

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

**Report to Council – 17 December 2025**

I am pleased to share an update on the work of the Environment Team. Over the past year, significant progress has been made in delivering projects and initiatives that support the corporate priority to protect the environment for the future. I will take this opportunity to highlight some of the key achievements this year that demonstrate the commitment and the team have made throughout the year.

This has been a year of action and collaboration, with Environment driving forward work that not only meets immediate objectives but also lays strong foundations for long-term environmental resilience. From advancing climate change strategies and biodiversity initiatives to strengthening flood risk management and delivering innovative green infrastructure projects, the focus has remained firmly on creating sustainable outcomes for residents and communities across the Borough. These achievements reflect the dedication of the team and the importance of working in partnership to achieve shared goals.

Waste and Recycling

Food Waste Trial

Environment received Cabinet approval in November 2025 to implement a food waste collection pilot commencing in September 2026. The proposed pilot area is likely to cover the Larkfields Estate in Nuthall and will include approximately 1,700 properties.

The objectives of the trial are:

- To assess participation levels among residents.
- To evaluate the operational feasibility of food waste collections.
- To gather insights that will inform the full-service rollout planned for October 2027.

How will the food waste be treated?

Food waste collected during the pilot will be processed via anaerobic digestion, a method that generates renewable energy and reduces carbon emissions. After contaminants are removed and the material is sanitised, bacteria break down the waste in an oxygen-free environment, producing biogas for electricity and heat. The remaining digestate is matured into a nutrient-rich biofertiliser, turning food waste into a valuable resource and supporting the Council's sustainability goals. Whilst the final disposal site is yet to be agreed, options are currently being explored at facilities in Derby and Colwick, Nottingham.

Simpler Recycling

Simpler Recycling will be introduced to all households from 1 April 2026. This will mean that residents will be able to put additional items in the green-lidded recycling bin and includes:

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

The Environment team are working alongside other Nottinghamshire districts and Veolia to deliver a consistent message to residents. The introduction of Simpler Recycling will help reduce confusion, improve recycling rates and reduce contamination.

A comprehensive leaflet will be delivered to all households in February/March 2026, which will include the new bin collection calendars for residents. This will be supported by detailed information on the Council's website and social media updates.

### Round Review

Waste and Recycling is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of refuse collection rounds, with proposed changes due to be implemented in April 2026. The last review of bin rounds was carried out in 2018, since then, development across the Borough has resulted in unbalanced and increasingly inefficient collection rounds. This review presents an important opportunity to improve service reliability, ease operational strain, and prepare for the introduction of food waste collections in October 2027.

To ensure residents are kept informed, a leaflet was delivered in November 2025, which explained the upcoming changes, Christmas and New Year bin collections and the provision of a QR code to online calendars through to April 2026. Residents without internet access can contact the Environment Team by phone to request a printed calendar.

While the extent of changes to individual collection days is not yet known, residents will be informed in advance through targeted communications. A new bin collection calendar will be delivered to all households in February/March 2026 and will cover collections through to the end of November 2026, after which deliveries of the calendars will move back to their original renewal programme.

### Missed bins and contamination

I'm pleased to share with Members some positive news from the Council's Refuse teams. They have made great progress in reducing the number of missed bin collections. Comparing the same seven-month period to last year, missed bins are down by 12%.

To put that into perspective, this year there have been just over 8,000 genuine missed bins, but when you consider that the teams have collected over four million

bins and bags, that equates to only 0.21% missed collections. This is an incredibly small percentage and an improvement on last year's figures.

On recycling, there's more good news. Contamination in green-lidded bins, that's unwanted materials that shouldn't be in the green-lidded recycling bin, has dropped by 4%, falling from 18% to 14% in the first seven months of 2025/26. This shows the real impact of residents and the Council's teams working together to 'Recycle It Right'. With the introduction of Simpler Recycling in April 2026 and the fact that more materials will be able to go in the recycling bin, it is hoped that contamination will continue to fall, and that there will be a real improvement in the Council's overall recycling rate.

### Clean and Green Events

Community engagement has continued to be a real focus this year, and despite being a small team, Environment has achieved a lot. The team have delivered 26 Clean and Green events, engaging with around 6,500 residents. In addition, 371 litter picks have been organised by individuals and groups across the Borough. A huge thank you to those volunteers who do this tremendous work alongside the Council's Street Cleansing teams, it's fantastic to see that level of pride in the Borough.

Just a reminder to Members, if anyone wants to take part in a litter pick or organise one, please contact the Environment team. They can provide the equipment and arrange collection of the waste on the day.

