

BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting of the Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee on Monday 23rd June 2025

Review of the Council's Approach to Environmental Despoilment Education and Enforcement

Report of the Chair of Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee

Classification	This report is Public
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PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To present to the Scrutiny Committee the completed report for the recent Review of the Council's Approach to Environmental Despoilment Education and Enforcement.

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 The Climate Change and Communities Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a review of the Council's approach to environmental despoilment education and enforcement, as part of the 2024-25 Work Programme.
- 1.2 The issue was initially raised due to concerns about environmental despoilment in Bolsover District, including fly-tipping, littering, and dog fouling.
- 1.3 These issues not only degrade the aesthetic value of the District but also pose significant risks to public health, safety, and local biodiversity.
- 1.4 Environmental despoilment has increasingly become a focal point in national policy, with the UK Government and environmental organisations highlighting the need for stronger action to reduce waste crime and promote cleaner, healthier environments.
- 1.5 Councils dealt with a record 1.15 million incidents of fly-tipping last year, an increase of 6 per cent on the year before. National initiatives, such as the mandatory digital waste tracking system set to launch in April 2025, aim to increase transparency and accountability in waste management, with the goal of reducing fly-tipping and enhancing enforcement against waste crime across the country.
- 1.6 In May 2025, the Environment Secretary announced further measures to tackle waste crime, including a review of local authority vehicle seizure powers to better

support councils in dealing with fly-tipping. Reforms to the waste carriers, brokers and dealers regime, as well as tighter controls on waste permit exemptions, will provide councils and the Environment Agency with stronger tools to crack down on illegal waste activity.

- 1.7 At the local level, Bolsover District faces unique challenges. Despite its natural beauty and rich heritage, the District has struggled with persistent environmental despoilment, especially when compared to neighbouring councils.
- 1.8 This issue has significant implications for the well-being of local communities, impacting both the physical environment and public perceptions of the area. The prevalence of environmental despoilment not only undermines residents' quality of life but also detracts from the District's appeal to visitors and potential investors.
- 1.9 Furthermore, environmental despoilment in shared public spaces can harm wildlife, pose hazards to public health, and incur high costs for clean-up efforts.
- 1.10 This is a critical issue for the Council, as it aligns with both local priorities—such as creating safer, cleaner neighbourhoods—and national objectives focused on waste reduction and environmental sustainability.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

2.1 The aims of the review were:

- That the Council reduces fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling to improve the aesthetical value of Bolsover District, to protect local wildlife and to reduce the cost of dealing with the unauthorised illegal depositing of waste by assessing the service's effectiveness in tackling environmental despoilment.
- That the Council becomes an excellent authority at 'keeping the District clean' rather than 'cleaning the District'.

2.2 The objectives agreed were:

1. Understand what Environmental Despoilment involves (fly tipping, littering and dog fouling), the Council's statutory duty and enforcement powers, and policies available to the Council.
2. Analyse the current data of incidents of environmental despoilment across the District.
3. Review the current arrangements undertaken by the Enforcement Team, Streetscene Services and Environmental Health to reduce or prevent Environmental Despoilment.
4. Improve public information/education on environmental despoilment.
5. Identify benchmarking opportunities and areas for improvement; ensure there is a clear strategy of enforcement action to improve the quality of the environment across the District.

2.3 The key issues identified for investigation included:

- Enforcement powers of the Council
- Types of land covered by the Council's statutory duties (Agricultural, Back Alley, Commercial/Industrial, Council, Footpath/Bridleway, Highway, Private Land, Railway, Watercourse)
- Public information and education
- Dog Fouling
- Fly Tipping
- Litter

2.4 The Committee met on five occasions to consider the scope of the review, discuss key issues and potential recommendations, and review the evidence gathered.

2.5 The Committee adopted a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to gather evidence, utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods including:

- Document review
- Informal presentations/briefings
- Desktop research
- Stakeholder consultation

This approach enabled the Committee to gather a broad range of evidence and perspectives to inform the review process.

2.6 A site visit took place by the former Chair of the Committee and the Scrutiny Officer to fly-tipping hotspots with the Rangers and Enforcement Team to observe the impact of environmental despoilment and enforcement actions in real-time.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The Committee have put together 11 recommendations which will hopefully assist the Council in improving the effectiveness of its response to environmental despoilment across Bolsover District.

