

MINUTES of a meeting of the CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Abbey Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2025

Present: Councillor M Ball (Deputy Chair) (In the Chair)

Councillors C Beck, D Bigby, M Blair-Park (Substitute for Councillor A Morley), M Burke, J Legrys (Substitute for Councillor S Lambeth), S Sheahan and J Windram

Portfolio Holders: Councillors A C Woodman

Officers: Mr A Barton, Mrs A Crouch, Mr Z Fazil, Ms K Hiller, Ms J Marshall, Ms H Panter, Mr P Sanders, Mr P Stone and Mrs R Wallace

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors K Horn, S Lambeth, A Morley and R Morris.

25. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

26. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

None.

27. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2025.

It was moved by Councillor S Sheahan, seconded by Councillor J Windram and

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2025 be approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

28. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS UPDATE

The Chair introduced the new standing item and explained the process for future meetings.

Members welcomed the addition of the item and the update was noted.

29. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chair introduced the new standing item and explained the process for future meetings.

Members welcomed the new item introduced in accordance with the Cabinet/Scrutiny Protocol. Members raised concerns that Cabinet were only noting scrutiny comments and requested that clearer explanations and accountability be included in future Cabinet responses.

During discussion it was suggested that the dates Cabinet consider the scrutiny comments be included moving forward for clarity.

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30. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY 2026 -2028

Councillor A Woodman, Portfolio Holder, presented the report.

During a discussion on the future of Customer Services, the Strategic Director of Resources provided the ambitions for the service, particularly with artificial intelligence (AI) which was received positively. Support was shown for reducing unavoidable contact, but some concerns were raised regarding digital exclusion and maintaining face to face options, it was hoped that AI would complement services rather than replace them.

It was commented that customers were often quick to complain about services but not to celebrate success. Members all agreed it was important to celebrate service success.

In relation to the approach taken to change customer service culture throughout the authority, Members welcomed the shared responsibility for good customer service and looked forward to seeing the improved effectiveness and accountability.

During discussion, Members emphasized the need for clear expectations for customers on waiting and call-back times.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their comments.

31. COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN - PERFORMANCE REPORT - 2025/26 QUARTER 2

Councillor A Woodman, Portfolio Holder, presented the report.

Prior to discussion it was noted that a section of the report in relation to Cabinet's responses to comments made by scrutiny were missing from the agenda papers. It was therefore, circulated at the meeting.

Comments were made on key performance indicators as they were discussed in turn.

Annual targets: The lack of annual key performance indicators across the board was raised, as Members felt it was difficult to measure progress and determine funding needs without them, especially in relation to zero carbon ambitions.

Performance scoring: Members enquired into the methodology for performance scoring. Officers confirmed that a universal scoring system was used to oversee performance by the Performance Team rather than individual services. It was noted that Cabinet had political oversight while the management team were responsible for delivery.

Staffing: Concerns were raised over staffing shortages, particularly in the planning service, and the impact it had on service delivery. Officers confirmed that staffing issues were addressed by focusing management attention on areas of risk and underperformance. It was suggested that a key performance indicator be added for agile manpower planning and staff retention. Officers confirmed that a retention plan was being developed and there were currently no plans to include this as a key performance indicator.

Housing repairs service satisfaction: Members questioned the improvements in customer satisfaction figures and asked what changes had led to recent positive monthly results in comparison to the annual results. Caution was given against over interpreting figures as the current rating was only two steps on a four point scale above the lowest possible rating. Officers and the Portfolio Holder explained that significant work had been undertaken over the past two years to improve the housing repairs service, including responding to the housing regulator's feedback

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following the recent inspection and implementing action plans. Ongoing monitoring and improvements were planned.

Customer service complaints: It was requested that more detailed breakdowns by department be provided regarding customer service complaints to identify areas needing support and to fairly recognise high performing teams.

The Chair thanked the Committee for their comments.

32. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The Head of Community Services presented the report.

Members raised concerns that the draft policy was bland, lacking detail and not actionable. It was felt that it was too generic and did not reflect the Council's context or ambitions such as the climate emergency targets.

It was suggested that the policy be reconsidered by officers to provide a better explanation of the policy's purpose and the need for plain English for clarity was emphasised. In addition, it was felt that an explanation should be included as to who Unipart were and what their role was in the policy development. Officers gave further information as to the role of Unipart and offered to provide a clear explanation to Cabinet on the matters raised by the committee when it considered the report.

Members felt strongly against the use of the policy in its current form. It was therefore moved by Councillor S Sheahan, seconded by Councillor D Bigby and

RECOMMENDED THAT CABINET:

Not adopt the Environmental Policy in its current form and that it be revised to include more concrete Council commitments and context before being reconsidered.

33. ZERO CARBON UPDATE

The Head of Community Services presented the report.

Members recognised the significant progress, but concerns were shared regarding future funding and lack of detailed targets. It was acknowledged that work was still being undertaken on analysing what had been done at Stenson House and Whitwick Business Centre, however Members would like to have seen the data as it would help form budget discussions in progressing outstanding issues. It was suggested that progress on the matter be included in the performance report moving forward.

A discussion was had on the mine water heating feasibility project for Coalville and Whitwick Leisure Centre, and officers updated the committee on progress. Members fully supported the work on the project and agreed to recommend to Cabinet that the cost of stage three of the study be allocated as part of the 2026/27 budget.

Concern was shared about the depletion of the net zero reserve and the use of the fund for staff salaries. Following further discussion, it was agreed to recommend to Cabinet that the funds to the net zero reserve be increased, and the staff salaries be funded elsewhere to allow the project to be driven in the right direction.

Members discussed further budget matters and received clarification from Officers. It was suggested that the annual update be brought earlier in the financial year in future to allow full consideration of progress prior to commencing budget discussions.

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By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RECOMMENDED THAT CABINET:

- 1) Allocate the £80,000 as required to fund stage three of the mine water heating feasibility study as part of the Council's 2026/27 budget.
- 2) Allocate further funds to the net zero reserve as part of the Council's 2026/27 budget.
- 3) The cost of the Climate Change Programme Manager salary be moved to the general fund to preserve the net zero reserve for future projects.

34. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the future work programme.

A discussion was had on the possibility of scrutinising flooding issues in the district. It was noted that a task and finish group was currently looking at the issues in the Coalville strategic growth area. It was suggested that this could be a matter for the Community Scrutiny Committee and that should Members wish to progress it further, then they raise it at its next meeting.

Following on from earlier discussions, it was confirmed that the Zero Carbon Annual Report be placed back on the work programme for summer as it was in previous years.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30pm