

NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

26th March 2026

An additional meeting of the Environment and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday, 26th March 2026 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall Nuneaton.

Present

Councillor J. Sheppard (Chair)

Councillors: M. Bird (substitute), J. Gutteridge, W. Hancox, S. Markham, C. Phillips, C. Smith, R. Roze, and M. Walsh (Vice-Chair)

Apologies: Councillor J. Collett (substituted by M. Bird), B. Saru (substituted by W. Hancox) and Mr J. Healy (Co-opted Member).

PART I – PUBLIC BUSINESS

EL35 **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Environment and Leisure OSP meeting held on 5th February 2026 be approved and signed by the Chair.

EL36 **Declarations of Interest**

RESOLVED that the declarations of interest are as set out in the Schedule available to view on the website. In addition the following was declared:

Councillor J. Gutteridge declared that the panel members had all received an email from Councillor T. Jenkins regarding the Sea Cadets item.

Councillor W. Hancox declared that he had not received the email by Councillor T. Jenkins as he was a substitute member.

EL37 **Questions to Cabinet**

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health Councillor B. Hughes was in attendance, the following questions were asked and the answers including the written responses after the meeting are shown below.

Question 1: Councillor Walsh asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Environment:

Yes, councillor sorry question for the portfolio holder for environment.

It regards an issue that was raised to me by a resident with regards to the dumping of um dog waste. I raised the issue with the environmental officer on the 2nd March.

I in turn met with the dog warden or animal warden as now called investigating the situation. Pictures were taken. We're talking large volumes of dog waste being dumped, not the odd bag as there is around.

I met with the animal warden. We took photographs, sent a report in and I was informed then later on the 10th March I've been informed it been cleared away. I

revisited the site on the 11th March but it hasn't been. I then had an email back from the environmental officer it had been passed to waste management who said that it was unable to clear the area because of the overgrowth.

I went there again today. It still hasn't been cleared.

Now I could do it myself with a pair of wellie boots, coveralls, a mask and gloves. I want to know why it hasn't been clear and why it's been pushed from pillar to post and not been resolved. This is nearly four weeks before four weeks come Monday.

Now it is diabolical that this level I have photographs on my camera on my phone to share but obviously not this moment in time. It's diabolical this has not been cleared up. It's an environmental health issue and I say we're not talking the odd plastic. We are talking in the open air been covered with cat litter to hopefully presumably hide the smell. But we are talking great volumes. You could probably fill a full size dust bin.

So question is why hasn't this been dealt with and why has it been pushed from pillar to post? Thank you.

Councillor B. Hughes, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health replied:

Thank you. I can't comment why it hasn't been or why it seems to be pushed from village post. I think, you know, as a dog owner and as a personal level, it's one of my bug bears, absolute bug bears about people leaving dog waste that's not picked up, that's put in bags and hung off trees, which is absolutely disgusting. On my own residential area we have a repeat offender that seems to allow their dog to foul on or dogs to foul on the pavement which I reported into the environmental department. I've noticed that some stickers have been put up, so it's sort of as a warning, but I will take it away because it is something that is a blight and if I see it and I've got bags with me and gloves, then I will actually pick up myself and dispose because it's something that really is an annoyance. I'll take it away. Thank you.

Councillor B. Hughes written response:

This has been dealt with by the cleansing team. It was a significant amount. I understand Environment Health are looking to write to a local resident. This will be monitored to see if any further occurrence happens and then a covert camera will be considered.

Question 2: Councillor Walsh asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health

The refurb of the Alders Play Area had been postponed or pushed back but I was also contacted by a resident in that area to tell me of the trees that were planted there a couple of years ago two of those have actually been broken down and completely destroyed. Now, could you please advise whether or not whilst being refurbished that that could be those trees could be replaced?

Councillor B. Hughes, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health replied:

I'm pretty sure they will be but I'll just get that confirmation.

