

HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 9th March, 2026
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------|
| Present: | Councillor Rupert Adcock (Chair) | | |
| Councillors: | Beeston | Northcott | Wright |
| | Crisp | Reece | |
| | Dymond | Richards | |
| Apologies: | Councillor(s) Barker MBE and Whieldon | | |
| Substitutes: | Councillor Mark Holland | | |
| Officers: | Nesta Barker | Service Director - Regulatory Services | |
| | Andrew Bird | Service Director - Sustainable Environment | |
| | Roger Tait | Service Director - Neighbourhood Delivery | |
| Also in attendance: | County Councillor Adam Griffiths | Staffordshire County Council | |
| | Councillor Gill Heesom | Portfolio Holder - Community Safety and Wellbeing | |
| | Councillor David Hutchison | Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Environment | |

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received as listed above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24th November 2025 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. **DISTRICT AND BOROUGH HEALTH SCRUTINY ACTIVITY**

The Chair introduced County Councillor Adam Griffiths who gave an overview of recent district and borough health scrutiny activity.

Cllr Reece referred to visa issues encountered by certain care workers following policy changes and asked if there were any alternative solutions in place.

Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee - 09/03/26

The County Councillor advised that there was a 306 million pounds cut resulting in savings in connection with the use of agencies and banked staff. More information could be provided by email.

Cllr Northcott enquired about the impact of Covid and flu vaccinations.

The County Councillor responded that people were encouraged to get vaccinated. More information could be provided by email.

Cllr Northcott asked if the County Council was actively involved in promoting vaccinations or if this was left to the NHS.

The County Councillor said that there was no policy he was aware of going on the County Council Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda. Elected representatives were passing on the advice from the NHS.

The Chair shared having attended a meeting of the above mentioned committee in November during which he had raised the issue of Stoke Air Ambulance charity. Since then the regulator had sanctioned the organisation for its irregular fundraising practices which involved a lot of controversy and the false allegation to be entitled to operate as an air ambulance.

Resolved: That the District and Borough Health Scrutiny Activity be noted.

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5. WALLEYS QUARRY UPDATE

The Service Director for Regulatory Services introduced the newly formatted update report on Walleys Quarry as presented to Cabinet in February. Only one complaint had been received in 2026 which demonstrated a very positive situation despite a localised low level of hydrogen sulphide.

Cllr Whieldon thanked the Service Director for covering issues raised at the previous meeting.

The Chair asked if any further details had been received on when the restoration of the site would be considered completed.

The Service Director for Regulatory Services advised that multi agency working groups had been set up, one of which was focusing on the restoration aspect of the site. There were two elements to take into consideration, one being that the landfill would remain closed i.e. not accepting any waste and that part was completed; the second was the ongoing monitoring in terms of decomposition of existing waste and related gas emissions. Restoration was looking at the long term i.e. what would ultimately happen to the site. At the stage it was too early to provide a timeline. The multi-agency working group and other organisations were starting to formulate plans.

Cllr Richards wondered if the Environment Agency would continue overseeing the works going forward.

The Service Director for Regulatory Services advised that the Environment Agency was undertaking discretionary powers to prevent serious pollution under section 57. There was currently no answer to the question of how far along the journey this will

lead however supplementary information provided showed that they were commissioning reports in relation to various potential issues including groundwater.

The Chair referred to paragraph 8.2 and asked if there were other powers the Council could use to recover the substantial money invested and owed.

The Service Director for Regulatory Services responded that while claims could be put through the liquidation process there were no awareness of other ways to recover debts.

The Chair added that input from local residents, parish councils and borough councillors used to be featured in the reports and a lot of information was now behind the scene which he regretted. An open forum where residents could submit questions and talk with both local representatives and the Environment Agency would be welcome.

The Service Director for Regulatory Services said that this had been looked into and raised with the Committee of Inquiry.

Cllr Whieldon supported the Chair's request adding that this, as well as the money recovery process, should be tracked not to drift on.

The Service Director for Regulatory Services advised that the Council was one of the many creditors in relation to the liquidation process and were engaged as far as they could.

Resolved: That the contents of the update report be noted.

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6. **PROGRESS OF THE COUNCIL'S SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY & DELIVERY PLAN**

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment presented the progress of the delivery plan associated with the Council's Sustainable Environment Strategy as taken to Cabinet in January.

Cllr Richards asked how community centres would afford to meet the requirement set out in the Strategy and if the Council would provide any assistance.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment advised that audits had been carried out for community centres giving a framework of works to be undertaken to meet the net zero emission requirement. These would need to be done at some point however the priority at the moment was to focus on the Council's own operational buildings.

