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Monday, 13 January 2025

Chair: Councillor P Peacock

Members of the Committee:

**Councillor R Cozens
Councillor S Crosby
Councillor L Brazier
Councillor S Forde**

**Councillor C Penny
Councillor P Taylor
Councillor J Kellas**

MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	Tuesday, 21 January 2025 at 6.00 pm
VENUE:	Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY

**You are hereby requested to attend the above Meeting to be held at the time/place
and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the
business on the Agenda as overleaf.**

If you have any queries please contact Nigel Hill on nigel.hill@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

AGENDA

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1. Notification to those present that the meeting will be recorded and streamed online	
2. Apologies for Absence	
3. Declarations of Interest from Members and Officers	
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5. Chair's Update	Verbal Report
Housing Portfolio	
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Heritage and Culture and the Arts Portfolio	
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Health, Well-being and Leisure Portfolio	
Public Protection and Community Relations Portfolio	
12. Exclusion of the Press and Public	
The Committee will be invited to resolve:- 'To consider resolving that, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.'	
None.	

Categories of “Exempt Information”

Under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
 - (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person : or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Cabinet** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Tuesday, 3 December 2024 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P Peacock (Chair)

Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Crosby, Councillor L Brazier,
Councillor E Oldham, Councillor C Penny, Councillor P Taylor and
Councillor R Jackson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S Haynes and Councillor J Kellas

ATTENDANCE:

199 NOTIFICATION TO THOSE PRESENT THAT THE MEETING WILL BE RECORDED AND STREAMED ONLINE

The Leader advised that the proceedings were being audio recorded and live streamed by the Council.

200 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

201 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING 4 NOVEMBER 2024

The minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 4 November were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

202 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Leader welcomed Councillor R. Jackson to the meeting and thanked Councillor R. Holloway for her work on Cabinet and as Leader of the Opposition following her resignation.

203 BUDGET PERFORMANCE QUARTER 2

The Assistant Business Manager - Financial Services presented a report which detailed the forecast outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year for the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account revenue and capital budgets, which detailed performance against the approved estimates of revenue expenditure and income; report on major variances from planned budget performance; and report on variations to the Capital Programme for approval; all in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

The Cabinet considered details of the favourable and unfavourable variances reported, detailed in tables one and two of the report, and the HRA revenue outturn in table three of the report. The Council had been fully compliant with all prudential indicators during the reporting period.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- (a) note the General Fund projected favourable outturn variance of £0.719m;
- (b) note the Housing Revenue Account projected favourable outturn variance of £0.033m to the Major Repairs Reserve;
- (c) approve the variations to the Capital Programme at Appendix E;
- (d) approve the Capital Programme revised budget and financing of £49.467m; and
- (e) note the Prudential indicators at Appendix H.

Reasons for Decision:

To consider the forecast outturn position for the 2024/25 financial year for the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account revenue and capital budgets.

To show performance against the approved estimates of revenue expenditure and income; report on major variances from planned budget performance; and report on variations to the Capital Programme for approval; all in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Options Considered:

Not applicable.

204 COMMUNITY PLAN PERFORMANCE QUARTER 2

The Transformation and Service Improvement Officer presented a report which detailed the Quarter 2 Community Plan Performance Report (July to September 2024). The report and accompanying presentation highlighted various projects undertaken by Business Units including cross objective working, community grant funding awards and some areas where performance was not meeting targets, including re-lets and processing Council tax and Housing benefits. Cabinet discussed the issue and noted that resources had been focused to address the back log in re-letting. With regard to the back-log in claims, the Council had seen a significant increases in claims since the migration to Universal Credit, which impacted our processing times for the Quarter. This had been addressed and at the start of December, times were now at or below target.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) review the Community Plan Performance Report attached as Appendix 1;
- b) review the compliance report attached as Appendix 2; and
- c) consider the Council's performance against its objectives highlighting any areas of high performance and identifying areas for improvement.

Reasons for Decision:

Performance management is used to drive improvement by analysing data and progress against key activities as well as building a picture of the context of performance using district statistics, customer feedback and workforce information.

Options Considered:

Not applicable.

205 HOUSING SERVICES COMPLIANCE REPORT

The Director - Housing, Health & Wellbeing presented a report which set out the performance position as of 30 September 2024 (Quarter 2) in the new format with regard to compliance, including actions to rectify identified issues. The report set out the Council's performance against the Council's legal and regulatory landlord responsibilities for a range of building safety measures including fire protection, gas, asbestos, electrical and water as well as summarising details of the Council's housing stock.

Cabinet heard details of where performance was either in red or amber categories and the actions underway to attain compliance, noting actions to gain access to properties and delay with some Court processes.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet note:

- a) the exceptions to performance of the housing service compliance functions; and
- b) the new format for performance for Quarter 2 2024/25 onwards.

Reasons for Decision:

To enable the Cabinet to monitor performance and compliance relating to the Council's legal and regulatory landlord responsibilities for 27 building safety measures including fire protection, gas, asbestos, electrical and water.

Options Considered:

Not applicable.

Meeting closed at 6.44 pm.

Chair

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Cabinet** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Tuesday, 10 December 2024 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P Peacock (Chair)

Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Crosby, Councillor L Brazier,
Councillor E Oldham, Councillor C Penny, Councillor P Taylor and
Councillor J Kellas

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor N Allen, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor J Lee, Councillor
S Michael, Councillor P Rainbow, Councillor N Ross and Councillor
S Saddington

APOLOGIES FOR
ABSENCE:

206 NOTIFICATION TO THOSE PRESENT THAT THE MEETING WILL BE RECORDED AND
STREAMED ONLINE

The Leader advised that the proceedings were being audio recorded and live
streamed by the Council.

207 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor L Brazier declared an Other Registerable Interest in Agenda Item No. 14 –
Levelling Up Fund 3 Programme Update – as a Member of Ollerton & Boughton Town
Council.

Councillors S Crosby, J Kellas and P Taylor declared Other Registerable Interests in
Agenda Item No. 6 – Proposal to Site the ‘Kidney Stones’ as Castle House, Newark – as
Members of Newark Town Council.

Councillor J Kellas advised that he was Trustee of Nottinghamshire and Newark
District Scout Group, but not the organisation not of the Scout Group that had been
successful in receiving community grant funding as detailed at Item 9 on the agenda.

208 CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Leader welcomed Councillor J Kellas to his first meeting of the Cabinet after being
appointed as the new Leader of the Conservative Group on the Council. Councillor R
Cozens paid a personal tribute to Councillor R Holloway for her service on the Cabinet.

209 ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND NATIONAL PORTFOLIO ORGANISATION EXTENSION
APPLICATION (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Heritage & Culture presented a report which updated
Members on the progress of the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) programme
and proposed that the Heritage & Culture Business Unit applies for the available
extension funding for 2026-27.

The funding agreement was overseen by the independent Board which included the Portfolio Holder and the report gave examples of the projects delivered to date. It was proposed to submit an application to Art Council England for the maximum available funding of £309,000 for 2026-27 confirming that the activity would be broadly in line with 2023-26 plans which had been agreed by the Board. The detailed plans for the additional year would continue to build on the strengths and successes of the original three-year programme.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- (a) approve the submission of the extension application by 19 December 2024;
- (b) approve the extension of the three staff for £137,000 funded by the Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, to be added to the establishment for 2026-27; and
- (c) approve a budget in 2026-27 of the remaining £172,000 of the £309,000 funded by the National Portfolio Organisation Grant.

Reasons for Decision:

The Open Doors programme links to Objective 7 in the community plan, to celebrate and invigorate community spirit, pride of place and a sense of belonging through heritage, culture and the arts, enabling the Heritage & Culture Business Unit to reach more audiences and increase cultural engagement.

Options Considered:

The extension application is not mandatory, however if the Council does not apply for the extension year there will be a gap in funding and activity will not be able to continue. Not applying would also be to the detriment of any future NPO application, which is anticipated to cover the period 2027-2030.

210 PROPOSAL TO SITE THE 'KIDDEY STONES' AT CASTLE HOUSE, NEWARK

The Portfolio Holder – Heritage, Culture & the Arts presented a report which set out the outcomes from the public consultation following on from a previous in principle decision by the Cabinet to site the Kiddey sculptures at Castle House. The Cabinet considered the responses from the public consultation and the comments from the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee, following their consideration of this item at their meeting held on 25 November 2024.

The cost to deliver the scheme was forecasted as £81,240 when the first report was presented to the Cabinet on 4 June 2024. That was based on latest cost from April, so given inflation a new cost estimate of £87,430 was noted, however this was subject to the works being tendered and completed.

It was reported that subject to any Cabinet decision, Newark Town Council and the District Council would need to enter into a formal agreement for leasing the Kiddey structures. The principles for such an agreement were set out in the report.

AGREED following a named vote (with 6 votes for, 1 against – Cllr Kellas and 1 abstention – Cllr Oldham) that Cabinet:

- a) consider the report on the public consultation on the Kiddey sculptures at Appendix B to the report;
- b) consider the comments from the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee at Appendix A to the report;
- c) confirm the earlier, in principle decision taken on 4 June 2024, to site the Kiddey sculptures at Castle House, Newark;
- d) add a sum of £87,430 to the capital programme funded by the Change Management Reserve, to fund the installation at Castle House; and
- e) give delegated authority to the Director - Communities & Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to enter into an agreement with Newark Town Council for a loan of the Kiddey Sculptures.

Reasons for Decision:

The recommendations align with the Community Plan objectives in relation to heritage and culture, particularly the specific actions around increasing the quantity and quality of public art in the district.

Options Considered:

The Kiddey Stones are part of Newark's heritage. For around 40 years they have been under tarpaulin in the town's cemetery. Without funding and a suitable location to site the stones, it is highly likely they will continue to remain away from public view. However, it is an option not to invest in the project.

211 TENANT ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder – Housing invited the Tenant Engagement Officers to present to the Cabinet progress made in relation to tenant engagement arrangements and new activities in the District, and the ongoing work towards maximum compliance with the social housing consumer regulation regime. The Cabinet welcomed and thanked officers for the informative presentation.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) review and note the responsibilities of the Council (both Members and officers) as a housing authority in relation to consumer regulation;
- b) note the progress and planned engagement with the Tenant Participation Advisory Services (TPAS) on creating a new, strengthened tenant engagement structure;

- c) note how feedback and insight from the tenant engagement survey 2024 will be used alongside Tenant Satisfaction Measures performance and learning from complaints, to inform the workplan for service improvement for next 18 months;
- d) note that the results of the TPAS re-engineering project will be reported to the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee in June 2025 to scrutinise the detailed action plan, proposals for implementation and endorse for approval by the Tenant Engagement Board and Cabinet; and
- e) approve and endorse a bespoke training session for all Members, to be led by the Tenant Engagement team, to raise awareness and understanding of the Council's obligations regarding tenant engagement and the broader consumer regulations.

Reasons for Decision:

To keep Members updated on progress towards maximum compliance with the Consumer Standards and to highlight how we are aiming to achieve this within the tenant engagement team.

These recommendations align to objective 2, and 8 of the Community Plan. Specifically:

Objective 2 - Explore further ways to seek out imaginative and effective ways to engage with and involve tenants; Design and implement a 'New Housing Management System' for Council owned homes, to provide a modern system and better user experience for both tenants and staff; Embed and evaluate our new 'Repairs Online' service.

Objective 8 - Plan and implement arrangements to respond to new regulatory inspections and requirements.

Options Considered:

Continue with current methods and structure – this would impact the ability of the Council to meet the Consumer Standards, as set out in the Regulator of Social Housing's regime, and potentially result in a worse rating upon inspection.

This option has been discounted since compliance with the standards is a regulatory requirement.

212 YORKE DRIVE REGENERATION UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Regeneration & Housing Strategy presented a report which updated Members on the Yorke Drive Regeneration Scheme. The report set out the background to the project and its evolution since the original concept in 2012. The report also detailed the complexities behind the scheme and the external impacts on the project. The report presented three scenarios at section 2.3 for the delivery of social housing within the scheme and projected costs. Some costs had been excluded from

the report and included in an exempt appendix given they were commercially sensitive.

The Cabinet indicated their full support for the project and delivering the scheme for the residents of Yorke Drive.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) as landowner, promotes a scheme which will deliver 207 units with an initial split of 133 market and 74 social units;
- b) alongside this, continue to negotiate with Homes England to maximise the affordable housing on the scheme through grant funding and a further report will be brought forward at the appropriate time;
- c) increase the HRA Capital budget by xx (financed by the Major Repairs Reserve) to xx to allow for future inflation and contingency;
- d) the Revenue loss of xx due to the change from Affordable Rent to Social Rent and a reduction in units from 100 to 74 be noted; and
- (e) give delegated authority to the Director - Housing, Health & Wellbeing in consultation with the Director – Resources / S151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Housing to negotiate and enter into the development agreement and subsequent JCT agreements, subject to planning permission, costs remaining within the approved budget envelope and risk profile.

Reasons for Decision:

To continue the delivery of the Yorke Drive Regeneration Programme, a key action within the Community Plan and delivering overarching transformation for the Bridge Ward.

Options Considered:

Alternative options are considered within the body of the report.

213 COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Regeneration & Housing Strategy presented a report which gave an update on the Community Grant scheme delivery for 2024-25 to date, and budget setting proposals for 2025-26 to 2028-29. During 2023/24 a review of the grant scheme criteria led to a range of changes ineligibility, grant value and prioritisation which were approved by the Cabinet in October 2023.

The first round of the community grant scheme for 2024-25 received 29 applications of which 16 were successful. Five of these grants were allocated funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund. The successful applications were listed in the report. It was proposed that the £100,000 budget for the scheme continue for 2025-26 onwards.

Councillor J Kellas raised the eligibility criteria in relation to small parish councils being

excluded from this funding opportunity. The Portfolio Holder agreed to discuss this further.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) notes the delivery of the Community Grant Scheme in 2024-25 to date; and
- b) continue to budget for the Community Grant Scheme for 2025-26 to 2028-29.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure that funding can be allocated to community groups, supporting communities to be sustainable and thrive.

Options Considered:

To withdraw the community grant scheme – this alternative has been discounted due to the demonstrable positive impact the scheme has on the local community – empowering local groups and developing community capacity and resilience.

To amend the community grant scheme criteria and prioritisation – this alternative has been discounted as the scheme criteria and prioritisation have only been in place for one year (approved Oct 2023) and continue to reflect the Council’s community plan objectives.

214 REVISED CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Public Protection presented a report which set out the purpose and revision of the Contaminated Land Strategy. The strategy was a legally required document which detailed how land would be inspected for contamination across the district.

The new strategy provided as an appendix to the report had undergone a full review, taking into account the most up to date statutory guidance available on assessing contaminated land. The strategy also recognised that the majority of assessments and remediation were now completed via the planning process through land redevelopment.

The Business Manager – Public Protection advised that the Environment Agency had submitted a late comment requesting a minor change to the section on their role and adding a further link to a national guidance document. It was confirmed that these changes would be made following approval of the strategy.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Contaminated Land Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

Reasons for Decision:

This is a legally required strategy that must be in place to set out how contaminated land is identified across the district.

Options Considered:

Not appropriate, the existing strategy is out of date and not in line with current statutory guidance.

215 PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BRUNEL DRIVE DEPOT SITE (KEY DECISION)

The Director – Communities & Environment presented a report which put forward proposals for the future development of the Brunel Drive depot site, Farrar Close and the glass recycling facility at the Lorry Park, following a strategic review of the Council's future needs.

The report set out a comprehensive background to the proposals and the Appendix gave a detailed analysis of the Brunel Drive site and Farrar Close. The analysis specifically looked at trying to accommodate all the Council's current and future needs from the site, a permanent glass bulking facility, ten new food waste vehicles, new staff vehicles and better visitor access to the museum store. The appended analysis identified four potential Master Plan options which could be accommodated in three phases. Two of these options were discounted from the outset and options three and four covered in full the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) approve the future development plan (Option 4) as set out in the attached study at Appendix A and described in the report;
- b) approve that a planning application is prepared and submitted for the permanent siting of the glass bulking facility at the Lorry Park in Newark;
- c) approve a first phase investment of £669,000 including contingency, inflation, and fees, at Brunel Drive and Farrar Close and equivalent budget being added to the Capital Programme for 25/26, in line with the timescales and phasing set out in the report; and
- d) give delegated authority to the Directors of Communities and Environment and Housing, Health and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders, to tender and deliver the phased programme of investments in line with the indicative timescale set out in the report.