Councillor B. Hughes written response:

The parks department cannot continue to fund trees that are being mindlessly vandalised. This will be reviewed – however it may be that tree planting will have to take place elsewhere.

Question 3: Councillor Gutteridge asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health:

Now that the Bedworth physical activity hub is open, could you tell me up to date? I think you'll have to go back and do some homework. How much have we spent on outside consultants to get this far with the physical activity hub? And are we still planting the 144 trees that was promised in the plan and we've not engineered those out of the plan in the park? Because I presume now we will move start moving into the park in the spring to put the grass the 3G pitch down, build the skate park. I'll say it again. Build the skate park and plant the grass seed and get that all up to scratch ready for the spring.

Councillor B. Hughes, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health replied:

Thank you, Councillor Gutridge. Yes, I will go away and do my homework.

Councillor B. Hughes written response:

The 144 tree planting program was part of the planning application to which nothing has changed.

Regarding outside consultants, surveys and professional advice this totalled just under £2.9m from RIBA 3 stage of the BPAH project.

Question 4: Councillor Roze asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health:

It's regarding ground maintenance contract and I do appreciate that it may be covered under some context for the report. As in the last meeting it was confirmed in integrated report is that the data provided regarding compliance of what contractors do for grounds maintenance is provided by contractors themselves which slightly leads to I think the question asked by Councillor Walsh is how do you end up in situations that it's being reported that it's done and it's not done so the report that you presented to this panel last time quite clearly the data about compliance was provided by contractor so can I ask cabinet member has a working group looked at. What type of penalties or inspections there's going to be and improving his governance because I think it's wrong that the organization who delivers doesn't do their own homework checking. Thank you.

Councillor B. Hughes, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health replied:

Thank you Councillor Roze. I think some part of this has been looked at as part of the working group but I can take away your comment and come back to you.

Councillor B. Hughes written response:

The exact detail around contract monitoring for the new contract has not been discussed apart from Members wishing to ensure that rectification notices or similar are included and able to be enforced.

Question 5: Councillor Roze asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health:

This is going to be quick and I appreciate that you may not have that data. I was wondering in terms of Bedworth Leisure Centre since it been reopened in a new

building is there any data about membership for various activity there? Has it been going up or down or has it been actively monitored? Thank you.

Councillor B. Hughes, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health clarified:

Thank you. Do you want to break that down into types of membership? Do you want to break it down if it's just, you know people who've been issued the leisure card or whether it's actual memberships?

I think I think we'd have to be quite specific on the on the types of measure on the types of membership as people can get the everyone active card or passport to leisure but there are different levels of membership that I do know. So I'm a member myself of the gym. So, you know, I know the numbers at the Pingles have certainly increased over and above expectation, but we can get the data, but I think it does need to actually be broken down as to what specifics you're after.

Councillor Roze replied:

If I can quickly clarify, I wasn't just generally about general passport to leisure scheme. I was specifically interested in usage of Bedworth Leisure Centre. So whatever data you have, however granular you have, has it been going up or down? like let's say swimming and gym and you know what other things since the centre was opened.

Councillor Hughes replied:

Yep. Thank you. I will ask the officers to approach the leisure operator and get some statistics for you probably for the next meeting so they can actually get at least send probably a full quarter worth of data. I think that'd be useful.

Councillor B. Hughes written response:

As part of the new leisure contract twice yearly reports will come to OSP detailing data about performance. As you know these do come under confidential as part of reporting from Everyone Active as some of the data is commercially sensitive. What we can update is that usage and performance is more than expected at both Pingles and BPAH, since the refurbishment and opening.

Question 6: Councillor Smith asked the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health:

My question is to the cabinet member following on from Councillor Walsh if parks or whoever deals with the grounds request doesn't action what you've been asked has been asked for, what's the appropriate route to follow up maybe a complaint by the MAF system is would that be recommended for councillor use.