Cllr Reece enquired about the reduction of single use plastics widely utilized by supermarkets, take-aways and local businesses.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment responded that the Council was promoting the avoidance of single use plastics through the recycling and waste service but did not have an actual policy on the matter, which could be considered going forward.

Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee - 09/03/26

Cllr Whieldon suggested the use of the term “target date” instead of “achievement date” in the Delivery Plan and add a column with the date when the action has actually been implemented.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment noted the suggestion.

The County Councillor advised that the Borough Council had been at the forefront of waste and recycling and that plastic bags could now be recycled.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment added that the Borough Council through funding from the County Council was now supporting all the other districts in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent in terms of their roll out of food waste – both in terms of campaigns and the operational side.

Cllr Richards enquired about the processing of plastic waste.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment advised that the Council had a contract for the dry recycled material which was sent to a recovery facility operated by Veolia. Thin plastic used to wrap food was currently not recycled but turned into fuel which was an emerging market.

Cllr Dymond asked about cartons made of composite materials such as used for lactose free milk.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment said these were now being collected but very difficult to recycle with only one plant in the UK doing it.

The Chair asked if a graphic of what was recyclable and what wasn't had been made available to residents.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment confirmed that was the case and the information had been relayed with a number of communication campaigns pushed through the website and social media.

Resolved: That the progress of the delivery plan associated with the Council's Sustainable Environment Strategy be noted, and the update to a future meeting of the Health Wellbeing and Environment Scrutiny Committee (HW&E) be referred.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. CIVIC PRIDE (EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITIES) - EVALUATION OF 2025 ACTIVITIES

The Service Director for Neighbourhood Delivery presented the review of the activities delivered in the initial year of the Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) initiative ahead to the next phase of delivery.

The Chair enquired about the Civic Pride Investment Fund and timeframes to apply in relation to a local project starting in May.

The Service Director for Neighbourhood Delivery responded that applications were now closed as the funds for the current financial year had been allocated and spent. New fundings would be available for projects from May onwards.

Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee - 09/03/26

The Service Director for Neighbourhood Delivery said that other sources of funding may be available in the meantime, which he would be looking into.

Cllr Reece asked if Staffordshire County Council's transport plan was including Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

The Service Director for Neighbourhood Delivery advised that the Borough Council was not involved in the delivery of the Local Transport Plan and that the latter was currently in a consultation phase.

Cllr Reece enquired about the proliferation of vape shops in relation to public health as well as signage clashing with the aesthetic heritage of the borough.

The Service Director for Neighbourhood Delivery said this was a matter to be raised with the Planning team.

Cllr Whieldon raised the presence of blank boxes and vague timescales in the Delivery Plan. Lead partners' names and titles were also missing.

The Service Director for Neighbourhood Delivery said nothing needed to go in the blank boxes which were just there for formatting purpose. The names and titles of officers also didn't need to appear as the table was about which organization was in charge regardless of individual members of staff.

Cllr Heesom wished to thank the team for their hard work.

Cllr Hutchison commented that the £22,000 Civic Pride Investment Fund meant that a budget of £500 for each Councillor per annum was available for projects. Members were encouraged to start thinking about what the money could be spent on.

The Chair concluded on the enthusiasm brought by the events that took place in his ward and for which all partners had been working together.

- Resolved:**
1. That the report and notes the activities delivered in 2025 as part of the initial year of the Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) initiative be received.
 2. That the formal adoption of the Civic Pride (Empowering Our Communities) Strategy 2025 – 2028 be noted now that consultation had concluded.
 3. That the additional resource requirements of increasing community engagement activity and target setting and monitoring as set out in the motion which was approved at Full Council on 19th November 2025, be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Holland wished to thank the Chair for his work as Chair of the Committee as well as all the officers who had been involved in the current 4 years cycle.

The Chair thanked Cllr Holland and said it had been great to serve the Committee, adding that he would be leaving the Council in May.

Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee - 09/03/26

Reference was made to the very impactful work achieved on Walleys Quarry.

Cllr Whieldon asked Cllr Hutchison if he could pass on a request for the grass cutting team to be mindful of the daffodils recently planted.

Cllr Richards enquired about the bus gate topic and related restriction of traffic, wondering if these would be coming back to the Committee.

The Chair advised that unless any substantial update was received there was no plan for further discussions.

Resolved: That the work programme be noted.

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9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions received from members of the public.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: That the next meeting be held on the 25th June 2026.

**Councillor Rupert Adcock
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.02 pm