Reasons for Decision:

The recommendations align with the Community Plan objectives in relation to the environment and climate change, whilst waste and recycling always features at the top of any resident polling about the services provided by the Council which matter most to them. The proposals are the most cost-effective in the circumstances and are legislatively and operationally deliverable. They facilitate effective changes in the use of buildings which are no longer required. They also facilitate the Council's ability to accommodate the long-term delivery of new services from the existing site, including food waste, and in time may open up exciting opportunities to enable public access

into the Council's museum store. Whilst there has been a prolonged impasse in terms of national waste and recycling policy and how that is to be funded, the previous Government stated they would not be funding new depots or changes to depots with the rollout of a kerbside food waste collection service and there is no real reason currently to believe that stance will change. As such, Councils will need to arrange and fund their own requirements, which is what these proposals do.

Options Considered:

The study appended to this report sets out that it is not operationally, legislatively, or financially cost-effective for the Council to try to accommodate all of its future needs on the existing Brunel Drive and Farrar Road sites., as well accommodating the glass bulking facility on that site.

The Council could look to purchase a wholly new site, but this would be financially prohibitive and is not necessary given the ability to accommodate much of the Council's operations on the existing site, whilst taking advantage of some buildings on the site which are no longer required or soon could be surplus to requirements.

The Council could look to find an alternative site for the glass bulking station now situated on the Lorry Park. However, this would require the purchase or lease of additional land and the additional construction of a glass bulking facility, which already exists on the Lorry Park. This option would carry unnecessary additional costs. Furthermore, suitable locations are likely to be very challenging to find in order to meet the Environment Agency's permitting regime and planning permission. Efforts to find an alternative site to the Lorry Park in 2023 did not yield a suitable alternative.

The Council could forego the income generated through a glass bulking site and simply take the glass to the Veolia Materials Recovery Facility at Mansfield. In this way the Council would preserve the much-requested kerbside glass recycling service, but would lose a significant quantum of the forecasted £165,000 annual income being generated through the current model, which offsets some of the costs of providing the service.

216 14 MARKET PLACE, NEWARK (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Economic Growth & Visitor Economy presented a report which informed Cabinet of project progress in respect of the 14 Market Place, Newark property, and provided recommendations for final use. Since March 2024, officers had been drawing up a specification based on the creation of a single residential unit at upper floors and commercial shell at ground floor with basement storage. This had identified a need for an uplift in the capital programme budget to £373,000.

The proposals for Newark College taking the tenancy of the ground floor and developing and activating the building for community use, along with the funding proposals were detailed in the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note and support the proposed approach to create a usable community space at ground floor and single residential apartment at upper floors for long-lease sale to the market;
- b) approve amending the existing committed Capital budget from £353,000 to £373,000 in order to cover the costs of delivering a) above;
- c) delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director – Resources authority to enter into a lease with the Lincoln College Group (LCG) for use of the ground floor and basement as a Community Information Hub for a minimum period of 3 years and to proceed with the long-leasehold sale of the apartment at upper floors, including the imposition of any necessary service charges for both uses approved;
- d) delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director – Resources authority to include within the terms of c) above a rent-free and service charge free period of 12 months, with rent for subsequent years being jointly sought by the LCG, CVS, and this Council from any revised Newark Long Term Plan for Towns (LTPfT) which shall be capped at a maximum of £9,000 per annum until 31st March 2029; and
- e) subject to c) and d) above to conclude necessary fit-out costs for the Community Information Hub, providing the envelope remains within the revised capital budget of £373,000.

Reasons for Decision:

The use of the building for community space and residential will enable worthwhile use of a key asset within the Council's property portfolio in line with town centre strategy.

Options Considered:

There is an option to 'do nothing' and mothball the building. This option has been discounted as it is a prime retail unit within Newark Town Centre and regenerating the site for future uses is a focus for the economic growth of the town.

217 TOWNS FUND PROJECT UPDATE

The Business Manager – Economic Growth & Visitor Economy presented a report which provided an update on Newark Town Fund and Long-Term Plan for Town (LTPfT) Programmes. Since the last update report presented to the Cabinet meeting on 4 November 2024, the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee had received a detailed update on projects, outputs and various case studies on 25 November 2024, and the LTPfT had been confirmed in the Autumn Budget Statement.

The report gave a summary of the Towns Fund projects and provided an update from the Town Board. The Cabinet referred to the number of apprenticeships being generated by the YMCA Community and Activity Village and how these were defined.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note and welcome the progress and achievements of Newark Towns Fund projects; and
- b) note the future of Long-Term Plan for Towns Programme following the Autumn Statement in October 2024.

Reasons for Decision:

To update Members on Newark Town Fund and Long-Term Plan for Town Programme.

Options considered:

None, the report just details the projects finding which have delivered significant investment.

218 LEVELLING UP FUND 3 PROGRAMME UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Director – Planning & Growth resented an update report in respect of the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) 3 Programme. The update report published after the initial agenda, reflected the further discussions that had been held with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to agree in principle the draw down of a deliverable portion of the LUF 3 grant in advance of confirmation of an extension beyond March 2025, and proposed wider recommendations.

The update report presented key recommendations to enable the ongoing delivery of the Ollerton and Clipstone regeneration projects, as well as giving a wider update on the programme. It was noted that a further report may be required at a future meeting, dependent on the finalisation of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the report, including the updates associated with the LUF 3 Programme;

Ollerton Project

- b) approves a capital budget of £500,000, financed initially by borrowing, to be replaced by the LUF 3 grant when received, to enable essential project development works associated with the Ollerton scheme, prior to the Council receiving a Memorandum of Understanding, as detailed in section 1.6 of the report;

Clipstone Project

- c) approves a capital budget of £200,000, financed by borrowing initially, to be replaced by LUF 3 grant when received, to enable essential project development associated with the Clipstone scheme

(Phases 2 and 3), prior to the Council receiving a Memorandum of Understanding, as detailed in section 1.9 of the report;

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

- d) approves an amendment to the existing delegation to the S151 Officer, Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Resources and Director of Planning and Growth, to include the acceptance of a partial (or full), LUF 3 grant of up to £20m, via an MoU, as detailed in sections 1.12 and 1.13 of the report; and
- e) notes the existing and proposed financial commitments immediately eligible for repayment by MHCLG, subject to a finalised partial, or full MoU, as detailed in section 1.13 of the report.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure Members are aware of the recent updates and developments associated with the LUF 3 programme, and to enable ongoing progression of both schemes for delivery within potential Government timescales. Without access to further funding, there is an elevated risk that both projects are unable to meet spend timescales detailed within this report.

It is recommended that the Council enters into an initial MoU with MHCLG at the earliest opportunity, to enable existing upfront investment to be eligible for repayment from LUF 3 Grant, in turn reducing the level of financial exposure for the Council.

Options Considered:

It remains an option for the Council to refuse to accept any future LUF 3 grant or decide not to provide further forward funding. This approach is not recommended as it would represent a missed opportunity to deliver genuine and impactful transformative change in the communities of Ollerton and Clipstone. Without additional forward funding, risk is elevated for both projects, particularly regarding timescales to deliver against LUF 3 funding requirements, potential loss of community and partnership momentum, and increased costs due to further delays.

219 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT (KEY DECISION)

The Director – Planning & Growth presented a report which updated Cabinet on matters set out in the 2023/24 Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) and sought approval to consult with Parish Councils and Parish Meetings on various issues relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Meaningful Proportion, where contributions were retained for local neighbourhoods.

It was a national requirement for the Council to produce an annual IFS setting out the current position on developer contributions which were either monies secured through CIL or onsite infrastructure provision secured through S106 agreements as part of planning applications. The 2024 IFS was attached as Appendix A to the report with a summary being presented in the report. It was noted that the most important projects were the A1 Overbridge at Fernwood and the Tolney Lane Flood

Alleviation Scheme. The Director – Planning & Growth advised that a further report on the A1 Overbridge would be brought to the Cabinet if required.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) approve the publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement, which has been produced in accordance with the legislative requirements, before the end of the calendar year; and
- b) approve consultation with Parish Councils and Parish Meetings on CIL meaningful proportion issues as set out in section 2 of the report.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure that the District Council is operating in accordance with the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Regulations.

To discuss with Parish Councils and Parish Meetings various issues related to CIL meaningful proportions.

Options Considered:

None, there is a statutory requirement to publish the IFS by the end of the calendar year.

It was considered whether or not consulting the Parish Council and Parish Meetings was necessary, but it is felt if the Council is formulating procedures, it would be appropriate to involve those impacted. In order for the Council to change the payment schedule consultation is required.

220 NEW LOCAL PLAN FOR NEWARK AND SHERWOOD (KEY DECISION)

The Director – Planning & Growth presented a report which updated the Cabinet on progress with the Amended Allocations & Development Management DPD, set out proposals in relation to the development of a new Local Plan for Newark & Sherwood, and proposed amendments to the Local Development Scheme to reflect these.

The report proposed two timetables be prepared for review, committing the Council to prepare a review as soon as possible. Both were based on assumptions which presented risk, but it was considered that whilst the systems may be different (a local plan under current regulations or one under new regulations) the overall task of preparing a plan for the district meant that the preparation work undertaken would not be wasted.

In considering the report, the Cabinet referred to future housing targets, a new Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, and the importance of community involvement in shaping the future plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the report;

- b) approve the preparation of a new Local Plan for Newark & Sherwood; and
- c) adopt amendments to the Local Development Scheme as set in Section 2 of this report and Appendix A, to come into force on 17 December 2024.

Reasons for Decision:

To allow Cabinet to note progress on the Plan Review;

To agree to begin preparation of a new Local Plan for Newark & Sherwood so that the Council can demonstrate to the Planning Inspector that it is committed to producing one; and

To allow the Council to publish an amendment to the timetable so that the Local Development Scheme can be updated to comply with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and appropriate regulations.

Options Considered:

The Inspectorate has requested that the Council confirm its position on Plan Review, therefore in order to meet these requirements it is necessary to review the Local Development Scheme.

221 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED (unanimously) that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

222 YORKE DRIVE REGENERATION UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Cabinet considered the exempt report in relation to the Yorke Drive Redevelopment Programme.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

223 ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND NATIONAL PORTFOLIO ORGANISATION EXTENSION APPLICATION (KEY DECISION) - EXEMPT APPENDIX

The Cabinet considered the exempt appendix to the report on the Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation Extension Application which contained the Human Resource implications.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

Meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Chair

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 21 January 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier, Housing

Director Leads: Sanjiv Kohli, Deputy Chief Executive, Director – Resources and S151 Officer
Suzanne Shead, Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Nick Wilson, Business Manager – Financial Services, Ext. 5317
David Price, Business Manager – Housing Income & Leasehold Management, Ext. 5538

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Key Decision
Report Title	2025/26 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting
Purpose of Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To examine the proposed income and expenditure on the HRA for the 2025/26 financial year for both revenue and capital income and expenditure, in accordance with Section 76 (Duty to prevent debit balance on the Housing Revenue Account) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. b) To provide indicative amounts of income and expenditure for the 2026/27 to 2028/29 financial years for both revenue and capital income and expenditure; and c) To set rent levels and service charges for 2025/26 (with effect from the first Monday in April 2025).
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet recommend to Council at its meeting on 11 February 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the HRA budget for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix A to the report; b) an increase of 2.7% in the 2025/26 rents of all current HRA tenancies will be applied from 7 April 2025; c) the 2025/26 service charges, as set out in Appendix C to the report; and d) the Capital Budget set out in Appendix D to the report are committed expenditure in the Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29.
Alternative Options Considered	<p>Various modelling was undertaken to assess the impact of different rent levels on the viability of the HRA 30-year business plan to arrive at the recommendation above.</p> <p>Consideration was also given to varying increases between general needs and supported (sheltered and extra care) accommodation but</p>

	no rationale was found to support this, alongside the equitable nature of any decision to do so.
Reason for Recommendations	To advise Members of the proposed HRA budget and charges in rent and service charge levels for 2025/26 and for these to be recommended to Council at its meeting on 11 February 2025.

1.0 Background Information

1.1 The setting of the HRA budget and the approval of rent levels must be completed within the required time to notify tenants of proposed changes to rents in accordance with legislation.

1.2 The key dates in the budget setting timetable are detailed in the table below:

Council determination of HRA budget and rent setting	11 February 2025
Newark & Sherwood District Council update of rent systems	16 February 2025
Generation of rent cards and letters to notify tenants of variation of their rent levels (tenants are required to be given four weeks' notice of the changes).	By end of February 2025

1.3 Any slippage from these key dates would jeopardise the implementation of rent changes from the first Monday in April 2025, and therefore, pose a risk to the sustainability of the 30-year HRA Business Plan (BP).

2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered

Statutory Duty

2.1 Section 76 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 requires local housing authorities to set a budget annually for their HRA, and that implementation of the budget proposals will not result in a debit balance (deficit position) at year-end.

2.2 Following housing financing reforms (self-financing) in April 2012 the Council's HRA has been operating within a 30-year business plan. The inputs and assumptions in the Business Plan are key to setting the HRA budgets annually for each year of the HRA's four-year medium-term financial plan (MTFP).

Rent Standard 2020

2.3 In February 2019, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government published a Direction to the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to set a Rent Standard which would apply from 2020 for five years. This was published alongside a Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing 2018 (Rent Policy Statement) for the Regulator to have regard to when setting its Rent Standard.

2.4 The Rent Standard 2020 specifies that rents must be set in accordance with the Rent Policy Statement. The Government's Rent Policy Statement allows annual rent increases to social rent and affordable rent properties by maximum of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate published for September of the preceding financial year plus 1%.

- 2.5 A new rent settlement was expected from 2025; however, government announced a 12-month extension to the current rent settlement with consultation on the social housing rent policy post April 2026 taking place in October – December 2024.
- 2.6 The consultation sought views on implementing a rent policy providing a settlement of Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate plus 1% from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031.
- 2.7 The below table shows the weighted average rents for socially rent properties in December 2024 and impact of applying the maximum permitted increase of 2.7% for 2025-26 as per the rent standard.

Unit Size	Average Rent 24/25	With increase of 2.7% applied
1 Bedroom	£85.83	£88.15
2 Bedroom	£93.94	£96.48
3 Bedroom	£99.52	£102.20
4+ Bedroom	£108.23	£111.15
Weighted Average of number of properties	£94.86	£97.43

Borrowing Cap

- 2.8 As part of the HRA self-financing reforms introduced in April 2012, the Government set a maximum amount of housing debt that each local authority could have. In subsequent years, the government awarded some local authorities limited increases to their housing borrowing limits. On 29 October 2018, the Limits on Indebtedness (Revocation) Determination 2018 revoked all previous determinations that specified limits on local authority housing indebtedness.
- 2.9 Though councils are no longer restricted in how much they can borrow in their HRAs, there is still the requirement for councils to make sure that all borrowing is affordable and proportionate within the context of their 30-year HRA business plan (BP). The Council has used the expert external advice it obtained on the assumptions in the BP to monitor the affordability of future indebtedness.
- 2.10 From the expert external advice obtained the Council has chosen to use the Interest Cover Ratio (ICR) as its borrowing boundary for the HRA. The ICR represents the cover that the HRA has against its interest cost liabilities in any year. The ICR is set to a minimum which provides comfort that if there were a sudden drop in income or increase in operating costs, there would be sufficient headroom to continue to cover debt interest payments. Anticipated future levels of indebtedness are currently viable within the plan based on this ratio and the limits will be approved as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

30-year HRA Business Plan (BP)

- 2.11 The BP summarises the viability of the Council's plans to fulfil its management, maintenance, and investment responsibilities to its HRA assets over the next 30 years. Key assumptions are made in the BP based on the council's strategic priorities and policies, detailed stock data and other factors.