Councillor B. Hughes, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health replied:

Absolutely Councillor Smith you can raise it on a complaint I'm more than happy if members have got concerns or where they feel that they haven't been addressed is to raise it to myself directly as well. I have regular meetings with the officers.

Councillor Smith replied:

Rather than raising this office obviously a complaint will leave a paper record. Is that paper record actually critical in going forward in terms of I suppose assessing the delivery of the existing contract?

Councillor Hughes replied:

Absolutely yes it is.

EL38 **Lawn Burial Provision**

A report of the Assistant Director (AD) – Recreation & Culture. The Panel were presented with a report that provided further detail and clarification following actions agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 4th December 2025.

SPEAKERS: Julia Warner (Heart of England)

Daniel Devall (Devall's Funeral Directors)

Yaseen Ahmedabadi (representative from Nuneaton Muslim Society)

The following points were raised:

- A panel member queried if the reuse of old burial sites had been considered as a solution going forward. The Strategic Director (SD) – Public Services advised this is currently being put through Parliament now but only to be implemented in London.
- A panel member raised that in the December OSP meeting an Audit report had highlighted that the Heart of England Crematorium owed arrears which could be put towards the cost of acquiring burial space and wished to clarify if these had been cleared. The AD confirmed that the arrears had been cleared.
- A panel member queried the high increase in deficit on expenditure at 5.7.1 of the report each year even though income is increasing. The Parks and Greenspace Manager advised that it is due to the contractual and repair costs that are incurred for maintenance.
- A panel member was concerned over the lack of burial spaces and asked if burial space provision is a statutory duty. The SD confirmed that this is not a statutory duty of the Local Authority.
- A panel member raised that spaces are limited but the best suggestion would be at Attleborough Recreation Ground – 5 acres that could be developed with new rules for headstones and various plots to suit all communities and is adjacent to current burial ground. Another panel member opposed the use of recreation ground.
- A panel member queried if an s106 monies could be put towards the costs. The SD advised this is being looked at.
- A panel member raised that the Haunchwood Road and Attleborough Recreation Ground seem the best sites and asked if it was possible to do some scoping of the sites to know how many burial spaces it could accommodate. The SD advised that a feasibility study will need to take place on both sites and potentially go through Planning Applications, there will also need to be mitigation of the green space that may be lost to burial space.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Cabinet that

- a) the sites at both Haunchwood Recreation Ground and Attleborough Recreation Ground be evaluated for its suitability as future burial land; and
- b) to move forward with options identified at section 6 of the report.

EL39 **Access to Open Water**

The Assistant Director – Recreation and Culture presented the report that provided further information from the report that was submitted to OSP on 16th October 2025. The report gave the current position the Council takes with managing public safety and its own responsibilities in relation to open water bodies.

The following the points were raised:

- A panel member raised concerns that the Sea Cadets were not given appropriate consultation on the report prior to publication. The AD for Recreation and Culture advised that a meeting was arranged with the Sea Cadets however they did not attend. The report was sent to the Sea Cadets prior to publication, and they had the opportunity to respond.
- A panel member queried that the highest risk is drowning in the independent report, but the Sea Cadets mitigate that risk and most of the risks are low to medium, but the outcome of the report is that it is high risk. The AD for Environment and Enforcement advised that there are a number of variables that are uncontrollable such as swallowing of water of which the quality of the water in this particular open water is uncontrollable. In addition, there is uncontrolled water feeding into this open water. If the Sea Cadets are permitted to use the water, it is creating a risk that doesn't need to be there.
- A panel member commented that with groups such as the Scouts/Sea Cadets there are qualified instructors and any liability lies with the group that uses it. Water quality is not perfect but if controlled by Sea Cadets the risks are low and if water is swallowed the process is to seek medical advice.
- A panel member commented that while it is acknowledged that currently the sea cadets have to travel for their training exercises to not take the advice of the reports would be irresponsible.
- A panel member commented that in the report the site is of wildlife importance therefore if the quality of the water is so badly polluted then the Wildlife Sanctuary would not have stated that.
- A panel member commented that this is a difficult position and whilst the council would like to support the sea cadets, there are concerns regarding the safety of the water and for those who would use it.

