

## ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

**A meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel was held on 12 September 2023.**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Ryles (Chair); Councillors: Grainge, Mason, Morrish and S Platt.

**OFFICERS:** J Dixon and G Field.

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor Gavigan – Executive Member for Environment.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Banks, Branson and Ewan.

### **\*\* DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this point in the meeting.

### **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 10 JULY 2023**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel held on 10 July 2023 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

### **SETTING THE SCRUTINY PANEL'S WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

The Democratic Services Officer submitted a report inviting Members to consider and agree its Work Programme for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

The report explained that, on 18 April 2023, the Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed a new scrutiny structure in Middlesbrough. Part of the new arrangements included the creation of the Environment Scrutiny Panel. For information, the report set out the topics covered in 2022/23 by the former Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel and the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel, which were relevant to the new Environment Scrutiny Panel's remit. This also included statutory updates which would now need to be considered by the Panel and these were fully outlined at paragraph 5, page 13, (in the table headed "Updates").

A list of suggested topics relevant to the Panel's remit, received via the scrutiny consultation process, and topical issues anticipated to be of interest to the Panel were contained in the report.

Members were advised that the suggestions and topical issues outlined in the report were merely proposals and the content of the work programme was entirely a decision for the Panel to make.

The Panel was encouraged to select two topics, utilising the prioritisation aid at Appendix 1, where scrutiny could make an impact, add value or contribute to policy development.

The Panel was reminded that it could also identify shorter 'one-off' topics and receive any relevant updates throughout the year as it considered necessary.

Paragraph 11 of the report set out the key considerations when agreeing to include a specific topic in the work programme. The Panel's chosen topics for inclusion in its Work Programme would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 20 September 2023 for approval.

The Panel held a discussion in relation to each of the topics within the report and selected the following for the inclusion in its Work Programme:-

#### Review topics:-

1. Waste Management
2. Community Councils and Wider Community Engagement

Updates:-

1. Flood Risk Management.
2. Toxic Chemicals in the River Tees/Crustacean Deaths Working Group.
3. RIPA (Regulatory Investigatory Powers).
4. Prevent and Channel.
5. Community Safety Partnership.
6. Off-road Bikes – update on previous scrutiny topic.

Regarding the suggested topic of grass cutting, the Panel acknowledged that this was an emotive subject and requested that a briefing be provided, by the service area, to ALL Councillors addressing the issues raised and how these issues could be addressed going forward. This would enable Ward Councillors to be better placed to respond to queries from their residents.

**AGREED** as follows:-

1. That the topics, as listed above, be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board, on 20 September 2023, for approval and inclusion in the Environment Scrutiny Panel's work programme for 2023/2024.
2. That an all-Member briefing be arranged in relation to grass cutting, addressing the issues raised within the scrutiny topic suggestion, to enable Ward Councillors to be better placed to respond from queries from residents.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update in relation to the business conducted at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 26 July 2023, namely: -

- Update from the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Education and Culture, Councillor Philippa Storey – who provided an overview of her portfolio.
- Executive Forward Work Programme.
- Middlesbrough Ward Boundary Review – a verbal update was provided by the Head of Legal Services.
- Scrutiny Panels' Chairs' Updates.
- Next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board – 20 September 2023 at 4.30pm.

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel was scheduled to take place on Monday, 9 October at 10.00am.