- 2.12 The assumptions in the BP are key to setting the HRA budgets annually for each year of the HRA’s four-year MTFP. The main assumptions that are fed into the HRABP were noted by the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee on 25 November 2024.
- 2.13 Officers monitor relevant government policy announcements and model the implications of these on the HRA BP. Recently these have included increased legislation around building safety, including the Building Safety Act 2022, Fire Safety Act 2021, Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order 2005) and Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order 2005). The Social Housing Bill which was enacted in July 2023 will continue to bring further changes to the regulatory framework the Council operates within, with changes to consumer standards, increased scrutiny on accountability to tenants, performance, a refresh of the Decent Homes Standard, embedding the priority of decarbonisation and the introduction of enhanced regulation of the sector having implications for the long-term viability of the plan. Officers will model the impacts of these changes on the BP as further details become available and this will be refreshed when any rent standard is considered for future years.
- 2.14 As per paragraph 2.11 above, a range of scenarios have been modelled into the 30-year business plan. The recommended increase of 2.7% has been modelled into the budgets currently and hence is reflected within the attached appendices. The table below describes the alternative options compared (both annually and 30 year cumulative) against the proposed 2.7%:

Rental increase	Annual difference compared to 2.7%	30-year cumulative difference compared to 2.7%
2%	£0.186m	£8.167m
1.7%	£0.266m	£11.667m

- 2.15 As can be seen from the table above, available resources would be significantly reduced based on the alternative options which would limit the ability of the HRA to be able to meet future responsibilities that may be placed upon Local Authorities from government policy announcements as described at paragraph 2.13 above.
- 2.16 Therefore, a rent increase of 2.7% on current tenants, across all stock types is recommended in this report.
- 2.17 Currently the assumptions made within the BP together with future forecasts of income and expenditure (both capital and revenue) are affordable and sustainable within the 30-year plan, based on the recommendations within this report.
- 2.18 Priorities remain the safety and decency of council homes, modernisation of service delivery, future development of new homes to replace those lost through Right to Buy as well as meeting energy efficient homes by 2030 increasing those serviced by green energy.

Rent Cycle

- 2.19 Rent is currently charged over 48 weeks, giving tenants four “rent free weeks” albeit that the full years rent charge is the same as if charged across 52 weeks. The non-charge weeks for 2024/25 will be weeks commencing 26 May 2025, 25 August 2025, 22 December 2025 and 30 March 2026.

Affordability Considerations

- 2.20 This section provides information regarding the impact of the proposed changes to rent and services charges, as well as data on how tenants pay their rent and the support they receive from Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

Rent Level Comparable Data

- 2.21 *Table 1* compares data on average rent levels for the private rented sector (PRS) in Newark & Sherwood and in England as at October 2024 to the Council's average social housing rented stock as at December 2024.

Table 1: Comparison of data on weekly average rent levels for the PRS in Newark and Sherwood, the PRS in England, and NSDC's social rented stock

	Newark and Sherwood Private Rented (as at October 2024)	England Private (as at October 2024)	Average Rented (October)	NSDC Social Rented Stock (as at December 2024)
One Bed	£115.62		£253.85	£88.15
Two Bed	£153.46		£283.62	£96.48
Three Bed	£185.54		£315.92	£102.20
Four Bed plus	£279.69		£466.62	£111.15
Average for all categories	£169.38		£311.08	£97.43

- 2.22 For all sizes of accommodation, the Council's average social housing rents are significantly lower than those in the private rented sector.
- 2.23 *Table 2* compares 2023/24 data on average rent levels for Private Registered Providers (PRPs) in Newark & Sherwood to the Council's average social housing rents, split for each by whether properties are for general needs tenants or supported housing tenants.

Table 2: Comparison of 2023/24 data on average rent levels for PRPs in Newark and Sherwood and NSDC's social housing rents, split by general needs tenants and supported housing tenants

Type of Accommodation	Social Rent: General Needs		Social Rent: Supported Housing/Housing for Older People	
	NSDC	Private Registered Providers	NSDC	Private Registered Providers
Non-self-contained	-	-	-	£192.78
Bedsit	£65.68	£66.49	£62.61	£128.67
1 bedroom	£72.31	£86.16	£79.97	£118.46
2 bedrooms	£80.51	£101.92	£89.42	£105.94
3 bedrooms	£92.23	£104.33	£96.58	£128.75
4 bedrooms	£100.33	£114.95	-	-
5 bedrooms	£105.80	£109.04	-	-
Average self-contained	£89.09	£100.07	£85.43	£117.08
Average all types	£89.09	£100.07	£85.43	£135.93

- 2.24 For all sizes of accommodation, NSDC's average social housing rents are lower than those of the PRPs.
- 2.25 The average 2023/24 social rent levels of £100.07 (general needs tenants) and £135.93 (supported housing tenants) by PRPs in *Table 2* excludes service charges.

Housing Benefit (HB) and Universal Credit (UC)

- 2.26 A snapshot of data taken in December 2024 estimates that of the 5,392 current tenants, 3,757 (70%) received some help from benefits towards paying their rent. This has increased by 2% compared to this time last year. 1673 (31%) were in receipt of Housing Benefit and 2084 (39%) were in receipt of Universal Credit. The remaining 1,635 (30%) of tenants paid their rent without receiving help from benefits.
- 2.27 Universal Credit (UC) is the Government's working-age benefit which combines six means tested ('legacy') benefits, including Housing Benefit (HB), into a single monthly payment. UC was a central feature of the government's Welfare Reform Act 2012. The Government started rolling out UC in 2013, with the full service commencing in 2018 across Newark & Sherwood.
- 2.28 Since 2018, there has been a steady increase in the number of tenants claiming UC, with around 2,084 tenants receiving help towards their rent from UC. Of the 2,084 UC claimants, around 45% have their rent paid directly to the Council, either due to being in arrears or due to a vulnerability.
- 2.29 UC cases increased significantly during 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and have increased again as the DWP works to complete the migration of claimants from legacy benefits to UC by March 2026.
- 2.30 As the number of council housing tenants claiming UC is increasing, the number claiming Housing Benefit (HB) as a standalone ('legacy') benefit is decreasing. Around 2,179 of council households had tenant(s) in receipt of legacy HB in December 2021, compared to the 1,673 currently receiving legacy HB.
- 2.31 Despite the trends outlined above, a substantial number of council housing tenants will continue to receive legacy HB even after all relevant households have transferred to UC. This is because eligible adults of all ages (including older people) can claim legacy HB, whereas only eligible adults of working-age can claim UC. Around 47% of the council's social housing stock is designated for older people.
- 2.32 Around 1,110 of the 1,673 households, or around two-thirds, are entitled to the maximum amount of HB, and around 563 households entitled to partial HB.

Supporting Tenants

- 2.33 We offer a range of support to tenants to help them meet their housing costs and help sustain their tenancy and will continue to provide additional support with cost-of-living challenges:

- We continue with our commitment to not move to evict tenants for rent arrears if they continue to engage with us to address their debt with us;
- We recognise the importance of supporting tenants at an early stage to sustain their tenancies, especially around rent collection, benefit entitlement and arrears management;
- We also promote the use of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) where appropriate and refer tenants to partner advice agencies for specialist financial support and advice
- We have implemented new initiatives such as the Helping Hand Fund which looks to promote positive engagement with tenants through matching arrears payments.

2.34 We have also implemented further initiatives from the Tenant Welfare Fund which has targeted tenants who do not receive additional support from HB or UC towards their increase in rent. This could be due to people falling just outside of benefit support or have limited qualification such as single people or couples.

Service Charges

2.35 In addition to rent, local authorities can charge for other services they provide (service charges). Section 93 (Power to charge for discretionary services) of the Local Government Act 2003 requires charges to be set such that taking one financial year with another, the income from charges for a service does not exceed its costs of provision.

2.36 The Policy Statement on Rent for Social Housing (February 2019) sets out an expectation that service charge increases remain within the limit of rent charge of CPI + 1% to keep service charges affordable. Appendix C details the current (2024/25) and proposed (2025/26) service charges, with proposed increases to current charges of 2.7%. Subsequent paragraphs provide details about the services that tenants are charged for.

Housing-Based Services for Supported Housing and Extra Care Services

2.37 The main housing-based support service provided is a community alarm service, to help tenants live more independently. Tenants with lifeline units in their properties can raise an alarm call from anywhere in the home if they require this. Around half of the council's social housing properties have these lifeline units.

2.38 Tenants in properties with Careline units currently pay £2.50 per week for the community alarm service and this report proposes to increase £2.56 per week.

2.39 In addition to these support services, tenants in the extra care housing schemes receive additional housing management and housing-related services due to their specialist needs. The council currently has four extra care housing schemes. These are at Gladstone House, The Broadleaves, Vale View and the Bilsthorpe Bungalows.

Other Housing-Based Services

2.40 Other weekly service charges applied to tenants are for the costs of water and sewerage provided to properties at Vale View (£4.55 per week) and for the costs (where appropriate) of landscaping, lighting and drainage provided to 79 general needs properties.

2.41 The council provides several housing-related services for which it does not currently recover the cost of provision through service charges, therefore resulting in costs being met through rent income. Such services include communal cleaning, communal lighting, and grounds maintenance. Work is being undertaken to identify these costs and how they might be separated from the rent charge and identified as distinct service charges. This would help to meet the cost of provision, increase transparency, and meet the expectations of the Regulator.

Consultation with Tenants

2.42 The assumptions used in this paper to propose the HRA budget and rent setting for 2025/26 were presented to the Tenant Engagement Board on 19 December 2024.

2.43 The tenants who sit on the Tenant Engagement Board were supportive of the assumptions used in the HRA budget and the proposal to increase of rent and service charges by the 2.7%.

Revenue Budget

2.44 The budget increases reflect the focus on improving existing services that are important to our customers, repairs, building safety, responding to complaints (and learning from them) whilst always being as efficient and value for money as possible. We are increasing staff resources to better co-ordinate our front-line services and give a better customer experience to tenants. Details of the revenue budget can be found at **Appendix A and B**.

Capital Budget

2.45 The Council intends to spend £78.926m from the HRA from 2025/26 to 2028/29. This is made up of £52.354m on existing property investment and £26.572m on additional Affordable Housing.

2.46 Major schemes included in the HRA are:

Scheme Name	Summary of Proposed Financing
Kitchen & Bathroom Replacements	MRR and borrowing
Roof Replacements	MRR and borrowing
Heating Renewals	MRR and borrowing
Decarbonisation	Government Grant, MRR and Borrowing
Yorke Drive Estate Regeneration	Borrowing plus external grant
New Phases 6 of the Council House Development Programme	S106 where appropriate, Capital Receipts and Borrowing

2.47 Details of individual schemes are shown in **Appendix D**.

Capital Resources Available

- 2.48 External Grants and Contributions can provide additional resources to the Capital Programme and is subject to a detailed bidding process. Officers continue to liaise with external parties to secure the maximum available inward investment to contribute towards the delivery of the capital programme.
- 2.49 There is one grant currently forecast over the medium term which relates to Decarbonisation. It has been assumed that 50% of the budget will be available in grant.

Capital Receipts

2.50

	Other Receipt £'m	Right to Buy £'m	Right to Buy 1-4-1 £'m	Total £'m
Estimated Balance @ 1 Apr 2025	0	0.240	0	0.240
Estimated Receipts 2025/26 – 2028/29	0.490	0.921	1.473	2.884
Approved for Financing 2025/26 – 2028/29	-0.490	-0.830	-0.644	-1.964
Unallocated Capital Receipts Balance	0	0.331	0.830	1.160

- 2.51 The other receipt is the sale of a building on Lombard Street, Newark which is a property within the HRA but not a Council House, therefore is listed separately to the Right to Buy.
- 2.52 The Right to Buy (RTB) and RTB 1-4-1 figures above relate to forecast RTB sales. The Council signed a Retention Agreement with the Secretary of State relating to retained receipts (1-4-1 receipts) from properties sold under the RTB scheme on the provision of replacement social housing. The guidance now includes increased flexibilities which were announced in July 2024 and the terms have been amended for the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26, summarised as follows:
- The maximum permitted contribution from RTB receipts to replacement affordable housing has increased from 50% to 100%.
 - RTB receipts will be permitted to be used with section 106 contributions.
 - The cap on the percentage of replacements delivered as acquisitions each year (currently 50%) has been lifted.
- 2.53 Local authorities are permitted to retain the share of RTB receipts that were previously returned to the Treasury and during the Autumn Budget it was announced this would continue.
- 2.54 If the council is unable to spend its retained receipts within five years of receiving them, it must return these to Government with interest of 4% above the base rate (currently 4.75%). Use of the receipts is monitored closely to maximise where practicable and appropriate.

Major Repairs Reserve

- 2.55 The table below shows the estimated contributions to and the use of the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) in terms of Capital Financing.

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Estimated Opening Balance	5.375	4.503	4.500	4.500
Depreciation Contribution to the MRR	6.369	6.740	6.790	6.790
Revenue Contribution to the MRR	5.346	1.906	2.023	2.345
Debt Repayments	-5.041	-3.044	-6.046	-9.046
Capital Financing	-7.546	-5.605	-2.767	-4.090
Unallocated MRR Balance	4.503	4.500	4.500	0.500

Capital Financing

- 2.55 Subject to the approval of the proposals outlined above, the current plan for financing the HRA capital programme is shown below.

HRA	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	2028/29 £m
Government Grants	0.746	0.518	0.815	0.855
Contributions from Third Parties	1.152	0.000	0.000	0.000
Capital Receipts	1.285	0.222	0.254	0.202
RCCO	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Revenue Support	7.546	5.605	2.767	4.090
Borrowing	12.566	17.505	14.197	8.601
Total	23.295	23.850	18.033	13.748

- 2.56 At the end of the financial year, once all capital expenditure has been finalised (including accrued expenditure) the financing of the Capital Programme is arranged by the Section 151 Officer, in line with the Council's Constitution.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding, Sustainability, and Crime and Disorder and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Digital Implications

- 3.1 There are no digital implications directly arising from this report.

Equalities Implications

- 3.2 The proposed rent increase would apply to all occupied council social housing, rather than to the tenants themselves or to tenants in specific properties. The proposed rent increase is therefore not expected to discriminate against any of the characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.

- 3.3 The proposed rent and service charge increases are not expected to adversely impact tenants in receipt of benefits. The increase in rent and most service charges will be met by an increase in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Element.
- 3.4 The increase of state pension of 4.1% and increase of working age benefits of 1.7% in 2025, will compensate for the small number of service charges not fully eligible for increased Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Element.
- 3.5 As outlined in the report, council housing tenants claiming benefits in need of help with housing costs can request a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) from the council. The Government has not yet announced how much DHP it will be giving councils for 2025/26. Officers recognise the importance of supporting tenants of all ages to sustain their tenancies.

Financial Implications

- 3.6 All of the financial implications are set out in the body of this report or its appendices.

Tenant Implications

- 3.7 A presentation on the 30-year business plan, budgets and rent setting proposal was presented to the Tenant Engagement Board on 19 December 2024. The proposals were well received including the challenges to the HRA of new legislation, increased health and safety burdens and the refreshed regulatory regime as well as the need to increase resources in services important to tenants – particularly the repairs service.

Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

- 3.8 The implementation of the proposals in this report will directly support the council's HRA to meet multiple objectives of the Community Plan 2023-2027, such as to:
- Improve health and well-being
 - Increase the supply, choice, and standard of housing and
 - Reduce the impact of Climate Change
- 3.9 Some of the actions the council is taking to achieve the Community Plan objectives are:
- Refreshing stock condition information so the Council reprofile capital budgets to provide data driven improvement works inc. lifting the energy performance of homes and looking at green energy opportunities;
 - Build on our successful decarbonisation project, renewing over 100 oil heating systems with air source heat pumps and solar panels as part of the Warm Homes initiative currently in consultation; and
 - Evaluating and embedding recommendations from TPAS on how to build on existing arrangements to engage with and involve tenants in scrutiny and improving housing services;
 - Deliver the Housing Strategy, 2023-2028;
 - Implementing a new Housing Management System to increase efficiencies in our operations, to free up officer time to focus on engagement with tenants

Legal Implications

- 3.10 As set out in the report, the Council is under a statutory obligation to set an annual budget for the HRA. Full Council must set the budget; the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution provide for Cabinet to finalise proposals for the budget and submit them to Full Council, taking into account any recommendations made by Policy and Performance and Improvement Committee.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

2024/25 BASE BUDGET £	SUMMARY	2025/26 BASE BUDGET £	2026/27 BASE BUDGET £	2027/28 BASE BUDGET £	2028/29 BASE BUDGET £
	INCOME				
(27,350,700)	Rents: dwellings	(27,870,270)	(28,672,650)	(29,678,590)	(30,639,950)
(163,630)	Rents: non-dwellings	(156,190)	(160,880)	(165,710)	(170,680)
(1,198,280)	Charges for services	(1,430,950)	(1,473,900)	(1,518,130)	(1,563,680)
(1,513,790)	Contributions to expenditure	(1,883,370)	(1,849,890)	(1,884,160)	(1,917,910)
(30,226,400)	Sub Total - Income	(31,340,780)	(32,157,320)	(33,246,590)	(34,292,220)
	EXPENDITURE				
6,353,120	Repairs & maintenance	7,735,620	8,217,080	8,314,440	8,434,660
8,210,070	Supervision & management	8,906,430	9,147,460	9,395,390	9,648,590
1,225,450	Rents, rates, taxes & other charges	1,319,560	1,356,950	1,394,310	1,432,890
6,388,080	Depreciation & impairment	6,368,700	6,740,390	6,790,390	6,790,390
26,250	Debt management costs	26,780	27,320	27,870	28,430
368,000	Efficiency savings: prospective revenue initiatives	368,000	0	0	0
22,570,970	Sub Total - Expenditure	24,725,090	25,489,200	25,922,400	26,334,960
(7,655,430)	NET COST OF SERVICES	(6,615,690)	(6,668,120)	(7,324,190)	(7,957,260)
3,955,455	Interest payable/(receivable)	4,243,380	4,636,260	5,172,730	5,483,720
27,300	(Profit)/loss on sale of non-current assets	13,000	7,800	7,800	7,800
(3,672,675)	NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	(2,359,310)	(2,024,060)	(2,143,660)	(2,465,740)
	APPROPRIATIONS				
(27,300)	(Profit)/loss on sale of non-current assets	(13,000)	(7,800)	(7,800)	(7,800)
119,250	Pension-related costs	123,750	126,230	128,750	128,750
3,580,725	Revenue contribution to/(from) Major Repairs Reserve	2,248,560	1,905,630	2,022,710	2,344,790
0	Contributions to/(from) earmarked reserves	0	0	0	0
0	HRA (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT FOR YEAR	0	0	0	0
(2,000,000)	WORKING BALANCE brought forward (b/f)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)
(2,000,000)	WORKING BALANCE carried forward (c/f)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)

	2024/25		2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	BASE BUDGET	SUMMARY	BASE BUDGET	BASE BUDGET	BASE BUDGET	BASE BUDGET
	£		£	£	£	£
	133,470	STORES	137,060	141,000	145,030	149,170
	4,144,970	CENTRAL CHARGES INCL SLA'S	4,326,910	4,488,790	4,600,110	4,713,780
	545,830	HOUSING CHOICE	567,520	582,470	597,820	613,550
	794,870	INCOME MANAGEMENT	988,460	868,600	893,200	917,770
	127,790	INVESTMENT TEAM	78,000	77,800	77,600	77,390
	316,790	COMMUNITY CENTRES	268,330	276,890	285,790	295,050
	186,040	VALE VIEW	213,210	218,880	225,120	231,370
	176,850	STREET WARDENS	174,930	180,630	186,490	192,590
	1,047,550	VOIDS MAINTENANCE	1,240,940	1,094,080	1,123,010	1,152,740
	2,520,990	RESPONSIVE REPAIRS	2,868,260	2,947,270	3,028,650	3,111,050
	1,531,100	TENANCY & ESTATES	1,544,510	1,588,340	1,634,820	1,606,170
	(151,540)	GLADSTONE HOUSE	(239,330)	(245,250)	(252,710)	(260,310)
	1,599,550	COMPLIANCE SERVICES	2,306,140	2,457,070	2,409,230	2,462,620
	(50,310)	BOUGHTON EXTRA CARE SCHEME	(82,040)	(84,080)	(85,700)	(87,550)
	348,440	CARELINE SERVICES	268,280	347,170	356,980	367,040
	25,980	CPOOL/SEWAGE EMPTYING/REPAIRS	26,740	27,530	28,350	29,200
	406,800	YORKE DRIVE SCHEME	391,550	399,390	407,370	415,520
	20,000	COMMUNITY HUBS	19,830	20,230	24,390	24,870
	(21,380,600)	HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	(21,714,990)	(22,054,930)	(23,009,740)	(23,969,280)
	(7,655,430)	NET COST OF SERVICES	(6,615,690)	(6,668,120)	(7,324,190)	(7,957,260)

Newark and Sherwood District Council (NSDC) proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) charges for 2025/26

2.70%

Service charge	2024/25 Charge (£)	Proposed 2025/26 charge (£)	Frequency	Other information
<u>CareLine service</u>				
Lifeline alarm monitoring. Advice, contact of next of kin or emergency service if required by tenant	2.50	2.56	per week	All tenants
Sensor rental and monitoring for two to five sensors	1.82	1.50	per week	All tenants. Lifeline customers only
<u>Additional Tenancy Assistance (opt-in service)</u>				
	6.05	6.21	per week	
<u>Gladstone House</u>				
Support Charge	2.50	2.56	per week	
Intensive Housing Management Charge	81.50	83.70	per week	
TV Licence	0.21	0.21	per week	
Meal Charge	44.29	45.48	per week	
<u>Broadleaves</u>				
Support Charge	2.50	2.56	per week	
Intensive Housing Management Charge (Apartment)	82.27	84.49	per week	
Intensive Housing Management Charge (Bungalow)	68.64	70.49	per week	
TV Licence	0.27	0.27	per week	
Meal Charge	55.60	57.10	per week	
<u>Vale View</u>				
Intensive Housing Management Service	93.81	96.34	per week	
Support Charge	2.50	2.56	per week	
Water Charge	4.55	4.55	per week	
<u>Extra Care Bungalows, Bilsthorpe</u>				
Intensive Housing Management Service	120.89	70.49	per week	
Support Charge	2.50	2.56	per week	
<u>Other charges relating to dwellings or tenants</u>				
New build landscaping, lighting and drainage	2.20 - 8.34	2.25-8.56	per week	
<u>Leasehold</u>				
Annual Leasehold Management Fee	146.21	150.15	per annum	
<u>Garages</u>				
Garage Rent	10.57	10.85	per week	VAT added if let to non-council tenant
Garage Plot	49.66	51.00	annually	VAT added if let to non-council tenant
Garage Port	4.71	4.83	per week	VAT added if let to non-council tenant

CODE	SCHEME	EXTERNAL FUNDING	NSDC COSTS	TOTAL SCHEME COST	BEFORE 2025/26 INC FORECAST FOR 2024/25	PROPOSED BUDGET 2025/26	PROPOSED BUDGET 2026/27	PROPOSED BUDGET 2027/28	PROPOSED BUDGET 2028/29
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT									
PROPERTY INVESTMENT PROGRAMME									
S91100	Roof Replacements		7,327,210	7,327,210		1,700,000	1,785,000	1,874,250	1,967,960
S91218	Kitchens & Bathrooms		9,575,120	9,575,120		2,221,540	2,332,620	2,449,250	2,571,710
S91300	External Fabric		1,218,000	1,218,000		378,000	300,000	280,000	260,000
S91412	Doors & Windows		1,206,840	1,206,840		280,000	294,000	308,700	324,140
S91500	Other Structural		646,530	646,530		150,000	157,500	165,380	173,650
S91535	Dpc Works		271,540	271,540		63,000	66,150	69,460	72,930
S93100	Electrical		3,448,100	3,448,100		800,000	840,000	882,000	926,100
S93300	Passenger Lifts		220,710	220,710		53,550	54,620	55,710	56,830
S93500	Heating		4,317,630	4,317,630		1,000,000	1,050,000	1,102,500	1,165,130
S93622	Pv Invertors		889,520	889,520		214,200	218,480	222,850	233,990
S93626	Decarbonisation	4,062,368	4,580,328	8,642,696	2,272,426	1,477,980	1,551,880	1,629,470	1,710,940
S93628	EPC		1,724,050	1,724,050		400,000	420,000	441,000	463,050
S95100	Garages, Footpaths, Walkways		220,710	220,710		53,550	54,620	55,710	56,830
S95200	Environmental Works		2,118,840	2,118,840		514,080	524,360	534,850	545,550
S95208	Sewerage Works		30,000	30,000		30,000			
S95252	Flood Defence Systems		10,000	10,000		10,000			
S95254	Estate Remodelling		60,000	60,000		60,000			
S95292	Communal Areas		46,170	46,170		10,710	11,250	11,810	12,400
S95400	Void Works		1,293,038	1,293,038		300,000	315,000	330,750	347,288
S97100	Asbestos		264,860	264,860		64,260	65,550	66,860	68,190
S97200	Fire Safety		1,002,560	1,002,560			318,020	333,920	350,620
S97218	Enhanced Fire Risk Assessments		240,000	240,000		240,000	0		
S97221	Fire Doors Various Locations		645,600	645,600		645,600	0		
S97400	Disabled Adaptations		4,341,120	4,341,120		1,007,190	1,057,550	1,110,430	1,165,950

CODE	SCHEME	EXTERNAL FUNDING	NSDC COSTS	TOTAL SCHEME COST	BEFORE 2025/26 INC FORECAST FOR 2024/25	PROPOSED BUDGET 2025/26	PROPOSED BUDGET 2026/27	PROPOSED BUDGET 2027/28	PROPOSED BUDGET 2028/29
S97500	Legionella		344,810	344,810		80,000	84,000	88,200	92,610
S98100	Building Safety		1,396,160	1,396,160		185,690	383,970	403,170	423,330
S98101	Fire Alarm Systems		35,000	35,000		35,000			
S98103	Structural Surveys - Elivated Walkways		150,000	150,000		150,000			
S98104	Scooter Shed		45,000	45,000		45,000			
S98108	Door Entry Systems		50,000	50,000		50,000			
S99100	Property Investment Contingency		240,000	240,000		60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
S99102	Investment Programme Fees		2,605,070	2,605,070		605,020	634,810	665,970	699,270
	SUB TOTAL PROPERTY INVESTMENT	4,062,368	50,564,516	54,626,884	2,272,426	12,884,370	12,579,380	13,142,240	13,748,468
AFFORDABLE HOUSING									
SA1031	Site Acquisition (Incl RTB)	0	2,310,532	2,310,532	710,532	1,600,000			
SA1033	Yorke Drive Estate Regeneration	986,766	17,330,815	18,317,580	3,046,691	5,000,000	10,270,889		
SA1090	Phase 6	0	4,891,000	4,891,000				4,891,000	
SA1092	Phase 6 Cluster 2	0	771,000	771,000	250,000	521,000			
SA1093	Phase 6 Cluster 3	0	1,500,000	1,500,000		1,000,000	500,000		
SA1094	Phase 6 Cluster 4	0	1,500,000	1,500,000		1,000,000	500,000		
SA1095	Phase 6 Cluster 5	0	1,000,000	1,000,000		1,000,000			
SC2002	New Housing Management System	0	856,000	856,000	566,667	289,333			
	SUB TOTAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING	986,766	30,159,347	31,146,113	4,573,891	10,410,333	11,270,889	4,891,000	0
	TOTAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	5,049,134	80,723,862	85,772,996	6,846,317	23,294,703	23,850,269	18,033,240	13,748,468



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 21 January 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Peacock, Strategy, Performance & Finance

Director Lead: Sanjiv Kohli, Deputy Chief Executive Director - Resources

Lead Officers: Dave Richardson, ICT & Digital Services Business Manager, Ext. 5405
 Stacy Carter, Senior Information Governance and Data Protection Officer, Ext. 5216

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Non-Key Decision
Report Title	Implementation of an Information Security Management System (ISMS)
Purpose of Report	To provide Cabinet with an understanding of implementation of an Information Security Management System (ISMS) for legal and regulatory compliance.
Recommendations	That Cabinet approve the Implementation of the ISMS for the Council.
Alternative Options Considered	Various alternative frameworks and the option to take no action have been evaluated. However, this international standard for information security is mandated by the Council for procuring systems and technology, where applicable.
Reason for Recommendations	To align with the community plan objective 8: To be a top performing, modern and accessible Council. Community trust in the Council to manage and use their data in a secure and compliant way, whilst demonstrating transparency.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This report outlines the design and implementation of the Information Security Management System (ISMS) for the Council, following the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standard. The purpose of the ISMS is to protect the Council’s information assets from various threats, ensuring confidentiality, integrity, and availability.
- 1.2 The primary objective of the ISMS is to establish a framework that protects all council information assets, both physical and electronic, from internal and external threats. This framework complies with the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standard and aligns with the Council’s regulatory, operational, and contractual obligations.

- 1.3 The Corporate Information Governance Group (CIGG) is made up of Senior Leaders and Business Managers across the Council and are responsible for the effective management of Information Security and Information Governance risks across the Council and wholly owned companies. Therefore, the CIGG is responsible for managing the ISMS, ensuring that its implementation and maintenance are cohesive and effective. Work to date has been a collaborative effort, with multiple business units across the Council working together to design the ISMS with consideration to operational impact. The shared approach not only promotes a unified security posture but also ensures that the ISMS is tailored to meet the specific needs and challenges of the Council, thereby enhancing overall compliance and security.
- 1.4 Furthermore, within our supply chain and contractual agreements, we recommend and request ISO27001 certification as part of our due diligence process to ensure that suppliers safeguard the Council's data assets, therefore there is a reasonable expectation that the Councils works towards this standard.
- 1.5 Organisations implement ISO27001 to establish a robust Information Security Management System (ISMS) that safeguards its information assets against internal and external threats. This certification ensures compliance with regulatory, operational, and contractual obligations, enhances data confidentiality, integrity, and availability, and fosters a culture of security through regular risk assessments, asset management, access control, and incident response.
- 1.6 Additionally, it promotes trust within our communities as the custodians of their data. Furthermore, promotes stakeholder engagement, as employees, contractors, and external partners are educated and aligned on maintaining consistent information security practices, thereby reinforcing the Council's overall security posture and reputation.
- 1.7 In current times, the importance of ISO27001 certification is more pronounced than ever due to several evolving factors.
 - a) Firstly, the post-pandemic shift towards more digital systems has increased the volume and sensitivity of data being processed, necessitating enhanced security measures to protect against breaches.
 - b) Secondly, the rise in cyber threats, with hackers and malicious actors becoming more sophisticated, requires organisations to adopt comprehensive security frameworks like ISO27001 to safeguard their information assets.
 - c) Additionally, the complexity of modern work environments and the growing number of staff can inadvertently lead to data breaches, emphasising the need for stringent security protocols.
 - d) Lastly, the proliferation of remote working has expanded the attack surface, making it imperative for organisations to ensure robust security practices are in place to protect data accessed from various locations.
- 1.8 The successful implementation of an Information Security Management System means the Council is adhering to legislative, regulatory and third party data management requirements such as the ICO requirements, UK data privacy legislation and the Department of Work and Pensions Memorandum of Understanding (DWP MOU).