A recorded vote on the recommendations at section 3 of the report was taken as follows:

For: Councillors J. Sheppard, M. Walsh, M. Bird, J. Gutteridge, S. Markham, C. Phillips, R. Roze, C. Smith and W. Hancox

Against: None

Abstention: None

RESOLVED that it be recommend to Cabinet that:

- a) Officers work with the Sea Cadets Commander and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Health to review other private water bodies in and around Nuneaton and Bedworth that might provide a suitable venue for their water activities.

- b) members consider the opportunity of a small communities' fund be established, supported by income received from the Borough Lottery, open to application by Nuneaton and Bedworth organisations. Specifically, whose key aim is to provide youth advocacy where the use of open water is a key function, with criteria to be developed by the Communities Team in line with their existing funding programmes

EL40 Grounds Maintenance Procurement Contract

The Assistant Director – Recreation and Culture presented the report to the panel on the recommendations brought forward by the working group for the Grounds Maintenance Procurement Contract.

The panel raised the following points:

- A panel member raised that part of the working group voted against the recommendations being brought forward to Cabinet on the basis that the mapping has not been completed and if agreed by Cabinet the Grounds Maintenance contract will go out to soft market testing without the mapping of the areas to enable the contractors to give better costings. The AD – Recreation and Culture advised that the recommendation is needed to draw up the specifications for procurement, the mapping will be completed and then it will be put for soft market testing.
- A panel member raised a concern regarding the grass cutting as this received numerous complaints from councillors. Previously, the council has been cutting grass that was not council owned. The contract is commercial and without the mapping there is no guidance to tell them what areas are NBBC land. The AD – Recreation and Culture advised that they are currently recruiting for a vacant post in the team and part of their role will be to complete the mapping working alongside Warwickshire County Council.
- A panel member expressed his thanks to Glendale as he had seen a massive improvement in the service they have provided in the last 12 months.
- A panel member raised concerns that the mapping process has only just started and will it be an ongoing process to identify what is NBBC land. The AD – Recreation and Culture advised that the mapping will need to be continually updated.
- A panel member queried that the Christmas lights service and Christmas tree installation will be removed from the contract and managed by Town Centres via an external contract, are the Town Centres team aware of this and will they be able to get a contract in place by November 2027. The AD- Recreation and Culture advised the Town Centres team are aware of the deadline and the requirements.
- A panel member raised that it would be nice to see contractors checking their homework so that when an issue is raised by a councillor and it is marked as complete when it is still outstanding that there is some kind of penalty. The panel member was also concerned by the blanket approach to not replanting as in some cases such as shrubs they may serve a purpose e.g. to stop cars parking on the verge. Furthermore, the panel member raised that the sport pitches may be better placed in a contract with specialised experience to ensure the pitches are kept in good condition. The AD – Recreation and Culture responded that they had considered an external contract for the sports

pitches and had done some soft market testing, this was more expensive, but it is an option for considering.

A recorded vote was taken on the recommendations in the report as follows:

For: Councillors W. Hancox, C. Phillips, R. Roze, J. Sheppard and C. Smith

Against: Councillors M. Bird, J. Gutteridge, S. Markham, and M. Walsh.

Abstentions: None

RESOLVED that

- a) it be recommended to Cabinet that the contents of the report (specifically those at point 4 of the report) be adopted; and
- b) the soft market testing as per 5.1 of the report be brought back to the working party for consideration.

EL41 **Forward Plan**

The Forward Plan showing the key decisions that will be made in the four months commencing 1st April 2026 was provided to the Panel for information.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

EL42 **Work Programme**

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

RESOLVED that the work programme be updated and approved.

EL43 **Any Other Items**

None

Chair