

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

16th October 2025

A meeting of the Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday, 16th October 2025 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Nuneaton.

Present

Councillor J. Sheppard (Chair)

Councillors: J. Collett, J. Gutteridge, P. Hickling (substitute for Councillor B. Saru), S. Markham, C. Phillips, C. Smith, R. Roze, and M. Walsh (Vice-Chair)

Apologies: Councillor B. Saru

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

EL11 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment and Leisure OSP meeting held on 19th June 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair.

EL12 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED that the declarations of interest are as set out in the Schedule available to view on the website. An additional declaration of interest was declared by Councillors C. Smith and P Hickling in connection with Agenda Item 8 – Sea Cadets – Access to Open Water

‘The Sea Cadets attended and gave a presentation at a Labour Group meeting and that no party whip was in place.’

EL13 Questions to Cabinet

The portfolio holder for Leisure and Health (Councillor B. Hughes) and Leader (Councillor C. Watkins) of the Council was in attendance to answer questions from the Panel.

Councillor J. Collett asked the following question to the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Health:

Can the Portfolio Holder give an update on the discussions with Nuneaton Football Club to return to Nuneaton. They have raised funds of £50k and are keen to proceed but an agreement is needed.

Cabinet Member for Leisure & Health responded as follows:

Still in discussions at this stage.

Councillor J. Gutteridge asked the following question to the Leader of the Council:

Can the leader tell me, the remodel and landscaping at the front of the Nuneaton Town Hall cost £41,158.89, UKPF paid £15k towards it which leaves £26,158.89, what part of greenspace or other budget was this amount allocated to?

Councillor C. Watkins, Leader of the Council, responded as follows:

I asked for it to be done, we found the money elsewhere, I will get the information to you.

Councillor J. Gutteridge asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health

Can you give me an update on the Bedworth Physical Activity Hub on the fitment and landscaping of the surrounding area?

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health, Councillor B. Hughes responded as follows:

Yes, Councillor Gutteridge, the learner pool is being tiled, and the floor lift is going in next week. The glass and fire doors will also be installed and then snagging will be taking place. Most of the soil has now been moved and progress is being made with the pathways to the hub.

Councillor J. Gutteridge responded with a follow up question as follows:

I am pleased to hear that the hub is coming on, in respect of the landscaping, was there any contamination in the soil?

Councillor B. Hughes responded as follows:

Not to my knowledge

Councillor J. Gutteridge responded with a follow up question as follows:

I am amazed as there was some contamination in the soil that was removed and they were going to bury it, a director also emailed saying there was some contaminated soil, so is their contaminated soil or not?

Councillor B. Hughes responded as follows:

Not to my knowledge

EL14 Sea Cadets – Access to Open Water

The Strategic Director – Public Services presented the report to the panel for consideration.

SPEAKERS: Nick Humber
Eva Thompson
Mia Rowntree
Rebecca Turvey
Ashryah Dewar
Zaynah Taylor

The following points were raised and summarised below:

- In the recommendation there is a reference to maintenance and repair, the panel enquired about the sort of maintenance and repair. The Assistant

Director – Environment and Enforcement advised that if the sea cadets were given access to the open water site at Bermuda that the Council would look to remove council responsibility and hand over to sea cadets to take on that responsibility. This hasn't been discussed with the sea cadets currently, but the recommendation is that the whole lake is fenced off and under the sea cadets' control.

- Concern was raised that under the current policy no one can go in the waters and how will we stop others from entering the water.
- A panel member raised that the presence of the sea cadets on this site at weekends and evenings could act as a deterrent and address the safety issue listed on page 31 of the agenda. The sea cadets also have an indemnity which covers the objection at 5.2 of the report. The panel member also raised a contradiction at 5.3.2 of the report in respect of life rings to what it states in the water policy. The report also does not make clear if it is a toxic mix site or an ecological habitat. The report refers to degradation of site and monitoring, the panel member said that if the sea cadets were there, they could report a degradation to the council so we would be informed. Page 30 of the report regarding anticipating hazards, the sea cadets could inform us of any hazards or encroaching vegetation. The sea cadets also perform risk assessments, so this in the panel member's view addressed the concerns in the report.
- A panel member raised that the sea cadets have nine units in Warwickshire but only Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council do not support their local sea cadets and this must be rectified.
- A panel member raised that having access to water is very important to help young people develop their water skills especially for groups like sea cadets and scouts. The scouts have completed over 1000 water activities without accident so having access to the water would be favourable to the cadets.
- In the report at 5.3.4 it advises that the water could be contaminated but the panel raised the view that all water is contaminated.
- A panel member raised that at 5.5 of the report it says the council could put in place a Public Space Protection Order for water bodies which would be police enforceable. The council currently do not have a policy for accessing water, and a blanket order would not be appropriate. We should be concerned about health and safety but these organisations such as the Sea Cadets and the Scouts risk assess and are fully aware of the dangers of open water.
- A panel member raised that they want the water to be used safely, and the sea cadets have a good record of health and safety. It is important to teach respect for the water of which the sea cadets are best placed to do this. The sea cadets have an indemnity and are a responsible organisation who will not let young people into the water if it is contaminated.
- A panel member raised that if they don't have a full lease to the site the indemnity will only cover when the sea cadets are at the site.
- A panel member wished to clarify the word 'venues' in Appendix C of the report and, if we go ahead with this, would the council have to provide what is listed in Appendix C. The Assistant Director – Environment and Enforcement advised that the details would have to be addressed in discussions relating to the lease especially in relation to health and safety of the site.
- A panel member raised that there are concerns regarding if we do allow them to use this site, what storage will they need, will it be a lease or license