- 1.9 The ISMS framework encompasses several components, including risk assessment, asset management, access control, and incident response. Each of these components plays a crucial role in maintaining the security posture of the council's information systems. Risk assessments are conducted regularly to identify potential vulnerabilities and threats, allowing for timely mitigation measures. Asset management ensures that all information assets are accounted for and protected, while access control measures restrict unauthorised access to sensitive data.
- 1.10 Additionally, the ISMS includes a robust incident response plan that outlines procedures for detecting, reporting, and responding to security incidents. This plan ensures that any breaches are managed swiftly and effectively, minimising potential damage to the council's operations and reputation. Regular audits and reviews are also conducted to ensure continuous improvement and compliance with the ISO/IEC 27001:2022 standard.
- 1.11 The ISMS provides foundational support to new legislation, government changes and operational demands by ensuring a secure data management approach.

1.12 Next steps for the ISMS implementation

The next steps include:

- a) Implement ISMS policies and track progress with action logs and non-conformity lists.
 - b) Expand the risk log and ensure all staff understand their security responsibilities.
 - c) Provide ongoing training programs to maintain staff awareness of ISMS policies.
 - d) Conduct internal audits to ensure compliance and identify improvement areas.
 - e) Establish a review process for continuous ISMS effectiveness and alignment with Council goals.
- 1.13 A policy map is included (**Appendix A**) that acts as a visual representation of policies, terms, roles and responsibilities, control sections and acknowledges supporting strategies and plans.

2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered

- 2.1 Approve the implementation of the Information Security Management System (ISMS) for the Council, with oversight by CIGG, to mitigate information security risks within our community.
- 2.2 Information & Communication Technology, security and information governance, systems and processes are fundamental to all activities of the Council. Without robust policies and controls, the Council would be unable to operate at the high standard that our communities now expect and deserve.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

3.1 Financial Implications

No financial implications in this report.

3.2 Human Resources Implications - HR2425/3117 SL

- a) The implementation of the ISMS will give employees a consistent standard to work to and provide for a clear framework in which they can operate safely and with confidence.
- b) Employees will need to be adequately trained, and it is noted that the implementation plan makes provision for training and cultural change over the 2-year period with some workshops, training programmes and courses provided in person and on the Ambition Academy e-learning platform.
- c) We aim to foster a 'no blame' culture, and we would encourage staff to report any mistakes they make when handling data. However, failure to adhere to the new requirements may, in serious or repeated circumstances, lead to disciplinary action, and employees should be made aware of the impact this could have on their employment during training and in policy or procedural documents.

3.3 Legal Implications

Cabinet is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. Successful implementation of ISMS will assist the Council in meeting its statutory data protection obligations.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None.

Information Security Management System (ISMS) Policy Map

IS 01 Information Security Management Policy	
IS 01 Glossary of terms	IS 01 Roles and responsibilities

(5) Organisation Controls Section		(6) People Controls Section	(7) Physical Controls Section	(8) Technological Controls Section		ISMS supporting strategies and plans
DP 01 Data protection policy	IS 05 Information classification and handling policy	IS 06 Information security awareness and training policy	IS 04 Information security risk management policy	IS 09a Mobile and teleworking policy	IS 18 Information transfer policy	Cyber strategy
DP 02 Data retention policy	IS 07 Acceptable use policy		IS 10 Business continuity policy	IS 11 Backup policy	IS 19 Secure development policy	
DP 03 Data Breach & Security Incident Management policy	IS 08 Clear desk and Clear screen policy		IS 20 Physical and environmental security policy	IS 12 Malware and antivirus policy	IS 22 Cryptographic control and encryption policy	
IS 02 Access control policy	IS 23 Documents and records policy		IS 13 Change management policy	IS 25 Vulnerability & patch management policy		
IS 03 Data & information asset management policy	IS 30 Data Protection Impact Assessment policy		IS 14 Third party supplier security policy	IS 26 Cloud service policy		
			IS 15 ISMS Continual improvement policy	IS 27 Intellectual property rights policy		
			IS 16 Logging and monitoring Policy	IS 28 Bring your own device (BYOD) policy		
			IS 17 Network security management policy	IS 29 Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy		



Report to: Cabinet Meeting – 21 January 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Peacock, Strategy, Performance & Finance

Director Lead: John Robinson, Chief Executive

Lead Officer: Nick Wilson, Business Manager - Financial Services, Ext. 5317
Shanade Bradley, Estates Officer – Corporate Property, Ext. 3100

Report Summary	
Type of Report	<p>Open Report / Key Decision</p> <p><i>There is an exempt version of this report which contains exempt information as defined under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, Paragraphs 3 and 5 under which the Cabinet has the power to exclude the press and public if it so wishes.</i></p> <p><i>It is considered that the need to treat the information in this report as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosure because it contains commercially sensitive information and information which is subject to legal privilege. This information has been redacted in this open report.</i></p>
Report Title	Lowfield Lane Disposal
Purpose of Report	To agree revised terms for the disposal of land at Lowfield Lane, Balderton to Arkwood Developments Ltd.
Recommendations	That Cabinet approve the revised sale price of [REDACTED] for the land at Lowfield Lane, Balderton as detailed in the report, subject to confirmation from Nottinghamshire County Council on the Green Adoption at [REDACTED]; any adjustment in the offer in relation to the Green Adoption sum to be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance and Finance for decision.
Alternative Options Considered	Alternative options are set out in paragraphs 2.10 to 2.12 of the report.
Reason for Recommendations	In order to ensure that the Council secures the best consideration for the land which was previously purchased by the Council for residential redevelopment on the basis that it was both a largely allocated housing site and was entirely within the Newark Urban Area where the principle of residential development is acceptable.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In January 2022, the Policy & Finance Committee agreed to the exclusive disposal of land at Lowfield Lane, Balderton to Arkwood Developments Ltd, for the sum of £4,400,000.
- 1.2 The reason for the decision was to enable the Council's housing development company to purchase their second site to build homes and generate profits to be distributed back to the Council in dividends as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. As an allocated housing site in the Council's Development Plan this was preferred to a disposal to the general housing market to provide the Council with greater influence over the quality and sustainability of the homes provided whilst also ensuring a reasonable market value for the land.
- 1.3 Since January 2022 there have been a number of matters which have impacted on the scope and viability of the development. This has included changes to planning guidance (notably car parking guidance requiring greater provision and an increase in S106 developer contributions), the results of more detailed ecological work on the site (resulting in a significant reduction in developable land to protect habitat) a reduction in developable area and inflationary challenges across the development industry which have far outstripped any parallel rises in market returns. On this latter issue Members will be aware that this Council has been affected by such challenges in terms of contractor insolvency (notably Woodheads) and the need for budgetary increases (32 Stodman Street and Clipstone Holdings).

2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered

- 2.1 Following the granting of planning permission on 11 November 2024, the Council received a revised offer letter from Arkwood Developments Ltd on 13 December 2024 which proposes a revised offer to purchase Lowfield Lane. The revised offer is made as a result of a number of changes to the proposed scheme for the site through the planning process and wider market conditions which have been outside of the company's control. The revised offer is attached at Appendix A in the exempt report. This sets out a summary of the journey of the planning application and details how the revised offer has been calculated.
- 2.2 The original offer on 10 December 2021 was for ██████ for the land which forecast to achieve a commercial return of ██████ being 10.03% of Gross Development Value (GDV).
- 2.3 Throughout the planning process a number of issues have necessitated changes to the proposed housing layout which has impacted the viability of the scheme. This has included:
 - Retention of biodiversity-rich meadow land, which has significantly reduced the 'developable area' of the site;
 - Retention of further hedgerows, which has resulted in more points of access and locating hedgerows outside of curtilage within public realm which is less efficient from a cost perspective;
 - Removal of parking courtyards and greater car parking requirements which has required layout changes which are less cost efficient

- A widening of the range of house types to better reflect needed housing mix which includes some lower value units;
- An increase in S106 Developer Contributions from those originally anticipated, notably for the replacement of off-site ecological habitat and its associated maintenance for a 30-year period (a total impact of £460,184).

2.4 In addition to amendments specific to the site and planning process the scheme has been affected, as is the case nationally, by unprecedented rises in inflationary costs. Members will be aware that this has affected a number of the Council’s own schemes within its Capital programme. The BCIS index on cost inflation has risen from between December 2021 (the time of the original offer) and December 2024 by circa 13.4%.

2.5 Given the above impacts a revised offer from Arkwood has now been received of [REDACTED]. The detail of the changes in the valuation from Arkwoods perspective are included within exempt Appendix A. This includes changes based on a reduction in the number of deliverable units, an allowance for provision of offsite ecological improvements, increases in costs of the scheme and additional s106 contributions.

2.6 Two further valuations of the land have been commissioned (via Wilks, Head and Eve and Pygott and Crone) by the Council in order to demonstrate that best value is being achieved. The valuations are detailed in the table below. The valuations provided are based on the planning consent that was granted and hence include the constraints now known to be present on the land in addition to the current market conditions. These are attached as Appendices B&C to the exempt report.

Valuer	Value
Wilks, Head and Eve	[REDACTED]
Pygott and Crone	[REDACTED]

2.7 Based on the table above, it is proposed that Arkwood’s revised offer provides the Council with best value for the land for the consideration of [REDACTED].

2.8 Arkwood’s offer is subject to an assumption they have made regarding the Green Adoption by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC). At the time of offer and writing this report, NCC are yet to respond to Arkwood in relation to their cost of adoption. Arkwood have made an assumption within their appraisal that this cost would equate to [REDACTED]. The offer is therefore conditional that the cost does not exceed [REDACTED]. In the event that it either exceeds or is below [REDACTED] the land value will be adjusted accordingly.

Additional Benefits

2.9 As detailed in the January 2022 Policy & Finance Committee report there are a number of additional benefits to the Council from a sale of the land to Arkwood for market value. This includes an additional [REDACTED] in interest receivable for the loan facility that the Council has in place with Arkwood and an estimated [REDACTED] dividends receivable by the Council on the back of the sale of properties. This is an estimate based on assumptions of the company’s overheads and corporation tax. Any dividends that the Council do receive will not be project specific and will be based on the company’s overall profits from all of its activities.

Other Options

- 2.10 The Council could refuse the revised offer outright and request Arkwood to proceed to complete the sale on the original terms or seek to negotiate a higher sale value somewhere between the original and revised offers. Neither of these options are considered realistic, deliverable or in the Council's interest. Arkwood has set out its position that it is entitled to terminate the contract for sale in the circumstances if the revised offer is not accepted; Officers consider this position to be justified as the viability of the development has been materially affected due to the factors set out in exempt Appendix A. The revised offer exceeds the independent valuations obtained and detailed at paragraph 2.6 above, therefore it is not considered necessary to seek to negotiate a higher sale value.
- 2.11 The Policy & Finance Committee report of 27 January 2022 explored the alternative option of selling the land on the open market; this option was rejected as it did not deliver the Council's strategic aims of both housing delivery, and financial sustainability relative to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan provided by Arkwood's involvement. In addition, as the Council's wholly owned company, Arkwood does not seek as high a commercial return as other developers and is therefore able to deliver a more diverse mix of housing including lower value units which generate lower returns, but which are much needed in the community. The position on this alternative option has not changed, in particular with reference to the independent valuations referenced at paragraph 2.6 of this report. The Council's Acquisitions and Disposals Policy allows for disposal to be negotiated with a single party such as Arkwood. There is also a risk that by going to the open market the Council could fail to secure a buyer at all if Arkwood withdraw interest.
- 2.12 The Policy & Finance Committee report of 29 June 2017 confirmed the land purchase based on use for strategic residential development, as most of the land was already allocated for that purpose. The proposal offers the best disposal value that can reasonably be obtained, together with associated benefits of delivering much needed housing especially considering new targets now being introduced by Government, and the Medium-Term Financial Plan benefits already set out in this report. There are no alternative uses that would offer a viable and comparable return which achieves Best Value to the Council as landowner given the constraints of the site.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications

- 3.1 Currently the Council has ██████████ financed within the Capital Programme which is attributable to the sale of this land. The reduction in consideration from the land would therefore not impact the Council's financing of the capital programme and hence would therefore not immediately impact on the Councils revenue account due to additional

borrowing being required. There would however be [REDACTED] less capital receipts available going forward in order to finance future capital activity.

- 3.2 The Council stands to receive [REDACTED] from the sales proceeds for the land and hence this is over and above the market valuation as described at paragraph 2.14. Hence it can be demonstrated that a sale at this revised offer price would constitute best value for the Council. Additionally to this, the borrowing interest receivable would be a revenue income for the Council at [REDACTED]. Further to this, an estimated [REDACTED] in dividends would be receivable in revenue income form, from the [REDACTED] (after overheads and corporation tax have been applied).

Legal Implications

- 3.3 The Council is allowed by virtue of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council's Acquisitions and Disposals Policy to dispose of land in any manner it wishes, providing the disposal is for a consideration (value) not less than the best that can reasonably be obtained. The report confirms that the proposal meets this requirement. Further, it sets out that the proposal is likely to contribute to the achievement of economic and social wellbeing for the residents of the District, by contributing to the Council's strategic aims of both housing delivery, and financial sustainability.

3.4



- 3.5 If the proposal in this report is approved agreement should be reached to terminate the 2023 contract for sale. A fresh contract for sale should be agreed between the parties; it is anticipated that exchange of contracts and final completion of the sale would take place simultaneously.
- 3.6 Cabinet is the appropriate decision-making body to consider this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Planning Application reference 22/02375/FULM is published: - <https://publicaccess.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=RMMEX6LBG7W00&activeTab=summary>

29 June 2017 Policy & Finance Committee Report

*Exempt Report available for confidential inspection by District Councillors: - 27 January 2022
Policy & Finance Committee Report*



Report to: Cabinet Meeting – 21 January 2025

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Simon Forde, Climate & the Environment

Director Lead: Matthew Finch, Director - Communities & Environment

Lead Officers: Matt Adey, Environmental Development Manager, Ext. 5253
Danielle Davies, Environmental Development Officer

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Non-key Decision
Report Title	Motion for the Ocean - Action Plan Update
Purpose of Report	To update on the Council’s Motion for the Ocean commitments, activities to date and future plans.
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet approve the following requests to enable future initiatives to be carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) approve the transfer of £10,000 from the Cleaner, Safer, Greener reserve to Environmental Services to allow the organisation of day-to-day activities around the commitment to grow ocean literacy; and b) approve an additional £45,000 for the year 2025/26 budget to finance a touring theatre company to visit all 45 primary schools across the district to deliver a whole-school performance as part of the commitment to ensure all primary school-aged children have a first-hand experience of the ocean, in line with the Motion for the Ocean commitment.
Alternative Options Considered	Alternative options are set out in detail in paragraph 6 of the report and summarised at paragraph 7.
Reasons for Recommendations	To grow ocean literacy and champion ocean recovery, funding must be made available deliver the aspirations within the Motion for the Ocean and to engage young people in the health of the waterways that surround them.

1. Background

- 1.1. At the meeting of Full Council meeting on 17 October 2023, Councillors from all parties unanimously voted to support a Motion for the Ocean put forward by Cllr. Emma Oldham and seconded by Cllr. Keith Melton and declared an urgent need for ocean recovery. In doing so, the Council became the first Midlands authority to formally vow to act to protect our waterways and ocean in the fight against climate change and

pollution. Since then, on 1 January 2024, Cllr. Paul Peacock, Leader of the Council and Cllr. Emma Oldham, the then Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment, wrote to Central Government declaring urgent need for ocean recovery and calling on the Government to take action (**Appendix A**).

