

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present:

Councillor Caroline Smith (Chair) (in the Chair)

Councillor Graham Baxter MBE
Councillor Lilian Deighton
Councillor Fran Petersen

Councillor Richard Beech
Councillor Tony Lacey
Councillor Carolyn Renwick

Also Present:

D Thompson	Assistant Director of Planning
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Fuller	Governance Officer

ESC/ Apologies for Absence

11/2

5-26 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F Adlington-Stringer and A Dale.

ESC/ Declarations of Interest

12/2

5-26 There were no declarations of interest.

ESC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

13/2

5-26 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 21 July 2025 were approved and signed by the Chair.

ESC/ Performance Management

14/2

5-26 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 30th June 2025.

Some Members requested more information on how the Warm Homes scheme would be advertised and how many homes it would reach. It was agreed that the appropriate team would be invited to a future meeting to share information on the Warm Homes Local Grant scheme (private sector).

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

ESC/ Biodiversity Net Gain Update

15/2

5-26

Committee received a presentation that updated them on what the Council are doing to achieve biodiversity net gain (BNG). The presentation highlighted the sites that had been identified for biodiversity offsetting through the call for sites process, as well as the next steps in regard to achieving BNG in the district.

Some Members requested further details on the sites shortlisted for biodiversity offsetting. Committee were informed of how the sites had been through the call for sites process. It was shared that at least 2 of the locations that made the shortlist were Council owned. Some Members requested clarification as to how biodiversity offsetting would scale to the size of development. In this context, Committee heard how biodiversity offsetting is likely to work in practice and Members discussed the benefit to the district of having a bank of available sites.

Members were informed that there was still a lot of work to be undertaken within this area in terms of assessing site suitability, working closely with relevant land owners, S106 Agreements, developing the Local Plan for Nature and forming a Biodiversity Action Plan that aligns with the Derbyshire-wide Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Local Plan, and the Council's Climate Change Strategy/Action.

RESOLVED –

That Committee noted the presentation.

ESC/ Planning Infrastructure Bill/Planning Reform

16/2

5-26

Committee received a presentation on how Planning Reforms will impact the Council. The presentation gave an overview of the aims of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill as well as a detailing of how the Bill will impact the Council in practice. This included in areas such as critical infrastructure, nature recovery, decision making and planning fees, Compulsory Planning Orders and strategic planning.

Some Members had questions around the role of Parish Councils in the planning process going forward. Similar questions were raised the around the role of Planning Committee going forward. Members heard that the current trajectory was for more decisions to be made by officers, where development is within the Local Plan. The need for a Planning Committee was clarified and Members heard that the Reforms were in an effort to streamline the planning process. In this context, the pressure to have an up to date Local Plan was reiterated.

RESOLVED –

That Committee noted the presentation.

ESC/ Local Plan Update

17/2

5-26

Committee received a presentation updating them on the new Local Plan for North East Derbyshire. The presentation gave an overview of the ongoing work around the creation of a new Local Plan. This included the establishment of an

evidence base, the first round of the call for sites process and the consultations that had taken place. The presentation also included the priorities for the next few months and detailed the timeline for further consultation.

Committee also received an overview of the issues pertinent to Environment Scrutiny Committee. These included renewable energy development, biodiversity net gain, public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure, and recreation and green space.

RESOLVED –

That Committee noted the presentation.

**ESC/
18/2** **Cabinet Business**

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented Members with the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions for the period up to 15 September 2025.

RESOLVED –

That the update was noted.

**ESC/
19/2** **Policy Development**

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that there were no major policies for Members to consider.

RESOLVED –

That the update was noted.

**ESC/
20/2** **'Horizon Scanning'**

5-26 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 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) remained on the radar. In this context, Members discussed how different recycling systems would be combined into a single unitary authority under LGR.

RESOLVED –

That the update was noted.

**ESC/
21/2** **Work Programme**

5-26 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2025/26 for the Committee to consider.

RESOLVED –

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

ESC/ Additional Urgent Items

22/2

5-26 None.

ESC/ Date of Next Meeting

23/2

5-26 The next meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 17 November 2025 at 3.30 pm.