

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Policy & Performance Improvement Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Monday, 23 February 2026 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor M Pringle (Chair)
Councillor N Ross (Vice-Chair)

Councillor C Brooks, Councillor J Hall, Councillor R Holloway, Councillor D Moore, Councillor P Rainbow, Councillor K Roberts, Councillor K Smith, Councillor T Thompson, Councillor T Wendels, Councillor N Allen, Councillor S Michael and Councillor L Tift

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Crosby and Councillor P Peacock

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor A Brazier, Councillor A Freeman, Councillor S Haynes and Councillor R Jackson

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

The Chair advised that the meeting was being recorded and live streamed from Castle House.

188 DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

189 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2026

The minutes from the meeting held on 12 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Councillor Rainbow did however refer to minute 182 on page 7 of the Agenda having queried at the last meeting as to how successful the Shopper's Gift Card promotion had been. Councillor Penny did advise at the time to provide the Committee with a written reply and this would be followed up.

190 NEWARK TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN AND DESIGN CODE UPDATE

The Committee considered the report jointly presented by Jane Hutchinson, Town Centres and Visitor Economy Manager and Matthew Tubb, Senior Planner to update Members and provide the report which is also to be presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2026.

In Autumn 2023, Newark and Sherwood District Council (the Council) commenced working in partnership with Historic England (HE) to deliver a Newark Town Centre Masterplan and Design Code. Allies & Morrison (A&M) urban designers and architects were instructed to deliver this programme, alongside public consultation on both documents. Developing these documents in parallel, with the same team, has ensured consistency and efficiencies throughout the project.

The masterplan is structured around six themes:

1. Revitalising the Market Place as a safe and flexible space.
2. Supporting a strong economy and town centre living.
3. Promoting education, skills training, and creative industries.
4. Enhancing riverside leisure and flood resilience.
5. Improving walking, cycling, and public transport links.
6. Celebrating Newark's history and cultural assets through interpretation and events.

The report having outlined the main principles of each document and the recommended next steps, the Committee received a presentation provided by Jane Hutchnson and Matthew Tubb.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee received and recommended adoption of the Newark Town Centre Masterplan and Design Code (the latter through a revision to the Newark Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan) to Cabinet.

191 BUDGET REPORTS 2026/27

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager for Financial Services to provide Members with attached reports which will be considered by Cabinet on 24 February 2026:

Appendix 1 - General Fund Revenue Budget 2026/27

Appendix 2 - General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/27 – 2029/30

Appendix 3 - Capital Programme 2026/27 – 2029/30 (noted exempt references in the appendix)

This report is to enable Cabinet to consider the spending proposals in the Council's proposed 2026/27 General Fund revenue budget and Cabinet to then make recommendations to Full Council at its meeting on 5 March 2026.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee received and noted the reports which will be presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2026.

192 PRESENTATION BY PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HEALTH, WELLBEING & LEISURE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing & Leisure, Councillor Susan Crosby.

As detailed in the report, the Portfolio Holder had been invited to attend Committee to respond verbally to three specific queries as at paragraph 2.1.

The first question asked whether our leisure company Active4Today is happy to take forward the recommendations from the Life Chances for Girls Working Group and do they know what happens next?

Councillor Crosby replied that the simple answer is yes.

Active4Today have already used these recommendations when writing their new 2026–2029 Business Plan, which is currently going through the approval process and at the same time, the Sport and Active Lifestyles team are doing research to better understand what opportunities might be needed across the district.

They want to make sure decisions are based on evidence, not assumptions, so activities are shaped around what women and girls actually need.

In terms of what will happen next. You can expect:

- **Better images and branding:**
Active4Today will use more real, local and diverse images in their publicity so girls and young women can see themselves represented.
- **Sharing success stories:**
They will do more to celebrate and share good news about existing programmes, especially those that benefit women and girls.
- **Clearer reporting:**
They will improve how they report on who uses services, including showing how many women and girls take part, so progress can be properly tracked.

The second question asked whether there was a budget to maintain closed cemeteries, and whether this is enough?