- 1.2. As a result of the declaration, a Motion for the Ocean Officer Group was created; the first Newark & Sherwood Flood Partnership Meeting was held on 23 February 2024 and Cllr. Emma Oldham formed part of the panel discussion titled Meeting the EIP's Clean Water Goal at the Environmental Improvement Plan Conference on 8 July 2024.
- 1.3. The Motion for the Ocean has been created to enable local authorities to play their part in realising a clean, healthy and productive ocean and all the direct economic, health and wellbeing benefits it will bring. The #Motion4theOcean is a blueprint for local action, developed by leading ocean experts Emily Cunningham, Dr. Pamela Buchan, and Nicola Bridge together with Councillors and Council Officers from across England.
- 1.4. So far, twenty-nine councils have passed a locally adapted Motion for the Ocean since Plymouth Council passed it in 2021 (**Appendix B**). The majority of these are coastal councils; however, the responsibility for ocean action lies equally with inland councils.
- 1.5. Following the #Motion4TheOcean blueprint for inland councils, Newark & Sherwood District pledged to champion ocean recovery as outlined below:
 - A. Collaborate with responsible authorities and others with an interest in the River Trent to bring an action plan and to review the timetable to Cabinet within 12 months. Longer-term, we commit to making this report publicly available on the Newark and Sherwood District Council website and to subsequent bi-annual progress reporting at the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee.
 - I. Embed protection and recovery of the River Trent and its tributaries in decision making by the Council (particularly in planning, regeneration, waste, skills, and economic policy), in line with our actions to mitigate the Climate and Ecological Emergencies and to consider nature-based solutions in our journey towards a carbon neutral and climate resilient future.
 - II. Work with Severn Trent, the Environment Agency, developers, and other agencies to explore ways to improve the water quality of our rivers and coastal waters in our district benefitting nature and residents alike.
 - III. Update the Council's Climate Change Plan to recognise how land and rivers connect to, impact the ocean, and strive to support ocean recovery through a source-to-sea approach. Ensure any future relevant plans, set out in our new Development Plan 2024 to 2029, also adopts this approach.
 - B. Grow ocean literacy (where a person understands the ocean's impact on them and their impact upon the ocean) and marine citizenship in Newark & Sherwood, including:
 - I. Collaborating with the responsible authorities with the aim of ensuring that all primary school-aged children in Newark and Sherwood have a first-hand experience of the ocean or River Trent, striving to engage home-schooled children.

- II. Promoting sustainable and equitable experience and awareness of the ocean or River Trent through physical and digital experiences for all residents; and
 - III. Through these actions, embed understanding of the 'source to sea' approach and how all people, wherever they live, impact and are impacted by ocean health.
- C. Use our website and other communication channels to provide updates on the recovery of our rivers, and signpost to opportunities and guidance that enable residents to become more ocean literate and to get involved with river and marine citizenship activities and to stop pollution at its source.
 - D. Ensure that the Council's Biodiversity Portfolio Holder, or Cabinet in any future absence of a designated Portfolio Holder, champions ocean recovery in line with the pledges laid out in this motion.
 - E. Recognise that wherever we live we share responsibility for sustainable marine management and that the Leader will write to the Government calling on them to put the ocean into recovery by 2030, following expert guidance as outlined in.

2. Project Objectives

These objectives are taken from the Project Initiation Document created by the Motion for the Ocean Officer Group

2.1. **Grow Ocean Literacy for Primary School-Aged Children**

A. Current work in primary schools:

While there is no specific focus on ocean health within the current curriculum framework, there are objectives from the National Curriculum which provide opportunities to teach pupils about the impact pollution has on our waterways.

- I. **Key Stage 2 Geography Objective:** *describe and understand key aspects of: physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle.*
- II. **Key Stage 2 Science (Year 4) Objective:** *recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things.*
- III. **Key Stage 2 Science (Year 5) Objective:** *within the statutory and non-statutory guidance for the topic of 'properties and changes of materials' there are opportunities to explore plastic as a material and the impact it has on our environment.*

All schools make provision for Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education which provides a cross-curricular link to cover teaching around ocean health and recovery. The PSHE Association provides schools with a framework to follow which helps pupils understand more about 'Living in the Wider World'.

- I. **Key Stage 1 Objectives:** *how people and other living things have different needs; about the responsibilities of caring for them; about things they can do to help look after their environment.*

II. **Key Stage 2 Objectives:** *the importance of having compassion towards others; shared responsibilities we all have for caring for other people and living things; how to show care and concern for others; ways of carrying out shared responsibilities for protecting the environment in school and at home; how everyday choices can affect the environment (e.g. reducing, reusing, recycling; food choices).*

B. Enhance knowledge relating to ‘ocean literacy’ by ensuring that all primary school-aged children in Newark and Sherwood have a first-hand experience of the ocean or River Trent:

See ‘future proposals’ for challenges and opportunities in achieving this.

2.2. **Collaborate with Responsible Authorities and Others with an Interest in the River Trent**

A. Determine the health of the River Trent and where responsibilities lie:

The Environment Agency hold responsibility for the overall health of the river. In 2023 the River Trent and its tributaries within the district of Newark and Sherwood saw over 14,568 hours of sewage being discharged, as part of 1,521 spills that occurred throughout the year. The River Trent is split into two parts: The Lower Trent and Erewash, and the Staffordshire Trent Valley. The district falls under The Lower Trent and Erewash catchment which saw 58,696 hours of sewage discharged from 8,555 counted spills across 2023. The river flows downstream towards The Lower Trent and Erewash catchment from the Staffordshire Trent Valley where 17,588 hours of sewage discharge was recorded from 3,532 known spills (*Appendix C*).

B. Embed protection and recovery of the River Trent and its tributaries in decision making by the council:

This is linked to Goal 13 ‘Life below Water’ Sustainable Development Goal.

C. Develop an action plan for recovery of the River Trent:

In 2019, the Environment Agency commissioned Atkins to develop the Trent Gateway Masterplan with the vision to create a thriving river corridor for fish, wildlife, and people along the River Trent. The aim is to deliver a healthier watercourse that also reduces flood risk, creates habitats, and complements the ambition to support sustainable growth. The masterplan consists of short-, medium- and long-term projects ranging from 1 – 20+ years. We are working with relevant groups along the Trent to develop this project further.

D. Work with Severn Trent, the Environment Agency, developers, and other agencies to explore ways to improve the water quality of our rivers and coastal waters:

The Trent Gateway Masterplan had a Project Steering Group in the development of the vision, comprising of representatives from numerous agencies (*Appendix D*).

E. Update Climate Emergency Strategy and corresponding action plan to feature the Motion for the Ocean Strategy:

An updated version for the Climate Emergency Strategy is due in Spring 2025.

3. Ocean Literacy Achievements

3.1. Open Doors' Artist in Residence Paper Boat Crafts

During half term, Tuesday 13 – Friday 16 February 2024, people of all ages were invited to create their own paper boats, colouring them in and sending them down the collaborative paper version of the River Trent (*Appendix E Figure 1*). Open Doors' Artist in Residence at the National Civil War Centre, Vanessa Stone, led the creative craft putting her own spin on the activity, which was heavily influenced by Motion for the Ocean, raising awareness of the river's importance to residents.

3.2. Graffiti Hotspot Transformation

In April 2024, Year 4 pupils from Barnby Road Academy helped transform a graffiti hotspot with bright and colourful works of art. Barnby Road bridge and Clay Lane bridge underpass were freshened up after the school's original artwork from 2021 was vandalised (*Appendix E Figure 2*). Working with graffiti specialists Imageskool, their artwork depicted scenes of the ocean and a green forest. The murals serve as a reminder to passersby to take care of the planet as it takes care of us. This project was supported by Newark & Sherwood District Council and by the Safer Streets fund.

3.3. The Plastic Ocean Show

A. On Saturday 27th April 2024, Newark was captivated by a huge 18-metre-long, inflatable whale when it took centre stage in Newark Market Place (*Appendix E Figure 3*). The event, run by the Economic Growth and Visitor Economy Team in partnership with Newark Town Centre Partnership and provided by Circo Rum Ba Ba Ba theatre company, invited young people to step inside the creature to experience a beautiful, funny, and thought-provoking, interactive show, highlighting the impact plastic has on our environment and oceans. Each of the performances – held inside the whale – sold out in record time.

B. Due to its popularity, the whale washed up on the marketplace for a second time on Sunday 11th August 2024 as part of Newark on Sea. Situated alongside the urban beach, the sell-out show wowed audiences with its informative and interactive performances, proving it was a big hit and creating an important discussion point around plastic pollution. This event was run by the same teams and partnerships as the first and was partly sponsored by Newark Town Council.

3.4. Motion for the Ocean Activity Session

A. As part of Big Green Week and Water Safety Week in June 2024, Environmental Services provided a fun and interactive 20-minute session for over 850 primary school pupils across a 2-week period (*Appendix E Figure 4*). Pupils were introduced to the term 'Motion for the Ocean' and invited to take part in 3 activities linked to plastics, including what happens to plastic when littered, recycled, and disposed of in general waste. There were several misconceptions for both adults and pupils around items such as disposable cups, crisp packets, and food trays.

As part of the session, we awarded two winners of Holy Trinity Catholic Academy for their entries to the Motion for the Ocean Comic Strip Competition which we ran as a follow-up to the sessions (*Appendix E Figure 5*). The winning pupils were awarded turtle tracking bracelets where some proceeds go towards turtle conservation due to loss of habitat.

- B. The same session was also due to run as part of the Balderton Water Safety Event on Tuesday 24th September 2024, but it was cancelled due to wet weather. Instead, a presentation with resources was sent to the Year 5 pupils at John Hunt Academy, who were due to attend so that they did not miss out on learning more about how plastic pollution affects our oceans.

Again, Environmental Services ran the Motion for the Ocean comic strip competition for the children to demonstrate their understanding of what they had learned in a fun and artistic way (*Appendix E Figure 10*). A winner was selected by the team at Brunel Drive Depot and the winner won a turtle tracking bracelet which was presented to them in a prize-giving assembly that Environmental Services attended.

3.5. **Surf's Up**

The District Council's Community Development team provided 28 local primary schools with wooden surfboards to decorate, with 2024's theme being Motion for the Ocean (*Appendix E Figure 6*). Working with Art Smart to draw on the designs, pupils were asked to decorate the boards with Motion for the Ocean themes that inspire them. The entries were fantastic, and the pupils enjoyed working on a project that was being displayed at events they could attend. Some of the completed boards were exhibited alongside an informative 'mini beach' at Nottinghamshire County Show in May 2024 and were displayed at Newark's Buttermarket in August as part of Newark on Sea.

3.6. **Ollerton Motion for the Ocean Recycling Project**

The District Council commissioned artist, Michelle Reader, to work with pupils from Forest View Academy, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, and Park Gate Academy to create their own sea-inspired sculptures (*Appendix E Figure 7*). The ocean-themed sculptures were exhibited in their own art show titled 'Ocean in Ollerton Recycling Art Show'. The exhibition was open to the public from Friday 23 August to Wednesday 18 September 2024. It is hoped that the project will have inspired children to get creative at home, thinking about items they throw away and how they can reuse and repurpose them.

3.7. **Motion for the Ocean Trails**

A. Aqua Trail

To highlight plastic pollution in our waterways, Environmental Services and the Communications Team provided a free trail around Newark town centre for families during Newark on Sea in August 2024 (*Appendix E Figure 8*). Aqua, the plastic water bottle, guided trail goes to informative posters containing facts about ocean pollution. To record trail findings in a paperless format, a QR code was provided. 'Hidden' letters in each poster were collected, spelling out 'microplastics'. To further promote the messages around reduce, reuse, and recycle, shops displaying the posters were chosen for their sustainability.

Although the uptake for the trail competition was lower than expected, the posters were displayed during Newark on Sea providing further education around ocean health. In hindsight, this trail may have been more successful if it had not been active during Newark on Sea as there was already a wealth of activities for families to take part in.

B. Balderton Lake Trail

As part of the Balderton Water Safety Event on Tuesday 24th September 2024, Environmental Services and Community Development created a bespoke trail for pupils from John Hunt Academy to be delivered around Balderton Lake (*Appendix E Figure 9*). Working in small groups, the trail posed questions about the lake, water pollution, local wildlife, and the negative impact we inflict on our lakes, often unknowingly. The event was cancelled due to wet weather, but the trail was delivered in the playground of John Hunt Academy and there are plans to provide it to Balderton schools in summer term.

3.8. Refill.org Community Refill Scheme

In 2019/2020 Newark and Sherwood District Council encouraged – through their communication channels - organisations within the district to either sign up to the free Refill app or display in their windows that they were a part of the global network.

Anyone can download the free Refill app and visit one of the 300,000 Refill stations offering refills for water, coffee, food containers and plastic-free shopping. To date, the app has helped avoid 100 million pieces of plastic being used. These are just a handful of the organisations who have signed up in the district: Costa, Premier Inn, Morrisons, Newark Library, Greggs, Holland and Barrett, Nineteen20 Café at The Palace Theatre to name a few.

3.9. Costs of Delivering the Ocean Literacy Achievements

The table below shows the costs to complete the projects already delivered. NSDC officer time has not been included but is considerable in the delivery of these.

COMPLETED PROJECTS		
PROJECT TITLE	DATE COMPLETED	COST TO COMPLETE (inc. VAT, ex officer time)
Open Door's Artist in Residence Crafts	February 24	£300
Graffiti Hotspot	April 24	£1740
The Plastic Ocean Show	April 24	£2980
The Plastic Ocean Show	August 24	£2920
Motion for the Ocean Activity Session	June 24	£27.88
Surf's Up	August 24	£1672.50
Ollerton Motion for the Ocean Recycling Project	August 24	£1,250
Motion for the Ocean Trails	August and September 24	£13.94
	Total Cost	£10,904.32

4. Ongoing Projects with Responsible Authorities

4.1. Three Rivers Project

The District Council is working with ecologists, hydrologists, and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust to improve the water at Vicar Water Country Park. The works include: deculverting parts of Vicar Water, dredging, and wetland creation at Vicar Dale and beyond.

The construction phase of the project will address the issues of:

- I. Low flows due to leakage from the riverbed
- II. The need for enhancement of channel form and location
- III. Structures that compromise channel integrity and reduce fish passage
- IV. Water quality improvement.

The aims of this project are to:

- I. Address the low flow issues and to prevent water losses as far as is feasible
- II. To increase the ecological resilience of the watercourses, through a wide range of measures.

Work on the final phase of this project began on 28th September 2024. Completion is expected to be in early 2025.

4.2. **Water Audits and Water Saving Solutions**

Severn Trent are working with local authorities and other organisations to improve water efficiency across all sites.

As part of our audit, they'll monitor our current water usage and provide personalised water saving advice, tailored to our buildings. They'll fit water saving devices, replace any old fixtures and fittings, and identify opportunities to fix leaks – and they'll do it for free. Currently the scheme is closed, but they will be looking to reopen it.

5. **Ongoing and Future Projects around Ocean Literacy**

5.1. **Motion for the Ocean Lighthouse Project**

This project is expected to take part at 12 schools across the west of the District. Each child will make a red or white textile artwork about the environment which is then attached to structures forming a 'scaled' lighthouse. The plan is to then display them at Vicar Water at different times.

5.2. **Storm Drain Art**

Many countries now recognise the link between all water and the ocean. As a visual reminder of this, artworks have been created across the world around storm drains to draw attention to this fact, and to try to create change in people's behaviours (*Appendix F Figure 1*). Plans are currently being formulated to deliver something similar in our district through an interschool competition for the artwork to be created around the drains and delivered by an artist. We will be working with Open Doors to source a suitable artist. Something worth considering would be planned drain routes (approximately 1 mile) in selected areas for families to follow and interact with. Several organisations redo their drain artwork every 3 years.

5.3. **Plastic's Got Talent: School vs School**

Schools' project to run alongside the airing times on television of a well-known, family-friendly competition in February 2025. Schools will be invited to reuse single use plastics from both school and home, turning them into musical instruments (*Appendix F Figure 2*). Although we can promote the alternatives to plastic packaging available, there will be some that are harder to change for a variety of reasons. Encouraging children to reuse these in interesting ways promotes a 'reduce, reuse, recycle' lifestyle and unlocks creativity. Children can decorate their instruments and create music collectively. Entries

will be submitted in accordance with school safeguarding, so they can either present a video or audio recording of their classes and musical instruments, sending them in alongside photographs of their instruments. Prizes to be awarded to classes based on different criteria (TBC). We are also in discussions with the Heritage, Culture and Visitors team to display the audio recordings as an installation at the National Civil War Centre as part of a light and sound event.

A small teachers' pack will be provided to encourage discussions around single-use plastics whilst making their instruments.

5.4. **Plastic Pollution Theatre Production**

As part of growing ocean literacy in primary schools through a first-hand experience, a travelling theatre company, Hopscotch Theatre Company, has been sourced. They have a high-end production around ocean pollution and can deliver performances to all primary schools in the district from October 2025 (*Appendix F Figure 3*).