### Street Cleansing

The Environment Team have successfully run five free bulky waste days across the Borough this autumn and winter. The teams have collected over 13 tonnes of waste and have engaged with more than 200 residents. Chilwell proved to be the busiest event, with over three tonnes collected, but Nuthall's event collected the most waste, with over seven tonnes of bulky items collected. One final bulky waste day is scheduled before the end of the year on:

Wednesday 17 December, 8am to 11.30am – Eastwood

- Princes Street 8am – 9.30am
- South Street 10am – 11.30am

The team would like to thank Members for their continued support in encouraging residents to engage and helping to ensure that bulky items are correctly disposed of.

The Environment Team are planning additional bulky waste days for February and March next year, with a focus on supporting residents in independent living schemes. The selected areas include:

- Kimberley
- Stapleford
- Beeston

- Eastwood

Further details including location and times will be circulated to Members nearer the time. If Members would like further information regarding the waste days or are aware of areas that are experiencing high levels of fly tipping and would benefit from this type of collection, please contact the Environment Team.

### Parks and Open Spaces

The Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy and the newly revised Blue-Green Infrastructure Strategy, combined with a stronger focus on inclusivity and accessibility has provided new challenges, a stronger sense of purpose and confidence that the Council's parks and green spaces have so much to offer in mitigating the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss, in addition to the proven physical and mental health benefits that access to good quality green spaces offer.

### New Green Spaces

Adoption of the former BIFFA quarry in Bramcote in the summer has added almost five hectares to the Council's open space portfolio. The grassland and young woodland already present, will add to the already impressive sequestration value of the Council's green estate. Work has started to bring the habitats into positive management for biodiversity and plans are being drawn up to improve accessibility. A draft management plan has been prepared, marking the first stage in declaring the site the Council's 16th Local Nature Reserve.

Adoption of a new open space off Acorn Avenue in Giltbrook has now been initiated, which will extend the Council's existing Smithurst Road open space by over half a hectare, adding wildflower grassland and young woodland to the Local Nature Reserve. Funding has been identified to improve the site for residents and once adopted, seating and surfacing improvements will be made.

### Biodiversity projects

Thanks to funding from The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, works to restore over three hectares of floodplain meadow and woodland have started in the Toton Fields Local Nature Reserve. This will help to benefit biodiversity and mitigate against increased flooding. Further funding is now being sought to develop the site further, as access is currently limited.

The winter tree planting programme for this year has now been drawn up and will ensure that the Council achieves its 3,000 trees planted target for 2025/26, thanks to external funding from the Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCf). During the planting, the team has moved to using recycled organic mulch to help retain water and suppress weeds. This will significantly increase tree establishment rates and reduce glyphosate usage on these plantings.

The Council's commitment to bring the Boroughs woodlands into better management is ongoing, with programmes in place to eliminate invasive species such as

Rhododendron and Himalayan Balsam. Planting works to increase species diversity are planned for this winter, working closely with community groups and the Council's dedicated 'Friends' groups at Bramcote Hills, Brinsley Headstocks, and Colliers Wood.

A huge thank you to these groups, their dedication and volunteering make a real difference. With such a small team, the Environment Team couldn't achieve as much without their support. It's by working together that we're able to deliver these improvements and create spaces that everyone can enjoy.

In July this year, Environment held a 'bioblitz' at Toton Fields Local Nature Reserve, engaging the local community to help identify the plants and wildlife on site. While the event gave some great insights, the team has taken that learning to plan something even bigger and better for next year at Bramcote Hills Park, which will also include the newly adopted quarry. To make the day more inviting and inclusive, the event will be promoted under a clearer title, 'Nature Discovery Day', which is expected to encourage even more people to get involved and celebrate the biodiversity on their doorstep.

To help reduce peat usage and deliver more sustainable flower displays, a review of the Council's seasonal bedding has taken place. Over half of the displays will now be changed to use perennial plants, which have a much longer lifespan, provide greater benefits to pollinators, and eliminate the need for peat or supplementary heating during production at the nursery.

In addition, some beds will be given a much-needed rest and topped up to support healthy growth. Signage will be placed to let residents know that these beds are being rested and prepared for spring. This approach will follow a cyclical pattern to ensure Council get the very best from these spaces for years to come.

