

**Environment and Climate Change Portfolio
Councillor H E Skinner**

Report to Council – 16 July 2025

Introduction

Over the past few months, the Environment Team have been working hard to support our corporate aim of '*Protect the Environment for the future*'. It has been a busy period, especially as the garden waste season has begun and grass and hedge cutting are well underway across the Borough.

Alongside these day-to-day activities, the team has also been actively planning events, developing strategies and engaging with our residents – all of which is helping to ensure that we create a sustainable future for our Borough.

Waste and Recycling

Last year, Broxtowe residents threw away just over 40,000 tonnes of waste. The Borough's recycling rate for 2024/25 was 35.5% (a 0.5% decrease from the previous year and is a trend that is reflected nationally).

Whilst our contamination rate for the green-lidded bins has risen slightly compared to the previous year (0.6% to 16.6%), this does not reflect the full story. In the first half of the year, our average contamination rate had climbed to 18.5%; however, since launching our new waste and recycling promotion programme around our collection teams, we have seen the contamination rate drop in the later half of the year to 14.7% - a fantastic achievement! The teams ongoing efforts are really paying off and it is hoped next year I will be able to report a full year's decrease in contamination.

In April of this year, the Environment Team introduced Simpler Recycling (the ability to include plastic pots, tubs and trays, tetra paks and foil to the green lidded recycling bin) and a weekly food waste collection service for our trade waste customers. 56 businesses have requested a separate food waste collection, including our own premises at the Council Offices, Kimberley Depot, and Bramcote Crematorium. To date the team have collected over five tonnes of food waste, which is going to an Aerobic Digestion Facility at Severn Trent in Derby. Currently, only businesses with ten or more employees are required to have a separate food waste collection. From the 31 March 2027, all businesses will be required to use the service.

To make Members aware, simpler recycling will be introduced to all households from March 2026. This will mean that our residents will be able to put additional items in the green-lidded bin and this includes:

- Plastic pots, tubs and trays
- Foil and foil trays
- Tetra pak cartons.

Missed bins

There has been a positive movement in the number of bins that have been missed in 2024/25. Last year, the total number of missed bins was 14,506, which has decreased to 14,331 representing a reduction of 1.4%. Additionally, the number of bins and bags collected increased to nearly six million, representing an overall missed bin percentage of 0.24%, which is very positive. The team are working hard to reduce this number even further.

New team members

In May this year the Council's new Waste and Recycling Manager started in post. They will be working with the team to deliver new services to households including Simpler Recycling and Food Waste collections as well as working to improve the cleanliness of the Borough. They will be joined by the new Waste and Recycling Engagement Officer at the end of June. They will be working with the teams and engaging with the public to encourage recycling and reduce contamination.

Free Bulky Waste Days

In 2024/25, the Environment Team held eight free bulky waste days in Kimberley, Eastwood (2), Stapleford, Chilwell, Brinsley, Beeston and Trowell collecting over 30 tonnes of waste.

The team will be organising more bulky waste days this year, these will be held from September onwards. Areas are selected by need (those that experience high levels of fly tipping) and for 2025/26 include:

- Beeston Rylands
- Stapleford
- Eastwood
- Chilwell
- Bramcote
- Nuthall.

Refuse teams will be on hand to collect the following:

- Furniture.
- Mattresses.
- Electricals including TVs, kitchen appliances.
- Broken toys and play equipment.

Further details including location and times will be circulated to Members nearer the time. If Members would like further information regarding the waste days, please contact the Environment Team.

Street Cleansing

In May, the Street Cleansing Team have been working with a traffic management team to carry out additional cleansing operations on Shilo Way, as well as in Awsworth and

Cossall. Measures include the cleansing of central refuges. Traffic management is required, due to the speed of the roads.

The team will continue to undertake central refuge cleansing over the next month or so. Additionally, the cleansing teams will also be visiting our four town centres to perform deep cleans, including jet washing street furniture, weeding, chewing gum removal, litter picking and sweeping. These efforts will help to contribute to noticeable improvements across the Borough and positive results have already been observed.