It is an eco-fable written by bard of Glastonbury and Roald Dahl Foundation storyteller in residence, Sarah Mooney, taking the form of a slapstick ancient Greek comedy. Greek mythology is studied in primary schools so this could provide teachers with an opportunity to put an ocean pollution twist on any myths they write with their own classes.

The story was written using Sarah's diaries and experiences during an expedition sailing across the Atlantic Ocean with a team of ten female scientists studying plastic pollution and ocean toxicity.

The narrative focuses on ways to communicate with and educate young people about the impact ocean toxicity is having on our planet. How they can begin with small steps to understand the problem, in a sensitive way for their age group, and what changes they can make in their own day to day lives to foster positive sustainability in the future. It also promotes positive representation in areas such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and maths). STEM education aims to skill students by presenting a cohesive learning platform that is largely based on connecting classroom activities and experiences to real-life opportunities.

The company are based in Scotland and have toured across their own primary schools. The company received investment from People's Postcode Lottery, People's Postcode Trust, Walter Scott and The Leche Trust to bring the concept to life, creating a magical experience for the children watching. A lot of the costumes have been made using upcycled plastic. This will also feed into some of the forthcoming projects the council have planned and present classes with an opportunity to create their own upcycled costumes for plays and World Book Day the following year.

It has been agreed with the company that they would produce a video production of the performance to leave a legacy for our schools to use time and time again. A high-quality teachers' pack is also included with the performances.

5.5. **Litter Wise Water Signage Artwork**

Schools will be offered the opportunity to design a sign to be placed along waterways with high foot traffic. The signs will highlight that litter can end up in our rivers, leading to the ocean, and suggest what people should do with their litter (*Appendix F Figure 4*).

Signs will be printed on Dibond and fixed to existing posts where possible. Situating them near and away from bins will provide an opportunity to remind the public to keep hold of rubbish until they come across a bin.

5.6. Educational Resources

- A. The Environmental Services team is creating their own presentations and interactive resources to be sent to all primary and secondary schools to help deliver positive behaviour changes around reduce, reuse, recycle and water pollution (*Appendix F Figure 5*). The recycling resources have just been tested in both a primary and secondary school. Feedback was incredibly positive. Students loved the recycling games and gave the presentation 10/10. These are now being finalised with our communications team and will be made available to schools. The resources around water pollution are currently being created and will also be trialled in schools before they are released for use.
- B. Hopscotch Theatre Company have agreed to us using their interactive teacher resources for a small cost (*Appendix F Figure 6*). NSDC would be able to provide primary schools with some fun and informative classroom resources to use as part of their learning and to enhance the resources the Environmental Services team are providing.

5.7. Pond Dipping Sessions

The Park Rangers already deliver pond dipping sessions in Sconce and Devon Park and in Vicar Water Country Park. Providing this as an alternative to transporting children to the seaside has been discussed.

6. Challenges Ahead

6.1. Providing a First-hand Experience of the Ocean or River Trent

One of the initial project objectives was to “Enhance knowledge relating to ‘ocean literacy’ by ensuring that all primary school-aged children in Newark and Sherwood have a first-hand experience of the ocean or River Trent “. The two factors that we have continually come up against are the logistics and costs in being able to bring a project to fruition.

A. Trip to the Seaside

The initial thoughts lay around transporting children to the coast, after a few enquiries to a variety of different coach companies, costs were estimated at £289,500. This was the cost purely for the coaches to transport the 10,327 children of the district, not including any other additional costs for staffing and activities. This was obviously cost prohibitive.

B. Delivering the Plastic Ocean Show in Schools

Due to the success of the Plastic Ocean Show earlier in the year, it was considered that we may be able to move the whale around the district so all children could have the opportunity to engage with the whale and the plastics story inside. Initial estimates show that this would need the whale to be in the district for a full 45 days. Hire cost, of the whale only, is approximately £84,490.00 for all primary school children of the district to pass through. Having spoken with the team that

regularly engages the schools across the district the following where identified as further challenges to this activity, these include but are not limited to:

- I. Limited schools/community properties in the right locations that can host the whale safely and securely. Only four or five were identified.
- II. Additional revenue burden as many of these facilities are revenue generating during the day and evenings, so would potentially need packing away every night with additional costs being passed onto NSDC.
- III. The process for children getting to visit will need to be transparent and equitable, a challenge given the mix of schools.
- IV. The cost of transporting children to centralised locations, vehicles, extra staff for safeguarding. Unless parents are DBS checked they cannot be used even if available.
- V. Extra site staff for managing flow of external children to site.
- VI. Very few venues that have easy access without going through school buildings, and/or have suitable parking.
- VII. Availability in school calendars to logistically get all children to the site on the same day.
- VIII. Orchard Special School has 147 children who cannot travel due to the number of staff required for adult to pupil ratio, and due to health and safety concerns when offsite.
- IX. The biggest issue was the willingness of getting schools to travel, the history of getting schools to move about is poor.

C. Pond Dipping Sessions

Providing this activity to all primary school-aged children presents us with the same logistic and financial implications as those above. Transport would need to be provided, which would not be dissimilar to those estimated to transport children to the coast. Also, we have limited staff trained to deliver a quality session on this scale. NSDC will be able to provide additional pond dipping sessions to the ones currently provided at locations with the correct facilities. These are currently delivered by the Park Rangers at Sconce and Devon Park and Vicar Water Country Park.

6.2. Storm Drain Art

This has become a popular activity with organisations across the globe in recent years as a colourful and interactive way to highlight where our ocean begins. Despite this, it still has several implications in getting it installed:

- I. A review of suitable, pedestrianised locations will be needed to avoid congestion and traffic accidents by working with the Highways Agency, relevant councils, and Severn Trent to obtain permission to potentially alter the appearance of their drains with paints and sealant for anything from 6 months to 3 years, depending on how well they last.
- II. As an alternative to paint, chalk could be used but would not last as long.
- III. The drain areas being painted would need to be sand blasted to clear the working area of dirt.
- IV. It is recommended that a high-quality exterior paint be used such as Aura Exterior Flat due to its resistant properties. Also, a matte finish epoxy resin with shark grip

additive for non-slip finish will be needed as a sealant. The resin can still be slippery when raining or covered in snow.

- V. The works would need to be installed during pleasant weather conditions and over several days to allow the sealant to cure.
- VI. To ensure the murals longevity, they will need cleaning with a soft bristle brush to remove dirt. Consideration needs to be given over who will carry this out.

6.3. Litter Wise Water Signage Artwork

Running the competition for the artwork within schools is straightforward. Installing the signs at various points along rivers, streams and around lakes will present challenges. Erecting signage on land not owned by NSDC will require landowner permission, which comes with a degree of liability. This is something we are looking into. An alternative would be to sticker the tops of NSDC bins with vinyl stickers. This would work well but not in areas of high flooding. A solution would be to use a mix of both where appropriate.

6.4. Engagement of home-schooled primary-aged Children

As with all these projects, thought needs to be given to the group of children who are educated at home for a variety of reasons. Competitions and projects delivered to school can be delivered to these children through communication channels with the Newark home education community. For events such as the theatre production, an appropriate venue would need to be found to deliver this.

6.5. Estimated Costs for Ongoing and Future Projects Around Ocean Literacy

The table below shows the estimated costs of projects planned at present. NSDC officer time has not been included but will be considerable to deliver these projects.

ONGOING AND FUTURE PROJECTS		
PROJECT TITLE	ESTIMATED DATE TO BE DELIVERED	ESTIMATED COST TO COMPLETE (inc. VAT)
Motion for the Ocean Lighthouse Project	Spring/ Summer 25	TBC
Storm Drain Art	Spring/ Summer 25	TBC
Plastic’s Got Talent: School vs School	Between February and May 25	£1000
Hopscotch Theatre Company Production, Video and Resources	October 2025	£45,000
Litter Wise Water Signage Artwork	Summer/ Autumn 25	£1500
Educational Resources (if not purchased with theatre production)	Ongoing	£700

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. It is recommended that council approve the transfer of £10,000 from the Cleaner, Safer, Greener funding stream to the Environmental Services to allow the delivery of day-to-day activities and small-scale projects around the commitment to grow ocean literacy. As can be seen from the completed project costs, £10,000 will cover materials, prizes, educational resources, and individual events for the following year.

- 7.2. Approve £45,000 for 2025/26 to finance a touring theatre company to visit all forty-five primary schools across the district to deliver a whole-school performance as part of the commitment to ensure all primary school-aged children have a first-hand experience of the ocean. This production is as an alternative to transporting all primary-aged children to the seaside (see challenges faced in 5.1.1.) and in taking the Plastic Ocean Show to each primary school (see challenges faced in 5.1.2.). Although this is not a first-hand experience of the ocean directly, it has a strong connection to it. The ‘first-hand’ element is deliverable through a live theatre performance, which some children may not have experienced before and is more impactful than watching a pre-recorded performance. From the options investigated, this is logistically possible and more affordable. The video legacy will provide schools with a high-quality resource to work into their curriculum when they are delivering environmental education in the future.

8. Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment below where appropriate.

Financial Implications FIN24-25/8759

- 8.1 As part of the budget setting for 2024.25, a community plan objective included the following:

Declare a ‘Motion for the Ocean’ to champion good stewardship by the relevant authorities of the River Trent and its tributaries. To encourage addressing pollution and litter at source, contributing significantly to the preservation and restoration of the ocean.

- 8.2 A new Environmental Development Officer post was created costing £53,630 and is in the Councils MTFP, as a full-time established post. This post covers the Motion for the Ocean Agenda, as well as the Green Agenda with colleagues across the Environmental Services Team. This role also delivers environmental education and develops, implements, and manages new initiatives within the Environmental Community Plan Objectives.
- 8.3 This report seeks a one off £10,000 which can be funded by the Councils Cleaner, Safer, Greener reserve to allow the organisation of day-to-day activities around the commitment to grow ocean literacy; and any surplus at year end can be returned to the reserve and rolled in to the next financial year if needed.
- 8.4 This report also seeks another one off £45,000 which will be an additional requirement to the 2025.26 budget to finance a touring theatre company to visit all 45 primary schools across the district to deliver a whole-school performance as part of the commitment to ensure all primary school-aged children have a first-hand experience of the ocean, in line with the Motion for the Ocean commitment. If approved, this can be used in the following year should it be required.

Legal Implications

8.5 Cabinet is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

17 October 2023 Full Council Motion <https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=9732>

Background*Letter to the Secretary of State from Newark and Sherwood District Council*

Dear Secretary of State,

Newark and Sherwood District Council declares urgent need for ocean recovery and calls on government to take action

During our October 2023 Full Council meeting, Councillors from all parties unanimously voted to support a Motion for the Ocean and declared an urgent need for ocean recovery (attached for information). In making this declaration, we recognised that our ocean is in crisis and that local government has an essential role to play in recovering the health of our ocean. We are the first Midlands Council to pass a Motion for the Ocean, in recognition of our residents' concerns about the state of our local rivers and ocean. We may not have direct coastal responsibilities, but we understand the significance and impact that our local actions and policies have on the ocean. We have committed to doing everything we can locally, but we cannot do it alone.

Our ocean recovery declaration also committed for us to write to central government asking you to do everything within your power to put the ocean in net recovery by 2030.

Developed by leading ocean experts: Emily Cunningham, Dr Pamela Buchan of the University of Exeter, Nicola Bridge of the Ocean Conservation Trust, and with input from specialists at the University of Plymouth, the model Motion for the Ocean suggests central government do this by:

- a) Ensuring Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities have the resources they need to effectively research and monitor our growing number of marine protected areas, and to set and enforce appropriate fishing levels that support local economies and deliver environmental sustainability.
- b) Working with coastal communities to co-develop marine policy to ensure it delivers equitable and sustainable outcomes in local placemaking.
- c) Appointing a dedicated Minister for Coastal Communities.
- d) Embedding ocean and civic literacy into the national curriculum.
- e) Stopping plastic pollution at source by strengthening the regulations around single-use plastics and set standards for microfibre-catching filters to ensure that all new domestic and commercial washing machines are fitted with a filter that captures a high percentage of microfibres produced in the wash cycle.
- f) Improve the water quality of our rivers, coastal waters and ocean to benefit nature and the health and wellbeing of all UK residents, including by stopping the regular pollution of our rivers and seas; and
- g) by listening to marine and social scientific advice to update the Marine Policy Statement and produce a national Ocean Recovery Strategy which will:
 - i. Enable the recovery of marine ecosystems rather than managing degraded or altered habitats in their reduced state.
 - ii. Consider levelling up, marine conservation, energy, industrial growth, flood and coastal erosion risk management, climate adaptation and fisheries policy holistically rather than as competing interests.

- iii. Develop a smarter approach to managing the health of the entire ocean that moves beyond Marine Protected Areas and enables links to be made across sectors towards sustainability.
- iv. Establish improved processes for understanding the benefits of ocean recovery, leaving no doubt the links between this and human lives, livelihoods, and wellbeing.

We recognise that this government strives to be a world leader in marine conservation, but more needs to be done to move from ocean decline to recovery – for the good of our economies, our communities, and the natural environment on which they all depend.

We look forward to your response and your action to put our ocean in net recovery by 2030.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Paul Peacock
Leader of the Council

Cllr Emma Oldham
Portfolio Holder for Biodiversity & Environmental Services

Background*List of councils who have declared their Motion for the Ocean*

The following councils have declared an urgent need for Ocean recovery using a locally adapted Motion for the Ocean:	
Plymouth City Council 22 November 2021 – Motion	Falmouth Town Council 10 January 2022 – Motion
South Tyneside Council 13 January 2022 – Motion	North Norfolk District Council 9 February 2022 – Motion
North Devon Council 23 February 2022 – Motion	Monmouthshire County Council 3 March 2022 – Motion
Seaton with Slingley Parish Council 16 March 2022 – Motion	Seaham Town Council 22 March 2022 – Motion
Torrige District Council 11 April 2022 – Motion	Portsmouth City Council 17 May 2022 – Motion
Devon County Council 27 May 2022 – Motion	Blandford Forum Town Council 25 July 2022 – Motion
Teignbridge District Council 26 July 2022 – Motion	Blackpool Council 20 November 2022 – Motion
Isle of Wight Council 19 July 2023	Canterbury City Council 20 July 2023
North Somerset Council 19 September 2023 – Motion	Havant Borough Council 20 September 2023 – Motion
Norwich City Council 26 September 2023	Newark and Sherwood District Council 17 October 2023 – Motion
Lewes District Council 20 November 2023 – Motion	Cornwall County Council 28 November 2023 - Motion
Nottingham City Council 15 January 2024 - Motion	Colwick Parish Council 16 January 2024
Worthing Borough Council 6 February 2024	Swanage Town Council 28 February 2024
Stafford Borough Council February 2024	Walmer Town Council March 2024
Brandon and Byshottles Parish Council 15 March 2024	