### Natural Flood Management

In partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council, the Natural Flood Management (NFM) works on the Boundary Brook in Trowell have been completed. The section through Pit Lane Recreation Ground features a series of ponds, shallow scrapes and leaky dams, all designed to store and slow down flood water. The habitat created through this work will be particularly beneficial to amphibians and dragonflies. Wildflower seeding to introduce a diverse flora has taken place to complete the work and benefit pollinators. At the lower section the brook, a meandering course has been created replacing the straight channel. This will help to slow flow rates and add further water storage capacity.

### Sensory Garden and Bulb Planting

The Parks Team have completed improvements to the parking and entrance area to the Walled Garden at Bramcote Hills Park. This is the first part of a longer-term project to develop the Walled Garden into a more welcoming, accessible area with interest for a wide variety of park visitors. The improvements include a tarmac surfaced parking area, marked with accessible parking bays and new paths to the Walled Garden and Sensory Garden area.

All the newly surfaced areas are accessible and built with sustainable drainage features, ensuring surface water is retained on site. The Sensory Garden features planting and landscaping to stimulate all the senses, achieving a significant strategic objective. Since completion, two community planting events have taken place, engaging young people from Foxwood School and members of Social Souls in Stapleford to help plant a wildflower lawn with over eight thousand flowering bulbs!

Keeping on the theme of community bulb planting, the Friends of Brinsley Headstocks, with the help of children from Brinsley Primary School, recently completed the underplanting of the Miners' Memorial Orchard at Brinsley, with eight thousand bluebells, snowdrops and wild daffodils.

At Colliers Wood, the Friends of Colliers Wood have planted over two thousand native bluebells to woodland around the car park.

Whilst still in its infancy, the Council's newly adopted Blue-Green Infrastructure Strategy is already being utilised to shape improvement and development of the Council's Blue-Green assets. On the Nottingham Canal, the team are part way through a project funded by UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund). The first stage, a resurfacing of the bridleway and path is now complete. Additional works will take place in the new year to enhance accessibility and allow more people to enjoy this remarkable piece of industrial heritage, now a haven for endangered wildlife. Plans include creating a new accessible link to Robinettes, a peaceful off shoot of the canal and a fantastic spot for nature watching.

To complement this, over 500 metres of the canal channel have already been cleared and de-silted thanks to funding from Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, creating a continuous stretch of open water that provides excellent habitat for waterfowl, fish, insect life, and the endangered Water Vole. An updated management plan is also in draft, setting out objectives for the next five years to benefit both visitors and biodiversity.

### Water Audits

A thorough audit of the Council's brooks and watercourses has taken place, with no significant issues found. Work is now taking place to develop improved processes and procedures to manage these assets, aiming to reduce flood risk and enhance biodiversity. An example of this can be found at Colliers Wood Local Nature Reserve, where works have taken place to create a wetland area, slowing surface water run-off from reaching Beauvale Brook, which is helping to improve the local habitat at the same time.

### Access for all

One of the Council's key strategic aims is to improve accessibility and inclusivity across the Council's parks and play areas. Environment has worked hard to deliver on this, with over 3 kilometres (around 2 miles) of paths built or resurfaced this year across sites including Brinsley Headstocks, Colliers Wood, Eastcote Avenue,

Bramcote, Bramcote Hills Park, and the Nottingham Canal between Trowell and Cossall.

Further works are planned at Bramcote Quarry, Pasture Road in Stapleford, Dovecote Lane Recreation Ground in Beeston, and Cator Lane Recreation Ground in Chilwell.

At Eastcote Avenue, Bramcote a full play area refurbishment is at procurement stage, featuring inclusive play elements and a fully accessible surface. Combined with new paths, this will showcase the Council's holistic approach to accessibility.

At Colliers Wood, a new dipping platform has been installed with finishing touches underway to make it fully accessible.

#### From Tree to Tribute: Celebrating Broxtowe Borough

At Bramcote Hills Park, a dead Oak tree has been given a new lease of life through an impressive carving that pays tribute to Broxtowe Borough. Following efforts to save the tree after losing a large branch, the Parks team turned a challenge into a creative opportunity, commissioning a design inspired by the Borough's Coat of Arms.

The sculpture features symbols of Broxtowe's heritage and wildlife, including a Badger, Honeybees, Rivers, Bears, a Winding Wheel, and floral details, along with the Borough's name and founding year. Located in open parkland, it has been very well received by visitors and is a piece the team is particularly proud of. While Council have several wooden sculptures across the Council's parks, this one truly represents Borough.

