

CABINET – TUESDAY, 20 JANUARY 2026  
DECISION NOTICE

The following decisions were taken on Tuesday, 20 January 2026 by Cabinet.

Date notified to all Members: **Wednesday, 21 January 2026**  
End of the call-in period is **2.00pm on Monday, 26 January 2026**

These decisions will not be implemented until after this date and time.

Present: P Peacock, R Cozens, S Crosby, L Brazier, C Penny, P Taylor and J Kellas

<u>Agenda Item No.</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action By</u>
6.	Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Outcome	<p>That Cabinet review and note the Peer Team's feedback and associated appendices of the report.</p> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u> The Peer Team's feedback offers an independent view of how the Council is performing including areas where it can strengthen its approach. Reflecting on this feedback helps ensure the Council continues to improve, stays focused on delivering for residents and remains aligned to its strategic priorities.</p> <p><u>Options Considered:</u> Not applicable.</p>	Carl Burns, Business Manager – Transformation & Service Improvement
7.	Council Tax Support for Terminally Ill Residents	<p>That Cabinet approve:</p> <p>a) Option 3 as detailed in paragraph 2.4.3 of the report; and</p> <p>b) the Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme to support households facing the hardship of living with a terminally ill family member, as set out at Appendix A to the report.</p> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u> The recommended option supports the recommendation of Marie Curie to develop schemes to provide support to households on a low income that include someone living with a terminal illness. The recommended option is affordable to the Council, as identified in the report and the financial implications.</p> <p>The recommended option aligns to Ambition 3 in the Community Plan to 'Improve health and wellbeing, with an emphasis on communities with lower levels of life expectancy'.</p>	Phil Ward, Business Manager - Revenues & Benefits  Andrew Bayliss, Transactional Finance Manager

		<p><u>Options Considered:</u></p> <p>Alternative options considered are set out in paragraphs 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 2.4.4 of the report</p>	
8.	Arkwood Loan Facility Agreement (Key Decision)	<p>That Cabinet approve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the additional £13,591,929 to be added to the Capital programme, making a total capital budget of £25m;</li> <li>b) the variation to the Facility Agreement to accommodate the power to vary the agreement and the extension to the cap on the facility from £12m to £25m; and</li> <li>c) subject to the subsidy control advice, to delegate responsibility to the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance &amp; Finance to amend the Facility Agreement to ensure the agreement remains subsidy control compliant.</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u></p> <p>To ensure that the Council's wholly owned company are able to meet their contractual commitments and complete the existing developments. This aligns with Ambition two within the Council's Community Plan ensuring which has a specific action relating to 'Develop new homes for open market sale or rent through Arkwood Developments Ltd'.</p> <p><u>Options Considered:</u></p> <p>Should the recommendation not be approved, this would impact on Arkwood's ability to be able to progress the sites they are contractually obliged to complete and would force the company to seek external finance.</p>	Nick Wilson, Business Manager - Financial Services
9.	The Management and Operation of the Council's Leisure Facilities under an Agency Model (Key Decision)	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approve a change to the Leisure Management Agreement between Newark &amp; Sherwood District Council and Active 4 Today such that the company becomes an 'Agent' of the Council in the delivery of Leisure Services; and</li> <li>b) delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Resources and S151 Officer to vary the existing contract to an Agency Model arrangement and enter into all necessary agreements to implement the proposals.</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u></p> <p>This opportunity follows the successful litigation taken by Chelmsford City Council (and others) "the Chelmsford</p>	Jenna Norton, Senior Accountant – Financial Services

	<p>“ruling”). The ruling confirmed as being non-business all supplies of local authority leisure services that were previously taxable (liable to VAT at the zero rate, reduced or standard rate) or VAT exempt are now non-business.</p> <p><u>Options Considered:</u></p> <p>That the Council would continue under the existing contract with Active 4 Today acting as Principal and therefore would continue to incur irrecoverable VAT.</p>		
10.	<p>Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy - Review and Revised Strategy</p>	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note the changes made to the Council’s Equality, Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion (EEDI) approach; and</li> <li>approve the revised Strategy, attached as Appendix A to the report.</li> </ol> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u></p> <p>The previous EEDI Strategy was developed in 2019 and the Council have experienced significant changes in workforce, commitments and legislation since this time. Whilst the Council have maintained their commitment to operating within the framework of the Public Sector Duty, due to these changes the Strategy and associated documentation was overdue a review. This has now been completed and is presented for approval.</p> <p><u>Options Considered:</u></p> <p>None, a District Council must maintain a current EEDI Strategy to comply with legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, demonstrate its commitment to fairness and inclusion, and reduce risks of reputational and operational harm. It ensures policies and services are equitable, fostering trust and engagement across the community.</p>	<p>Carl Burns, Business Manager - Transformation &amp; Service Improvement</p>
11.	<p>Life Chances for Girls</p>	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>note the findings and recommendations of the Working Group; and</li> <li>endorse the recommendations as outlined in Appendix 3 to the report.</li> </ol> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u></p> <p>To ensure that the findings of the Life Chances for Girls Working Group are formally acknowledged and acted upon. This is in addition to Policy Performance and Improvement Committee, which will be presented the report on 12 January 2026.</p>	<p>Carina Tona Transformation &amp; Service Improvement Officer</p>

