

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 8TH APRIL 2026

Minutes of the meeting of the **ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe, on **WEDNESDAY, 8TH APRIL 2026 at 8.15pm.**

PRESENT

Councillor Martin Ashcroft (Chairman) and:
Councillors Tunde Akinsanya, Tony Armstrong, Jaci Beddard, Tony Beddard, Dorothy Bowman, Arun M. Chandran, Neil Collinson, Luke Ellis, George Gray, Brian Haigh, Sandra Kirby, Kyle Robinson, Ken Robson, Brian Sowerby, Michael Stead, Tracey Williams, Anne Woodward and John Woodward.

OFFICERS

Mr Dan Austin (Town Clerk)
Mr Steve Cooper (Works and Environment Manager)
Mr Lee Williams (Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator)
Miss Amanda Donald (Corporate and Policy Officer)
Mrs Vikki Anderson (Corporate Assistant)

IN ATTENDANCE

Five members of the public were in attendance.

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Phil Hawkins, Andy Hill, Richard Hutchinson, Jackie McFadden Lewis, John Moore and Carl Robinson.

78. MEMBERS' DISPENSATIONS

No applications for dispensations had been received.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

80. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

81. MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Ken Robson, seconded by Councillor John Woodward and:

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Committee, held on 25th February 2026, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82. PLANNING SUB COMMITTEE MINUTES

Councillor Martin Ashcroft commented that the Corporate and Policy Officer is closely monitoring the biomass application and will keep members updated.

Councillor Tony Beddard advised that he had asked the Planning Officer at Durham County Council for the application to be brought to a committee meeting but had been advised that as the issue was pending further investigation, it was not appropriate at this time.

Further information is awaited regarding whether the current hazardous substances application will involve further expansion.

It was proposed by Councillor Ken Robson and seconded by Councillor Tony Beddard and:

RESOLVED – That the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Planning Sub Committee, held on 23rd March 2026, be agreed, confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

83. ALLOTMENTS REPORT

Members considered an update report from the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator on issues relating to the allotments for the six weeks ended the 29th March 2026.

Councillor Neil Collinson asked for an update regarding the vacant plots listed in the report at St Oswald's and Finchale Road sites.

It was confirmed that all plots had now been let.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.

84. ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Members considered an update report from the Works and Environment Manager on issues relating to the environment for the six weeks ended the 29th March 2026.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received.

85. CEMETERIES REPORT

Members considered an update report from the Grounds Maintenance Services Co-ordinator on items relating to the cemeteries for the six weeks ended the 15th February 2026.

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- ii) The report be received.

86. INTERIM HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION POLICY - CONSULTATION

Members considered a report from the Corporate and Policy Officer requesting members' views regarding a Durham County Council consultation on their draft Interim Houses in Multiple Occupation Policy.

The Corporate and Policy Officer explained the interim policy is until the new County Durham Plan is finalised, to limit the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) around the County, likely as a precaution.

A planning application will be required from August, and the criteria is set out within the report.

Councillor Tony Armstrong asked for figures of how many HMOs there currently are within the county currently or are being applied for.

The Corporate and Policy Officer had no figures but suggested that Durham County Council may have these.

It was proposed by Councillor George Gray, seconded by Councillor Ken Robson and:

RESOLVED – that it be recommended that:

- i) The report be received and the details of the Durham County Council consultation on their draft Interim Houses in Multiple Occupation Policy be noted.
- ii) Approve the following consultation response comment:

“The Town Council agrees with the draft Interim Houses in Multiple Occupation Policy. The Policy will help to ensure that Great Aycliffe retains its characteristic balanced community and mixture of dwellings”.

Chairman