Parks and Green Spaces

Parks Standard

To make Members aware, the parks standard survey will be running over the summer holidays until 31 August 2025. This year eleven parks will be surveyed, and these are:

The Lane, Awsworth
Broadgate Park, Beeston
Bramcote Hills Park
Eastcote Avenue, Bramcote
Brinsley Recreation Ground
Chetwynd Recreation Ground, Toton
Colliers Wood, Greasley
Jubilee Park, Eastwood
Smithurst Road, Giltbrook
Archers Field, Stapleford
Judson Avenue, Stapleford.

A report will be shared with Cabinet in October once the results have been analysed, with the output also helping to inform the new Play Strategy.

Grass Cutting

The Grounds Maintenance Teams are working hard to create safe, attractive and functional green spaces across the Borough. Currently, the team are working at the peak of the season. Grass cutting commenced at the end of March, covering parks, green spaces and highway verges.

The team also work across eleven cemeteries and churchyards providing an excellent service in these sensitive locations. Additionally, they maintain numerous sports pitches covering provision for bowling, tennis, cricket and football. The team also provide garden maintenance for over 500 Council properties.

Hedge Cutting

Due to the bird nesting season, hedge cutting commences in June each year. The Grounds Maintenance Team are responsible for cutting the hedges for 450 Council properties and a further 195 outlying sites. There are two hedge cuts a year, and these

take place in June and September. Together, these hedges cover 95,000m². (For context this is equivalent to an area that covers 23.45 acres or 14 football pitches).

On behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council, the Environment Team also undertakes annual hedge cutting along 15 rights of way, as well as shrub maintenance at 35 highway locations across the Borough.

As we move into the height of the summer season, we will have all noticed accelerated growth on our hedges and grass. This maybe impacting some footpaths. The team is currently working across the Borough to address this, and I thank Members for your patience but if Members or residents have any immediate concerns, please contact the Environment team.

Capital Projects

The Parks Team are anticipating a full programme of Park Improvements this year, with a strong focus on accessibility and inclusivity. Works include:

- Access and path improvements at Bramcote Hills Park, King George V Park and Eastcote Avenue open space in Bramcote.
- Play area improvements at Coronation Park and Jubilee Park in Eastwood
- Ongoing restoration of Brinsley Headstocks and further improvements to the wider open space.

The Nottingham Canal

A successful bid to the UKSPF has seen a £50,000 allocation to the Nottingham Canal Local Nature Reserve.

The canal is a redundant navigation system, which originally ran between Langley Mill and Nottingham. Sections have been lost through open cast mining, road construction and housing development, but substantial lengths remain between Eastwood in the North and Bramcote in the South. The former towpath now forms part of the Erewash Valley walking/cycling trail, and the canal is an important recreational and biodiversity asset, as well as an important historical industrial asset.

The linear nature of the canal makes it an important blue/green corridor. A population of the nationally endangered Water Vole is present, and the connectivity of the canal allows this small mammal to migrate between sites, making the wider population more resilient.

The canal project will improve accessibility to the canal path, allowing a wider range of users with different abilities to enjoy access to nature and the local countryside. In addition, funds will be used to renovate and repair historical features, undertake works to prevent leakage on the embankments, improve habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna (including the Water Vole) and provide site interpretation panels. Additional funding will also be sought to extend the scope of this project.

The Boundary Brook, Pit Lane Recreation Ground.

The Boundary Brook, which forms the boundary between Stapleford and Trowell (Stapleford North Ward and Awsworth, Cossall and Trowell Ward) is a natural watercourse which has been modified in the past to improve land drainage. This has resulted in large volumes of water moving quickly down the brook in times of heavy rain. The brook is culverted under the A6007 Stapleford/Trowell Road and emerges into a deepened and straightened channel passing through the Trowell Park estate. During periods of exceptional rainfall (episodes of which we are seeing more frequently), this channel may not cope with the volume of water, resulting in it overtopping and flooding gardens and properties.

