

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee

Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee held in the Coltman VC Room, Town Hall on Monday 30th September 2024 at 6.30pm.

Present:

Councillors M. Slater (Chairman), G Allen, L Bullock, A Bailey, Mrs V J Gould and K Smith BEM.

Officers Present:

The Head of Corporate and Environment Services (Mark Rizk), the Environment Manager (Paul Farrer), the Corporate and Commercial Manager (James Abbott). The Enforcement Services Technical Officer (Jonathan Lowe) and the Principal Democratic Services Officer (Andrea Davies).

Also Present:

Councillor D F Fletcher (Cabinet member for Environment and Climate Change).

65/24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

66/24 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business submitted to the meeting pursuant to Rule 12.

67/24 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Several questions from a member of the public had been submitted in advance of the meeting and were read out at the meeting. The questions and responses from the relevant Cabinet Member are appended to these minutes.

68/24 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no questions from members of the Committee submitted in advance of the meeting.

69/24 **PUBLIC MINUTES**

Resolved:

That the Public Minutes of the Meeting held on the 24th June 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows.

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against Councillor	Those abstaining Councillor
M. Slater		Mrs V J Gould
G Allen		
L Bullock		
A. Bailey		
K Smith BEM		

70/24 **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF IMPACT OF GREEN WASTE SUBSCRIPTIONS ON CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Enforcement Services Technical Officer (Jonathan Lowe) gave an update on the scrutiny review and an overview of the proposed scoping paper for this review.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change attended the meeting to answer questions from the Committee on the subject matter of this review. He indicated that he expected the impact of the green waste subscription service to be very positive due to improvements, including a reduction in carbon emissions; increase in biodiversity; tree maintenance. He indicated that the impact on the grey bins had been considered and would be monitored. An option for residents could be to begin composting their green waste. It was noted that with regards to how the subscription service would be communicated, a bin tag would be placed on every residents' bin. The bin tag would contain a link to the Councils website and the page containing frequently asked questions. Concerns were raised that the service may increase fly tipping incidents. It was highlighted fly tipping incidents were monitored and that Councillors received regular updates and that this information would be used and assessed on an ongoing basis. The Council had contacted other Local Authorities operating a subscription service and it had been ascertained that no increase in fly tipping had been experienced. However this would be monitored.

NOTED.

71/24 **HEALTHY HOMES INITIATIVE**

The Environmental Health Manager (Rachel Liddel) had been invited to attend the meeting to give a presentation on the Healthy Homes Initiative.

Councillors noted that the aims of project were as follows:

- To tackle damp and mould hazards in private rented properties in the areas of greatest need.
- To understand impact of enforcement activity and best practice for damp and mould.

- To assess the impact to benefit expenditure
- To evaluate better enforcement on health outcomes.
- To increase awareness with Landlords
- To review the effects that poor quality housing has on labour market activity
- To understand landlord behaviour for repairs & maintenance.

In addition the Damp and Mould Strategy & Action Plan had been created in order to proactively target areas of concern to reduce damp and mould in all tenures; investigate all damp and mould complaints in privately rented accommodation; with referral and reporting mechanisms created for other Council departments and partner organisations; increased training & awareness via the Landlord forum and targeted Communication campaigns via the Website/Social Media.

An opportunity for questions followed.

It was agreed that Councillors Mrs V Gould and M Holton would convene a meeting to discuss how to progress this review further.

NOTED.

72/24 **SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRAMME**

Councillors received an update from the Corporate and Commercial Manager on the scrutiny review programme. It was agreed that the final report on the scrutiny review of Community Engagement Mechanisms in relation to Climate Change be submitted to a meeting to be arranged to take place in November/early December. A list of possible meeting dates would be circulated to members of the Committee to ascertain the best date for the majority of the Committee.

NOTED.

72/24 **PUBLIC EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS**

Members received for information a list of Public Executive Decision Records

An opportunity for questions followed.

In respect of EDR 190/24 (Terms of Reference Staffordshire Leaders' Board) Councillor G Allen requested that the Leader and the Chief Executive provide an update to the Committee as to how the Council engages with the Staffordshire Leaders' Board.