and what are the financial and legal implications of this, a lot more work needs to be carried out.

The panel put forward the following recommendations:

- a) it be recommended to Cabinet to note that the Environment and Leisure OSP have reviewed the report on the sea cadets and have requested further information to be brought to the panel in February 2026; and
- b) that further information be brought back to the next Environment and Leisure OSP held in February 2026 on the implications of the lease in respect of the operation of the site.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendations as follows:

FOR: Councillors J. Collett, J. Gutteridge, P. Hickling, S. Markham, C. Phillips, R. Roze, J. Sheppard, C. Smith and M. Walsh.

AGAINST: None

ABSTENTIONS: None

RESOLVED that

- a) it be recommended to Cabinet to note that the Environment and Leisure OSP have reviewed the report on the sea cadets and have requested further information to be brought to the panel in February 2026; and
- b) that further information be brought back to the next Environment and Leisure OSP held in February 2026 on the implications of the lease in respect of the operation of the site.

EL15 Integrated Performance Report – Quarter One 2025/26

A report of the Risk Management and Performance Officer. The Panel were presented with a report which seeks to provide appropriate performance measures, budget information and risk data for service areas within the scope of the Panel. The report has been adapted to reduce the volume of data (as previously reported under the former scrutiny panel arrangements), whilst still providing the Panel with sufficient information to monitor results to address issues arising.

The following was raised:

- The panel requested information on the Bedworth Leisure Centre and if the usage has increased since when the Pingles Leisure Centre was closed for decarbonisation.
- The panel noted that the short term and long term sickness had increased.

- Agency spend has increased but it was noted by the panel that a report was being considered at the Health and Corporate Resources OSP meeting on agency spending.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted;

EL16 Monitoring of Grounds Maintenance Contract

A report by the Parks and Greenspace Manager and a presentation by Glendale (contracted to deliver the Grounds Maintenance Service) was given at the panel.

The following points were discussed:

- Glendale had had to make a RIDDOR (Report on Injury, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) report to the Health and Safety Executive, they appear on site and charge a fee.
- A panel member asked if Glendale work with any schools, they advised that they do not currently work with schools, they usually engage with job centres looking for candidates that are hard to reach or vulnerable to give them opportunities. Glendale advised they would be very keen to support local jobs for local people.
- A panel member asked the impact of fly tipping and littering on jobs, Glendale advised that both are on the increase, there can be a significant amount of waste to dispose of.
- In the report it advises that 22% of tasks are not started, the Parks and Greenspace Manager advised that this figure is in part due to when the reports to OSP must be produced but can provide an updated figure at the end of the month.
- A panel member advised that the hanging baskets in parks were looking superb especially considering the amount of hot weather. The panel member then raised that with the grass cutting, it could benefit from being strimmed as with the mower there can often be a strip left uncut or in difficult areas such as round lampposts. Glendale advised they have suffered with shortage of staff this year and have had to take on agency staff which can be difficult due to lack of knowledge or interest but are now taking on additional permanent employees and will aim to do better next year.
- A panel member raised that often hedges are not cut back hard enough which means they grow back quicker. Glendale understood and will take it away for future discussion.
- A panel member questioned why 40% of enquiries received are not Glendale related as this is a high percentage. The Parks and Greenspace Manager advised that this can be due to the algorithm in how the system priorities enquiries. When a person makes a complaint it will come to NBBC first as there can be issues such as land ownership. NBBC are trying to reduce duplication.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

EL17 Domestic Food Waste Service

The Neighbourhood Services Manager submitted a report to the panel detailing the recommendations that had been put forward by the Food Waste Procurement Working Group.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Cabinet to note the recommendations made in the report submitted to Environment and Leisure OSP

EL18 **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan showing the key decisions that will be made in the four months commencing 1st November 2025, was provided to the Panel for information.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

EL19 **Work Programme**

The Panel were presented with the Work Programme for the municipal year 2025-2026.

RESOLVED that

- a) Access to Open Water – Sea Cadets be added to work programme with a future report to be brought back to February 2026 OSP.
- b) the work programme be updated and approved.

EL20 **Any Other Items**

None

Chair