In response Councillor Crosby confirmed that there is a budget, but it is not sufficient in the long term. As a council we are legally responsible for maintaining closed cemeteries when churches hand them over. This includes grass cutting, paths, bridges, trees and making sure headstones are safe. The law does not allow the council to refuse this responsibility, even if the cemetery needs a lot of work.

At the moment, the Council looks after eight closed cemeteries, but the annual budget is only **£5,000**, which does not cover the costs. If there is a serious health and safety issue, extra money may need to be found from elsewhere. The council is legally required to do the work, regardless of whether the budget is adequate or not.

The final question asked how we use data to understand health inequalities and decide where to focus projects?

Councillor Crosby advised as a council we use data to underpin all our decisions and priorities. With regards to health and inequalities, we use local data to see where people are most affected by poor health and disadvantage, so support can be targeted where it is needed most.

The team uses data like the Index of Multiple Deprivation data to identify the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and can access anonymised GP practice data, broken down by ward, to understand local health issues.

Access to this information helps us:

- See which areas have poorer health, shorter life expectancy, or difficulty accessing services
- Identify issues like long-term illness, mental health needs, obesity, smoking and low vaccination rates
- Focus projects and resources on places with the greatest need, such as Hawtonville, Bridge Ward and parts of Boughton

In closing the debate, the Chair thanked Councillor Crosby for her attendance and detailed responses to the queries raised.

AGREED (unanimously) that the responses to the questions raised be noted.

193 UPDATE ON ESTATE WALKABOUTS WORKING GROUP

As Chair of the Estate Walkabouts Working Group, Councillor Penny Rainbow was pleased to share with members of PPIC the groups progress so far:

One meeting has already taken place with Tenancy Officers present at the meeting to discuss ASB as well as Officers from Street Scene.

A second meeting is due to take place later this week and Councillor Rainbow will be able to report back to the next PPIC.

194 UPDATE ON HERITAGE AND CULTURE WORKING GROUP

The Chair of the Heritage & Culture Expenditure Working Group, Councillor David Moore was pleased to share with members of PPIC the groups progress so far:

As a reminder, the group is examining how Heritage & Culture activities are delivered across the district, with a focus on outreach activities, the impact of those activities, the value for money secured, and how partnership working is undertaken.

The first meeting took place on 17 December, and the focus of the meeting was to discuss and agree the objectives and key questions that would guide the review process.

During the meeting, it was agreed to expand the review scope to cover *all* income and expenditure within the Business Unit – changing the scope to include heritage sites such as Newark Castle and the Palace Theatre.

Nationally conducted studies focusing on the wider benefits of heritage and culture activities were shared with members, alongside data from the 2022 Resident Survey to understand how important providing arts and cultural services are for our residents and comparing how that ranks against other recreational services.

The second meeting took place on 4 February and Members received a full overview of the Heritage & Culture Service delivered by the Business Manager of Heritage and Culture and the Director of Communities and Environment. This update covered the Palace Theatre, National Civil War Centre, Newark Castle, outreach activities and Newark Creates.

Performance trends were reviewed, audience and postcode data insights shared, and volunteer contributions highlighted.

We explored the NPO-funded Open Doors programme, demonstrating its strong reach into communities and high participant satisfaction.

A detailed financial overview was also presented, including income and expenditure positions across all venues and programmes.

Finally, we reviewed partnership activity and the developing evaluation framework.

The third working group meeting is scheduled for 18 March, and we anticipate that this is likely to be the final meeting of the Working Group, in which we will reflect on all the information that we have heard and gathered so far and agree on a final set of recommendations to share back with this committee.

195 CABINET FORWARD PLAN (JANUARY TO APRIL 2026)

NOTED the Forward Plan of the Cabinet for the period January to April 2026.

196 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS

NOTED the Cabinet Minutes from the meetings held on 9 December 2025

197 PROVISIONAL ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Q3 Housing Compliance Performance Report
- Q3 Financial Forecast Outturn Performance 2025/26 GF/HRA/Capital
- Attendance at Committee by the Portfolio Holder for Housing – Cllr. Lee Brazier
- Bassetlaw and N&S CSP Progress & Performance/Review of Priorities
- Gender Pay Gap Report
- Q3 Community Plan Performance Report

Meeting closed at 7.01 pm.

Chair