



**Castle House
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19 November 2025

**Chair: Councillor R Holloway
Vice-Chair: Councillor P Rainbow**

Members of the Committee:

**Councillor D Darby
Councillor A Freeman
Councillor J Hall
Councillor P Harris
Councillor S Haynes**

**Councillor J Kellas
Councillor D Moore
Councillor P Peacock
Councillor M Pringle**

Substitutes

**Councillor L Brazier
Councillor R Cozens
Councillor L Dales
Councillor K Roberts
Councillor M Shakeshaft
Councillor M Spoors
Councillor T Thompson
Councillor T Wildgust**

MEETING:	Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee
DATE:	Thursday, 27 November 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 Helen Brandham on Helen.brandham@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
4. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025

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5. Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

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6. Review of Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints, Member/Officer Protocol and Social Media Protocol for Members
7. Annual Review of Housing Service Complaints & Improvement Report
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For Members to note that in accordance with Rule No. 6.5.2 – Appointment to Committees the following change has been made in the membership of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee.

Councillor Andrew Freeman has moved from the Audit & Accounts Committee to the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee.
Councillor Maurice Shakeshaft has moved from the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee to the Audit & Accounts Committee.

Councillor Shakeshaft has become a substitute on the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee.

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NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Thursday, 11 September 2025 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor R Holloway (Chair)
Councillor P Rainbow (Vice-Chair)

Councillor J Hall, Councillor P Harris, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor J Kellas, Councillor D Moore and Councillor M Shakeshaft

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor R Cozens, Councillor L Dales, Councillor N Allen and Councillor S Michael

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor P Peacock and Councillor M Pringle

1 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.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The Committee considered the report presented jointly by the Chief Executive and the Transformation & Service Improvement Officer which sought to provide Members with an update on the Government's requirement for local government reorganisation (LGR), including the work being undertaken to development Option 1e as a final proposal for submission in November 2025.

In presenting the report, the position of each of the Nottinghamshire councils and their preferred options was clarified. Paragraph 2 of the report set out the work being undertaken to develop the Business Case and of the collaborative work with the other Councils in developing the case for Option 1e. Members were advised that immediately following submission of the Business Case on 28 November, transitional work would commence whilst the Government were appraising the submissions. In relation to public engagement, Members were advised that there had been 10,462 responses to the survey and approximately 120 staff had attended the LGR drop-in sessions. It was also noted that following the submission of the Business Case, the Government would issue a consultation.

In considering the report, a Member stated that the public engagement survey should have included a question as to whether they supported the LGR, noting that the reorganisation would lose all local decision making. In response, the Chief Executive advised that LGR was a statutory decision. In relation to local decision making, he commented that neighbourhood committees and forums could be included in the final submission.

In response to how Members could input their views on LGR into the submission, the Chief Executive suggested that an additional meeting of the Committee be convened. Also, in response to whether Full Council would debate LGR further, the Chief Executive clarified that final approval of the Business Case was an executive decision and would be taken by Cabinet.

In considering the report and the ongoing work to develop the Business Case, a Member queried as to whether more should be done to better understand the financial implications of LGR. The Chief Executive advised that until the final decision of the Government was known the development of the Business Case was based on assumptions. He acknowledged that there had been a degree of financial modelling undertaken but that it remained a fluid situation.

In response to queries raised the Chief Executive advised that all the partner authorities were aware of Newark & Sherwood's preference for the whole of the Newark constituency to be within the new unitary authority. He added that the Local Government Association provided LGR webinars which included local authorities who had already gone through the process.

Referring to how Members might contribute to the ongoing work streams, the Chief Executive suggested that these be shared and discussed in a workshop setting, with Members requesting that they be involved in the development of the final proposal.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee noted the progress update in line with their role to:

- a) oversee the plans for, and impact of, local government reorganisation within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire;
- b) liaise with and advise the Council's Cabinet, Audit & Accounts Committee, Policy & Performance Improvement Committee and other committees to ensure all Members are kept informed and provide opportunity for them to input their views on LGR; and
- c) that informal meetings of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee be convened to provide Members with the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing LGR work streams.

4 HOUSING OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE SELF-ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Customer Services which sought to provide Members with an update on the completion of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

The report set out that the Housing Ombudsman (HO) Complaint Handling Code "the Code" set out best practice for landlord's complaint handling procedures to enable a positive complaints culture across all landlords within the social housing sector. The Code became a statutory duty on 1 April 2024 with the HO having a legal duty to ensure landlords complaint procedures and response were compliant. Part of the Code required landlords to submit an annual submission of a self-assessment,

detailing their compliance against the Code. The report listed the 9 sections of the Code and detailed that the self-assessment had been completed and reviewed by the Council's Tenant Engagement Board, noting that in all but one area the Council was compliant and that this was due to issues with reports being submitted to the appropriate committee, which the HO was aware of.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the completed Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment be approved; and
- b) publication of the Self-Assessment on the Council's website be approved.