		<p>By noting the outcomes and endorsing the recommendations, Cabinet can also support targeted actions that improve opportunities and outcomes for girls. This will be whilst working with our partners who can contribute to improving the life chances for girls. This approach demonstrates a commitment to addressing identified challenges and supports a number of the Council's Community Plan ambitions.</p> <p><u>Options Considered:</u></p> <p>The decision could have been to dismiss the topic request and not establish the Life Chances for Girls Working Group.</p>	
12.	Parks and Open Spaces Development Plan (Key Decision)	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) endorse the allocation of £100,000 in 2026/27 for parks and open spaces legacy fund for Town and Parish Councils to bid into on a match-funded basis, to drive improvement in parks and open spaces across the district, and delegate authority for the implementation and administration of the fund to the Director - Communities &amp; Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Climate and the Environment;</li> <li>b) agree that £30,000 is committed within the budget for 2026/27, to enable investment in a number of Council-owned sites which have the potential for future development, including some for future Green Flag status;</li> <li>c) agree that three strategic sites are identified for potentially significant investment in new facilities, with consultation due to take place about those developments within 2026/27; and</li> <li>d) once c) above is complete, to bring a report back to Cabinet in 2026/27 about detailed development at those sites, together with a funding package, for delivery in 27/28 – the last operating year of NSDC ahead of Local Government Reorganisation.</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u></p> <p>The recommendations align with the Community Plan objectives in relation to health and wellbeing, protecting and enhancing the environment and promoting community spirit. The proposals are also in line with resident feedback as evidenced through the latest resident survey and the increasing importance being placed on parks and open spaces.</p>	Matt Finch, Director - Communities & Environment

	<p><u>Options Considered:</u></p> <p>Given the growing importance residents attach to parks and open spaces, doing nothing was not deemed a viable option. In the context of LGR, future decisions about investment in parks and open spaces in Newark and Sherwood will be taken by a new entity with a much broader geographical footprint and set of delivery responsibilities. Cabinet could choose to press on with developments at the three strategic sites in 2026/27, but given the potential costs it is deemed prudent to understand community support and explore sources of funding that may be available. There is no requirement to create a Town and Parish Council Park Legacy Fund, but this would fail to address the reality that many parks and open spaces across the district are not owned by NSDC and would be a missed opportunity to facilitate improvement in these valued facilities.</p>	
13.	<p>2026/27 Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Setting (Key Decision)</p> <p>That Cabinet recommend to Council at its meeting on 10 February 2026:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the HRA budget for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix A to the report;</li> <li>b) an increase of 4.8% in the 2026/27 rents of all current HRA tenancies will be applied from 6 April 2026;</li> <li>c) the 2026/27 service charges, as set out in Appendix C to the report; and</li> <li>d) the Capital Budget set out in Appendix D to the report are committed expenditure in the Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2029/30.</li> </ul> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u></p> <p>To advise Members of the proposed HRA budget and charges in rent and service charge levels for 2026/27 and for these to be recommended to Council at its meeting on 10 February 2026.</p> <p><u>Options Considered:</u></p> <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 no rationale was found to support this, alongside the equitable nature of any decision to do so.</p>	<p>Nick Wilson, Business Manager – Financial Services</p> <p>David Price, Business Manager – Housing Income &amp; Leasehold Management</p>

14.	Corporate Risk Management Strategy and Policy Review	<p>That Cabinet review and approve the updated Corporate Risk Management Strategy and Policy as attached at Appendix A to the report</p> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u> To ensure the Council has a current policy, therefore ensuring the continued management of risk within the Council in accordance with its policies</p> <p><u>Options Considered:</u> If deemed unsuitable, Cabinet should provide feedback and not approve the revised policy</p>	Richard Bates, Safety, Risk & Insurance Manager
15.	Bilsthorpe Village Hall Complex - Capital Contribution	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <p>a) approve the creation of capital budget within the Capital Programme 2026-27 of up to £1,299,097.16 financed by £1,000,000 from the Change Management Reserve and £299,097.16 S106 Contributions listed in the table at paragraph 2.4 of the report; and</p> <p>b) approve that grant be released following the submission of a business case by Bilsthorpe Parish Council which would be subject to approval by the Council's Section 151 Officer in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Community Relations.</p> <p><u>Reasons for Decision:</u> The Community Plan has a specific action within the Portfolio for Public Protection and Community Relations to 'work alongside Bilsthorpe Parish Council and other partners, to continue to support the development of the Bilsthorpe Community Hub'.</p> <p><u>Options Considered:</u> The option to not support Bilsthorpe Parish Council with a capital contribution has been discounted, reflecting the project's priority with the District Council's Community Plan, and the opportunity to improve outcomes for the residents of Bilsthorpe through the provision of a village hall complex that meets needs now and in the future.</p>	Cara Clarkson, Business Manager – Healthy Places