NOTED.

73/24 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee take place in November/early December and then the next meeting would then take place on 13th January 2025.

NOTED.

74/24 **CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 1**

The Report of the Head of Corporate and Environment Services, on the performance update on progress at the first quarter of the 2024/25 financial year towards delivering East Staffordshire Borough Council's Corporate Plan, Leisure Services Contract Performance and Towns Fund Programme was considered. Appendix 1: Quarter 1 updates for all Corporate Plan targets had been circulated with the report.

Councillors noted that out of 102 corporate targets, 75 were green, 1 was amber; 3 were red and 23 had yet to be reported and that of the 79 live targets 94.94% were green; 1.27% were amber and 3.80% were red. At the end of Quarter 1 of the 2024-25 contract year a review of the Outcomes Scorecard's RAG ratings for the Key Performance Indicators in relation to the Leisure Operator showed the following: 77 Green; 1 Amber and 0 red. With regards to the Towns Fund Programme, Councillors noted project progress; key risks; current financial profiles and total spend and commitment claims for three projects was as follows: Canal Towpath Project (£1,784,619.21); Cycle Network Enhancements (£1,063,788.19) and the Specialist College Project (£3,504,278).

An opportunity for questions followed

NOTED.

75/24 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That, in accordance with Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting during discussion of the following items as it would likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in brackets before each item number on the Agenda

APPENDIX 2 QUARTER 1 LEISURE SERVICES CONTRACT PERFORMANCE SUMMARY; APPENDIX 3 QUARTER 1 TOWNS FUND PROGRAMME SUMMARY

PRIVATE EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORDS

PRIVATE MINUTES

Voting concerning the above decision was as follows:

Those voting for the motion Councillor	Those voting against Councillor	Those abstaining Councillor
M. Slater		
G Allen		
L Bullock		

A. Bailey		
Mrs V J Gould		
K Smith BEM		



Scrutiny (Climate Change and Environment) Committee – 30th September 2024

Questions received from a member of the public and Response by the Cabinet member for Climate Change and Environment.

1) How has the mandate for this charge been obtained?

National legislation places a statutory duty on the Council to collect garden waste from households. The legislation also allows the Council to charge for this service and a significant majority of Councils have already done this. On a local level, Cabinet has considered this against a reduction in central Government funding of £6.4 million since 2011/12. This, combined with the annual cost of the service (£1.1 million), advice from our external auditors and the need to explore options for further savings led to the principle of charging being approved for those that wish to opt-in to the service.

2) How has this proposed charge been made known to the residents of East Staffordshire, as I only became aware of it through a general election campaign leaflet?

The principle of introducing a subscription based service was considered at a public meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 20 May 2024. You may find the relevant report (Item 7) at the following link [Cabinet 20th May 2024 | East Staffordshire Borough Council \(eaststaffsbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk). The pre-election period, running up to July 4, 2024, places certain restrictions on what can and can't be promoted to the public. However, following the general election, the Council commenced a public consultation on the charging rates and any concessions will be set out and put into the public domain.

3) How are the costs for collection currently funded?

The cost of collection is funded through the Councils revenue budget but at a cost of £1.1m each year to the council.

4) If the answer to 2 is through the council tax, does that mean there will be a corresponding reduction in the council tax?

It is important to share some context around the Councils finances here. The council has seen unprecedented reductions of £6.4m or 78% in its core funding from central government since austerity measures were introduced in 2011/12. Council tax income accounts for approximately half of the income the Council generates and it therefore can't be considered to cover all the costs the Council incurs in delivering services. It should also be confirmed that nearly 70% of local authorities in England have already implemented a

subscription based service, with annual charges ranging from £25 to over £90 per bin.

5) What are we supposed to do with the green waste in the winter period when it is intended not to collect from the households?

We are proposing a short break in collections in December/January when the demand for the service is extremely low. During these weeks, our collection tonnages fall to approximately 10% of those in the peak growing season. Furthermore, the recent public consultation highlighted only 42% of respondents use the service each collection week, and 45% use it during the growing season only. Should households produce garden waste, we would recommend the use of home composting or the HWRC.