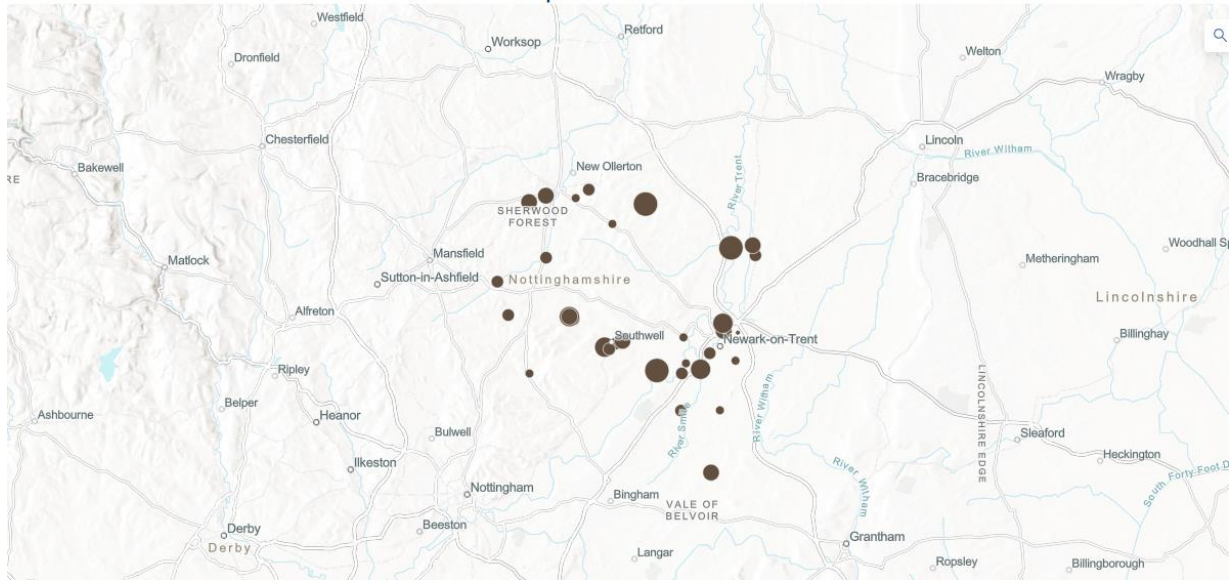
Project Objectives

The Rivers Trust Sewage Information for Newark and Sherwood (2023)

Monitoring was carried out on
41
out of 42 storm overflows

A total of
1,521
spills were counted

For a total duration of
14,568
hours

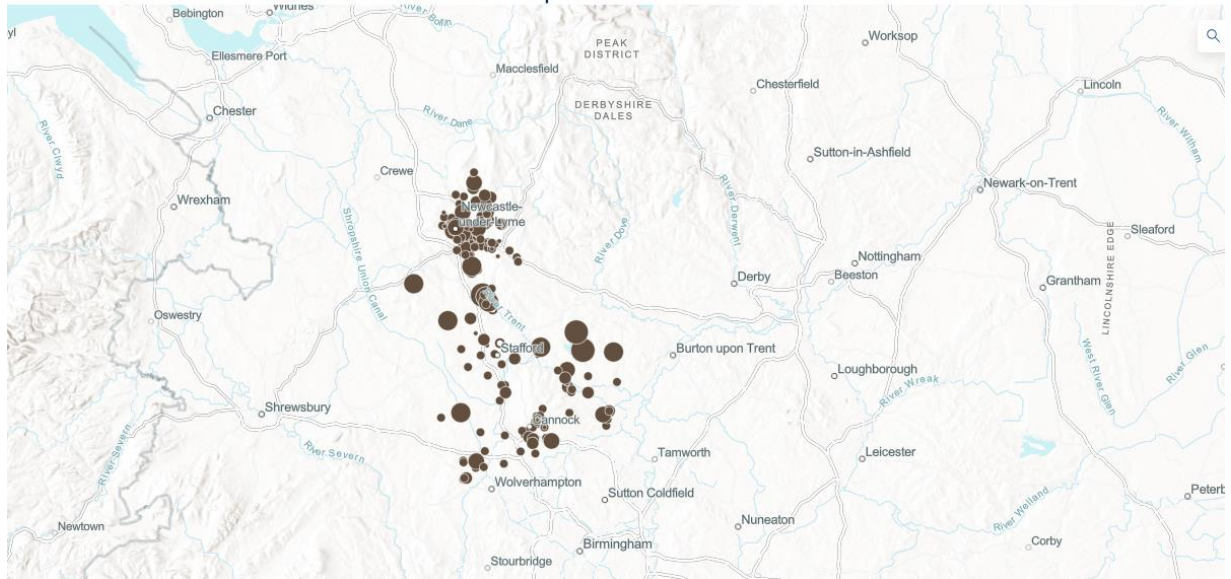


The Rivers Trust Sewage Information for Staffordshire Trent Valley (2023)

Monitoring was carried out on
226
out of 228 storm overflows

A total of
3,532
spills were counted

For a total duration of
17,588
hours



The Rivers Trust Sewage Information for The Lower Trent and Erewash (2023)

Monitoring was carried out on

287

out of 288 storm overflows

A total of

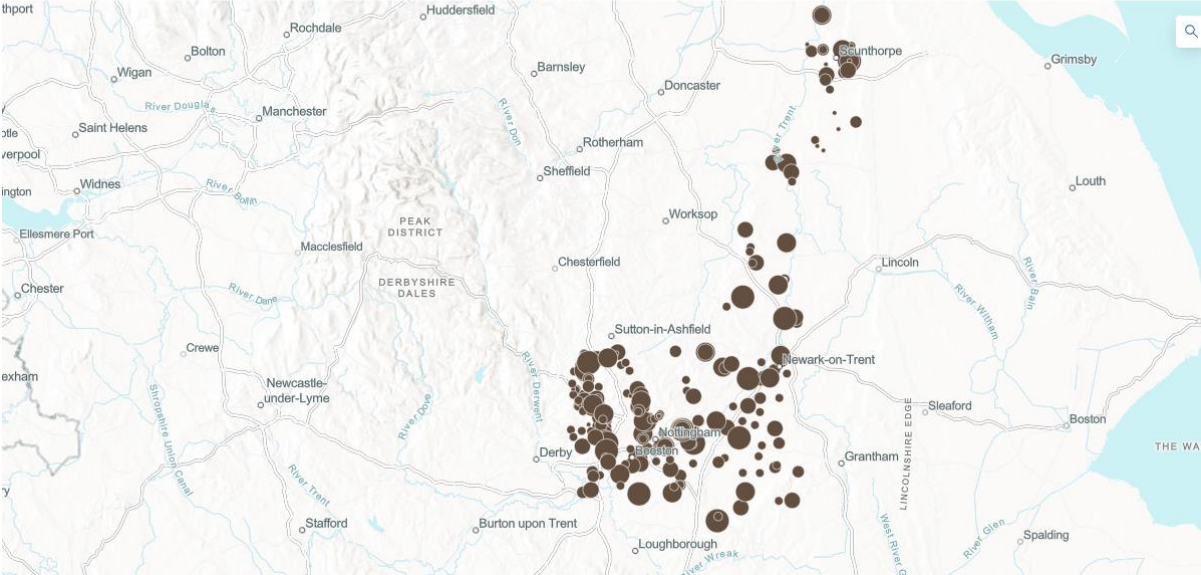
8,555

spills were counted

For a total duration of

58,696

hours



Project Objectives

List of agencies involved in the creation of the Trent Gateway Masterplan to improve the health of the River Trent

Agencies involved in the creation of the Trent Gateway Masterplan
Canal & River Trust
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust
Derbyshire County Council
Nottingham City Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
RSPB
Severn Trent Water
Trent Rivers Trust
Lower Trent & Erewash Catchment Partnership
Gedling Borough Council
Newark & Sherwood District Council
Rushcliffe Borough Council
Forestry Commission
Natural England
Beeston Canalside Heritage Centre
River Trent Joint Anglers Association

Ocean Literacy Achievements

Photographs of Completed Projects



Figure 1 - Open Doors' Artist in Residence Paper Boat Crafts



Figure 2 - Graffiti Hotspot Transformation



Figure 3 - The Plastic Ocean Show



Figure 4 - Motion for the Ocean Activity Session (Safety Event June 24)

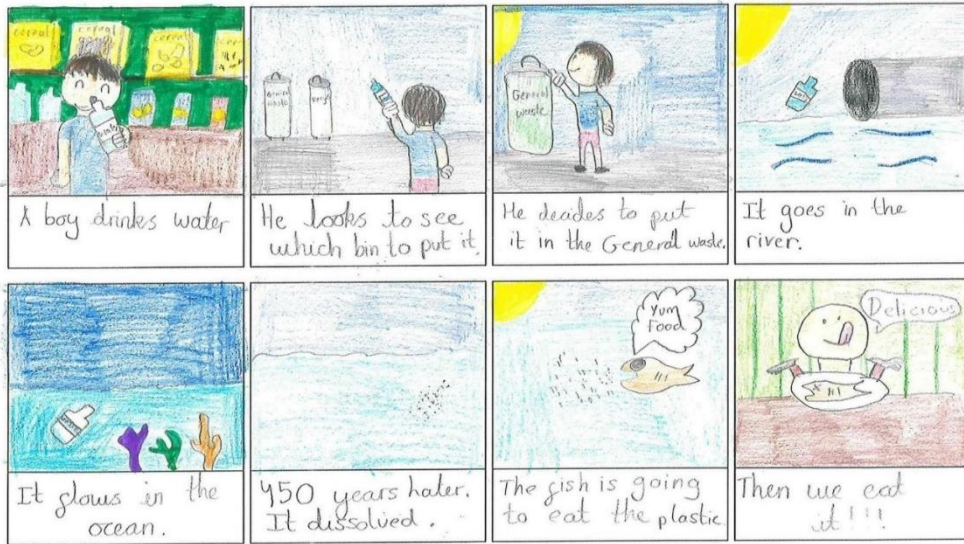
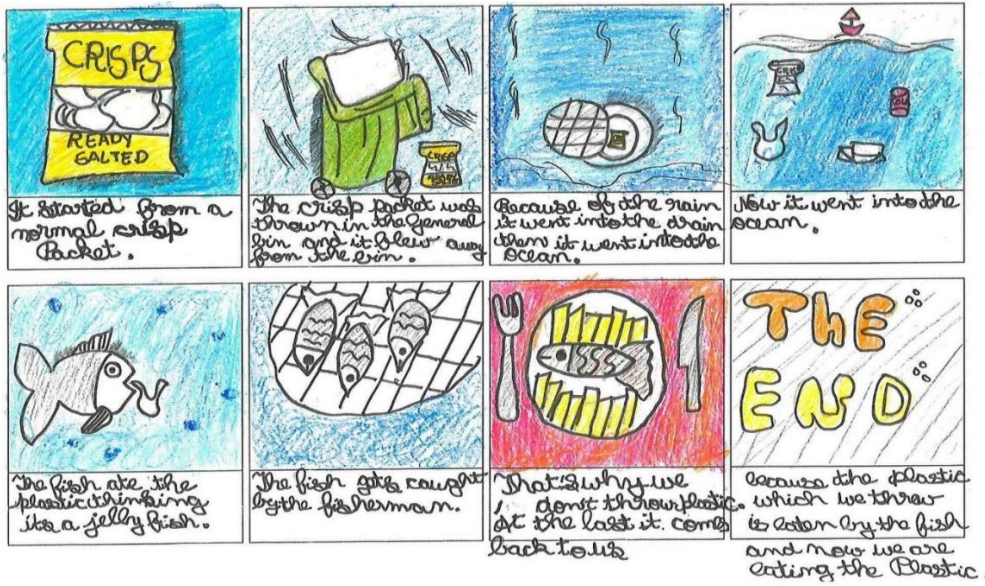


Figure 5 – Motion for the Ocean Comic Strip Winners (Safety Event in June 24)



Figure 6 - Surf's Up



Figure 7 - Ollerton Motion for the Ocean Recycling Project



Figure 8 - Aqua Trail



Figure 9 - Balderton Lake Trail

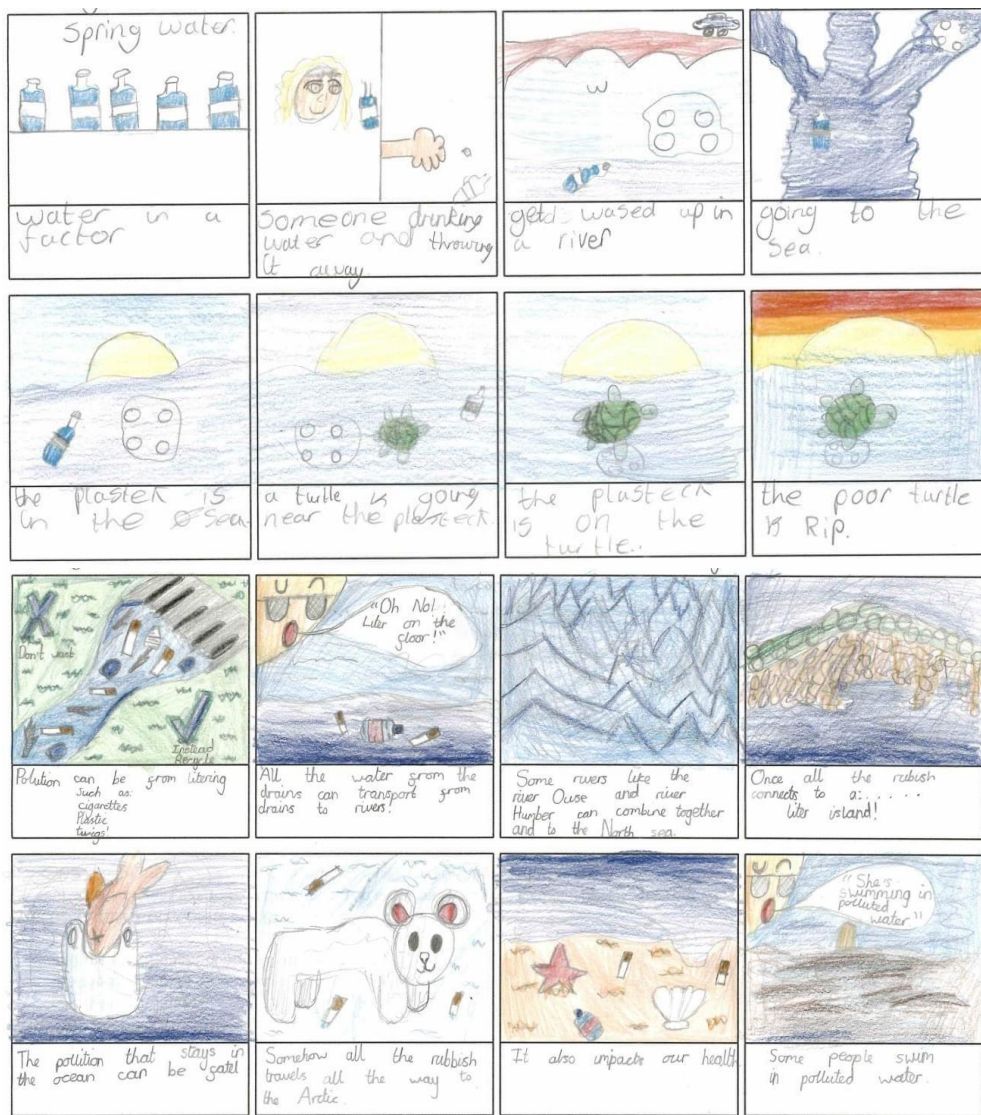


Figure 10 – Motion for the Ocean Sample of Comic Strip Entries (Safety Event September 24)

Ongoing and Future Projects Around Ocean Literacy

Photographs of Suggested Projects



Figure 1 - Storm Drain Art



Figure 2 – Plastic's Got Talent: School vs School Instrument Ideas

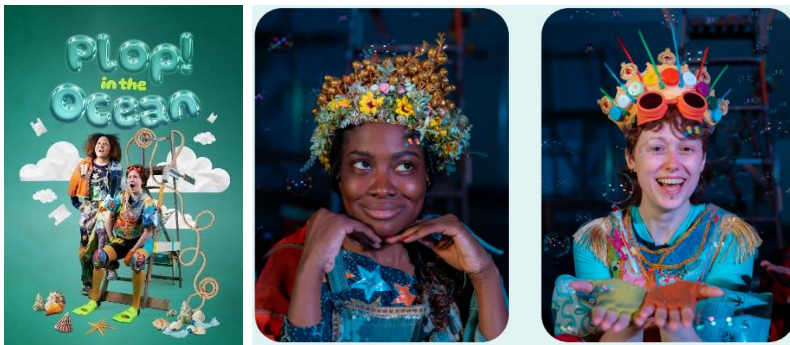


Figure 3 – Hopscotch Theatre Company Production of 'Plop! In the Ocean'



Figure 4 - Litter Wise Water Signage Artwork



Figure 5 – Educational Resources by Environmental Services



Figure 6 – Educational Resources by Hopscotch Theatre Company

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