Nottinghamshire County Council have submitted a successful bid to the Environment Agency Natural Flood Management programme, which will include work to the Boundary Brook catchment. Natural Flood Management uses natural processes to reduce the risk of flooding. These processes protect, restore and mimic the natural functions of catchments and floodplains to slow and store water, reducing the peak flow and increasing the time available to prepare for flood.

The project will be designed and managed by East Midlands Environmental Consultants, who have worked closely with the parks team to agree interventions along the Boundary Brook at the Pit Lane Recreation Ground, including:

- Leaky dams, constructed from natural materials such as logs and large stones.
- Ponds and shallow scrapes alongside or connected to the watercourse.

Prior to undertaking this work, extensive areas of Himalayan Balsam will be cleared. This plant is an invasive non-native species (INNS), the presence of which can have a seriously detrimental impact on native plants and biodiversity. The plant is an annual (it grows, seeds and dies in one season) and can grow very vigorously on the damp, fertile ground along watercourses, reaching heights of up to two metres through spring and summer, before seeding and dying in autumn.

The dense foliage of Himalayan Balsam shades out other plants, leaving the banks completely denuded through winter. Heavy rains can then wash out large volumes of bare earth and deposit it downstream, silting up channels and adding to flood risk.

Pulling the young balsam plants in June and July prevents seed setting and allows native flora to survive. The seeds are relatively short lived and after clearing balsam for two or three years, the seed bank in the ground is depleted, meaning control and eradication can be achieved quickly.

In addition to reducing flood risk, the interventions will improve existing habitats and create new habitats, improving biodiversity. All the work will be externally funded, but the parks team are planning some complementary work, including tree planting and pathway improvements.

Bedding Review

A review of the 85 annual bedding sites across the Borough is currently underway. The annual beds are currently changed twice a year, with spring and summer bedding plants used to create displays. This is quite resource intensive, with plant production requiring significant inputs of energy. The review will identify sites where more sustainable displays of herbaceous perennials can be established. The visual impact will be retained or improved by using a selection of plants with year-round appeal. These can then be maintained for several years before requiring replacement. Plants that have wider biodiversity benefits, including nectar production will also be used.

Nature Discovery Day

A nature discovery day will take place at Toton Fields Local Nature reserve on Sunday 13 July 2025. This will be an educational event, with local people encouraged to attend and help identify and record the diversity of flora and fauna that can be found at the site, with experts on wildflowers, insects, birds, bats, amphibians and mammals, all on hand to help with identification. Pond dipping and bug netting will likely prove popular with the younger attendees. Please let the Environment Team know if you would like to attend the event.

Climate Change

Green Festivals

I would like to inform Members that the Green Zone at this year's Hemlock Happening was once again a resounding success. There were ten participating stalls, showcasing all things environmental under a unique feature archway dressed in crocheted flowers made by Stapleford Yarn Bomb group. This was intertwined with real English Ivy provided by the Grounds Maintenance Team. This archway has been purchased by the Environment Team and can be used at other Council events.

I would also like to remind Members of the upcoming Green Festival event, scheduled to take place on the 20 September 2025, at Coronation Park in Eastwood. An impressive 26 stalls have already signed up and there are four schools taking part in the Green Festival arts competition.

These initiatives highlight our ongoing commitment to promote, engage and educate on sustainable practices.

Green Rewards

There are currently 3,246 residents from the Borough signed up to the Green Rewards platform. Since the launch of platform, Nottinghamshire residents have collectively avoided emitting over 1,400 tonnes of CO₂. (That would be enough gas to fill 1,400 hot air balloons).

As part of the Fast Followers project, an exciting pilot project (which expands on the Nottinghamshire Green Rewards platform) is taking place to include an interactive Green Home Guide and resident personalisation.

