start getting the work programme together for the 2025/26 municipal year. Submissions were welcomed in this regard.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Work Programme 2024/25 be approved.

**ESC/
48/2** **Additional Urgent Items**

4-25 None.

**ESC/
49/2** **Date of Next Meeting**

4-25 The next meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 12 May 2025 at 10:00am.