3.2 The key findings arising from the review are:

- Environmental despoilment, particularly fly-tipping, remains a significant and persistent issue across the District, impacting both the quality of the environment and residents' sense of place.
- Current enforcement outcomes are limited, with performance data showing a low percentage of reports leading to fixed penalty notices or prosecutions, particularly for fly-tipping, dog fouling and littering.
- The joint Environmental Health service with North East Derbyshire District Council offers a useful foundation, but there is a clear need to explore alternative models or tools that could enhance enforcement capability and effectiveness.
- Hotspot locations for fly-tipping require targeted action, including surveillance, signage, and operational task groups to focus efforts and improve accountability across departments.

- The coordination between departments—Streetscene, Community Safety and Environmental Health—must be strengthened through revived Corporate Enforcement Group meetings, structured evidence processes, and shared training opportunities.
 - Public engagement and education are essential components of any long-term solution, with the Council needing to amplify its communications, provide clear guidance on waste disposal, and increase the visibility of enforcement actions to deter offending.
 - Improved transparency and performance benchmarking through accessible, meaningful data and public updates will help build community trust and demonstrate the Council’s commitment to tackling environmental offences.
- 3.3 The Committee recognises that a strategic and joined-up approach is required to deliver sustained improvements.
- 3.4 The recommendations in this report aim to support that goal by enhancing enforcement activity, strengthening interdepartmental coordination, increasing public awareness, and improving the visibility and responsiveness of the Council’s actions.
- 3.5 If implemented effectively, these measures will help reduce environmental crime, promote civic responsibility, and create a cleaner, safer Bolsover District for all residents.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Executive could choose not to endorse the recommendations of the review where they feel the course of action recommended is beyond the delivery capacity of the Authority.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Committee endorses the recommendations of the review outlined in section 2 of the attached report (Appendix 2).
 2. That Committee submits the report to Executive for approval, in accordance with the Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference – Part 3.6 (3) of the Constitution.
 3. That following approval by Executive, monitoring of these recommendations by the Committee takes place over a twelve-month period via post scrutiny monitoring reports with an update report to the Committee at the end of the monitoring period.
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IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk

Yes ☐

No ☒

Details:

There are no immediate financial implications arising directly from the recommendations of this report. However, several recommendations suggest that the Council may need to consider future investment. As such, it should be noted that potential funding may be required at a later stage, depending on how the recommendations are implemented—particularly recommendations 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4, as outlined in the attached report within the appendices.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection)

Yes ☐

No ☒

Details:

In carrying out scrutiny reviews the Council is exercising its scrutiny powers as laid out in s.21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation which added/amended these powers.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing

Yes ☐

No ☒

Details:

N/A

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

Equality and Diversity, and Consultation

Yes ☐

No ☒

Details:

N/A

Environment

Yes ☒

No ☒

Details:

The scrutiny review supports the Corporate Ambition of 'Environment' and 'Customers'. The review also supports the Council's Priorities of: 'Reducing our carbon footprint whilst supporting and encouraging residents and businesses to do the same'; 'Enhancing biodiversity across the District'; 'Working with stakeholders, regional and local partnerships to deliver shared strategies and priorities that support the local environment'; and 'Ensuring all areas,

neighbourhoods and streets in the District, irrespective of housing tenure or type, are places where people want to live, feel safe and are proud to live’.

The review supports the Council’s Target ENV.06 – ‘Reduce fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people in Bolsover District over the plan period’ as well as the KPI goals SS 01 – ‘Remove 95% of hazardous Fly Tipping within 24 hours of being reported (Quarterly)’ and SS 02 – ‘Remove 95% of non-hazardous Fly Tipping within 5 working days of being reported (Quarterly)’.

DECISION INFORMATION:

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies:</p> <p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue (a) Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.</p> <p>Capital (a) Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.</p> <p>District Wards Significantly Affected: <i>(to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</i> Please state below which wards are affected or tick All if all wards are affected:</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>All <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p> <p>If No, is the call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report? <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer)</i></p> <p>Consultation carried out: <i>(this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</i></p> <p>Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deputy Leader <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing

<p>'Environment' and 'Customers'</p>

DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

Appendix No	Title
1	Original Review Scope
2	Review of the Council's Approach to Environmental Despoilment Education and Enforcement (REPORT)

Background Papers

(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive, you must provide copies of the background papers).