I am also pleased to inform Members that the bird boxes that were installed in Watnall Spinney back in November due to the Ward winning the biodiversity prize. These bird boxes were inspected by the Environment Team in April and out of the 10 boxes installed, seven of them had nests in, (some even had eggs)! The boxes will be monitored throughout the year and highlight that even in such a short space of time, nature has benefited from this installation.

Citizen Visioning

I would like to update Members on the Citizen Visioning project. This project was a result of an invitation from the Fast Followers project, who approached all D2N2 partners to gauge interest in establishing a Climate Change panel. Internal discussions with other Nottinghamshire Districts indicated that the Council had not undertaken a project of this type before, and this presented a valuable opportunity to communicate key aspects of the Climate Change and Green Futures programme. This work would be particularly important in helping shape our approach to adaptation and mitigation, a section in our strategy that could be strengthened.

This service has been provided entirely **free of charge** by Innovate UK. The only resource requirement from the Council has been officer time. The total value of the project is around £80,000 and the Council is fortunate enough to be one of only 25 local authorities selected to take part in this initiative.

In May of this year, 6,500 households across the Borough received an invitation to become part of the Broxtowe Borough Council Citizen's Climate Panel.

There was a significant response, with 156 residents registering their interest in being part of the panel, 22 residents were selected to form the panel.

During four in person sessions, panel members have been discussing the question:

What should Broxtowe Borough Council prioritise to tackle flooding in a fair way?

Participants have heard from a wide range of stakeholders including those from the Environment Agency, Nottinghamshire County Council, Ashden Climate Solutions and the University of Nottingham.

In their final session on 28 June 2025 the panel will make a series of priority recommendations for the Council. These will outline what actions should be taken to address inequality and flooding. This will also help to shape the Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy 2023-27, which will be reviewed and refreshed later in 2025/26.

Carbon Disclosure Project benchmark result

I am pleased to announce that the Council has been awarded a 'B' in the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP). CDP is a global non-profit organisation that runs the world's

only independent environmental disclosure system for companies, capital markets, cities, states and regions to manage their environmental impacts.

The scores range from A to D with B demonstrating that the Council has managed to gather data on the main risks and impacts of climate change and is taking action to adapt to and reduce these effects. It also demonstrates that the Council has worked collaboratively with key stakeholders to understand their risks and impacts and that there are plans in place to mitigate or adapt to these.

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI)

I would like to update Members on the progress of the LEVI project. This countywide initiative is fully funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) and aims to provide access to on-street electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints to residents without home charging facilities. Led by Nottinghamshire County Council, the procurement process is underway to appoint suitable Chargepoint Operators (CPOs).

To date, a total of 226 potential sites for charge points have been identified across the Borough. This represents 28% of the broader potential list of 810 sites identified across the Nottinghamshire. Once the procurement process is completed, each of the sites will undergo thorough evaluation and assessment to determine their suitability and feasibility for installation.

Once completed, the Environment Team will be notified, and updates will be provided accordingly.

Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)

Consultants Mott MacDonald and Integrated Environmental (IES) continue to make progress on the stakeholder engagement and LAEP modelling across the region. Workshops are available for Members to attend to hear updates on progress and gain an understanding of the proposed energy interventions for Broxtowe. If you would like further information on workshop dates, please contact the Environment Team.

The primary goal of the LAEP is to identify the most cost-effective ways to decarbonise Gedling, Broxtowe, and Rushcliffe Councils, aligning local plans and priorities with broader regional ambitions, as well as national policies and strategies. The LAEP will also consider other aspects including energy supply and demand, transport, buildings, local industry, and the environment.

The Council's Carbon Footprint 2024/25

I am delighted to inform Members that carbon emission calculations for 2024/25 have been completed for the Council's own operations and there has been a 31% reduction compared to 2023/24 and a 57% reduction compared to the 2018/19 baseline.

This significant reduction has been due to the Council's fleet transition from diesel to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in April 2024. Emissions from the Council's

vehicle fleet have reduced by 95% and now account for 2% of the Council's overall footprint, compared to 35% in 2023/24.