#### AED installation across the Borough's Parks

Following a successful UKSPF bid, nine new Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) have been installed at key parks and open spaces, including Ilkeston Road Recreation Ground, Stapleford, Archers Field, Stapleford, Queen Elizabeth Park, Stapleford, Hickings Lane, Stapleford, Leyton Crescent, Beeston, Beeston Fields, Beeston, Coronation Park, Eastwood, Hall Park, Eastwood and Toton Community Centre.

Defibrillators deliver a high-energy shock to the heart during cardiac arrest and can be lifesaving. While Council hope they're never needed, their presence offers reassurance to visitors. The team is also exploring additional sites to expand coverage further.

#### Environmental Enforcement

This financial year, the Neighbourhood Wardens have dealt with 205 cases of abandoned vehicles, with five of those removed from the streets. They've also responded to 152 complaints regarding dogs and managed 29 stray dog cases. Alongside enforcement, the Wardens continue to play a key role in community engagement and education, delivering 17 events so far this year, including clean-

ups, litter picks, and responsible dog walking sessions. The Neighbourhood Wardens next event will be a 'Walk and Talk' activity for dog owners at Bramcote Hills Park on 23 December 2025. Further information will be released nearer the date.

### Climate Change

There has been strong progress toward carbon neutrality over the last year, with a 26.4% reduction in the Council's operational carbon footprint, thanks to the transition to HVO fuel. Borough-wide emissions also continue to fall, with the latest data showing a 7% reduction in 2023 compared to the previous year, maintaining a long-term downward trend.

With just two years remaining to meet the 2027 carbon neutrality target, research is underway to assess how Broxtowe's natural assets could be used to offset any residual emissions. Current estimates suggest that the Council's natural assets sequester around 1,470 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. To ensure any future carbon neutrality claim is robust and independently verified, adoption of ISO 14068 is currently being considered.

### Citizen Visioning

This year, the Council established its first Citizens' Climate Panel as part of the Innovate UK Net Zero Living programme, a fully funded £80,000 project. Over four sessions, 22 residents came together to shape an approach to flooding, producing practical recommendations on what the Council should do. The team are now taking forward the learning by identifying actions that can be embedded into the refresh of the Climate Change and Green Futures Strategy.

### The Council's first Climate Forum

Thanks to funding through the Fast Followers programme, the Council hosted its first Climate Change Forum earlier this year, a fantastic event that was very well received. It brought together speakers, stallholders, and stakeholders from across the Borough, including schools, businesses, and community groups, to share ideas and best practice on carbon reduction.

Building on that success, plans are underway for a much larger, all-day event in 2026, with potential support from UKSPF funding. This next forum will include wider stakeholder engagement and incorporate learning from the Citizens' Climate Panel on flooding, ensuring these conversations help shape future resilience. The aim is to grow this into a key event, much like the Green Festival held in September that brings everyone together to tackle climate change collaboratively.

### Free Energy Advice for residents

This year marked the successful launch of two H.E.A.T (Home Energy Advice Team) Hub events, one in Beeston early in the year and another in Kimberley during the summer. Both events attracted strong attendance and provided residents with practical advice on improving energy efficiency in their homes. The Home Energy



Advice Team was available throughout to answer questions and offer tailored guidance on home energy improvement projects.

Funding has now been secured to continue the H.E.A.T Hub programme, and work is underway with partners to expand the schedule of events in 2026. These sessions will build on the success of this year's activities, ensuring that more residents can access expert support to make their homes warmer, greener, and more cost-efficient.

### Free Trees

This time of year usually marks the start of the Free Tree giveaway, but for 2026 the approach will be different. Rather than applying online, residents will be invited to collect a free tree or plant from one of four designated collection points across the Borough. These events will take place on Saturday 17 January and Saturday 24 January 2026, covering each of the four town centres.

Fruit trees will once again be included, as they remain extremely popular and provide the added benefit of supporting biodiversity while offering fresh produce. In addition, plants will be available, a feature introduced last year that proved very successful, particularly for residents without space for a tree.

Further details will be shared in December, and Member support in promoting these events will be greatly appreciated. Trees and plants will be available on a first-come, first-served basis, and to qualify, residents must be registered with the Green Rewards scheme. For anyone not yet signed up, the Environment Team will be on hand at each event to assist with registration.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Council remains committed to delivering sustainable initiatives that protect the environment, enhance biodiversity, and support residents in making greener choices. Building on the achievements of this year, further progress will be made through innovative projects, community engagement, and strategic partnerships. Together, these efforts will ensure the Borough continues to lead the way in creating a cleaner, healthier, and more resilient future for everyone