5 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Customer Services which sought to provide Members with information in relation to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Annual Review Letter.

The report set out that the LGSCO produced an annual review letter detailing the number, type and decisions made in relation to each authority. The review letter was attached as an appendix to the report and detailed that 16 complaints and decisions had been made relating to services provided by the Council. This was in comparison to 11 received and 9 decisions made for 2023/2024. An explanation of how complaints were dealt with was provided at paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 of the report. Table 2 within the report set out the category of complaint and the outcome of each decision.

In response to the issue raised of damage caused by a Council contractor and the decision of the Ombudsman, the Chief Executive commented that the purpose of the Council's complaints process was to provide a learning opportunity. The Business Manager advised that a dedicated Customer Satisfaction Officer was now in post within Customer Services and that contact was made with complainants to ascertain if they felt their complaint had been satisfactorily dealt with.

AGREED (unanimously) that the contents of the report be noted.

6 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK - HALF YEAR 2 - 2024/2025

The Committee considered the report presented by the Senior Transformation & Service Improvement Officer which sought to provide Members with information as to what complaints had been submitted across the Council. It also provided an opportunity to understand how the customer was receiving the services delivered.

The report provided an overview of all types of customer feedback between October 2024 to March 2025 which included: numbers received; types of feedback – praise or complaint; and how the complaints were dealt with and categorised.

In considering the report a Member referred to a review undertaken of the system used with a view to improving the handling of complaints. He also referred to the results of any blind tests carried out, requesting that these be included in the Half Year 1 – 2025/2026 report.

In referring to Table 2 within the report, a Member requested that additional detail be provided in future report to enable a better understanding of the complaints received.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

7 CODE OF CONDUCT ANNUAL REPORT - 1 MAY 2024 TO 30 APRIL 2025

The Committee considered the report presented by the Assistant Director – Legal & Democratic Services & Monitoring Officer which sought to provide Members with details of Code of Conduct complaints received in 2024/2025 together with related matters.

The report set out the number of complaints received relating to district and town/parish councillors. The report provided: a summary of complaints received, the complainant type together with a summary of the outcomes in relation to complaints received. Details of the formal investigations and Code of Conduct hearings were provided together with information relating to Register of Members' Interests; Code of Conduct training; Government consultation on Code of Conduct; and Conduct and Public Service.

In considering the report, Members raised a number of queries in relation to the complaints process. In response, the Assistant Director advised that complainants are kept informed of progress, adding that whenever possible the Monitoring Officer would attempt to resolve a complaint without taking it any further, noting that formal investigations were a slow and costly process with only minor sanctions available at the end of the process.

In noting reference to political motivation for complaints received, the Chief Executive advised that he had discussed with the Monitoring Officer the possibility of introducing a policy to mirror that which was used for members of the public in relation to unreasonable behaviour, suggesting that a Member and Officer workshop be held to explore this further.

In referring to the cost implications of investigations as detailed in paragraph 3.1 of the report, the Monitoring Officer noted the volume of complaints received and highlighted the amount of Officer time taken to review the initial complaints.

In response to the Chief Executive's comments that complaints in relation to incidents of misconduct were not always submitted, a Member stated that sanctions available following a breach of the Code of Conduct were of little use and therefore did not encourage this course of action.

In noting the increase in the number of complaints since 2023, it was suggested that there had been a deterioration in standards nationally, which was reflected at a local level.

Reflecting on the debate in relation to the annual report, Members agreed that they would wish to see additional detail in future reports which would enable them to make informed decisions.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the annual Code of Conduct Report be noted;
- b) particular focus will be given to social media at the next Code of Conduct Refresher Session for all Members be noted; and
- c) the communications strategy for the Local Government Association Debate not Hate campaign be endorsed and noted.

8 REMOTE ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS AND PROXY VOTING

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Elections & Democratic Services which sought to provide Members with an update on the Government consultation on remote attendance at meetings and proxy voting.

The report set out the reasoning behind the consultation and that it was Government's intention to amend the law to introduce provisions for remote attendance at local authority meetings. The intention was to permit local authorities to develop their own locally appropriate policies to facilitate this change in law. In relation to proxy voting, the plan was to require principal councils to implement a proxy voting scheme to provide consistency for Members who were absent due to, for example, becoming a new parent.

In considering the report a Member noted that the consultation responses indicated that local authorities were against allowing proxy voting, however, the Government appeared to be proceeding with this. The Business Manager advised that the use of proxy voting may be restricted to meetings of Full Council only. In relation to whether this may impact on town and parish councils, the Business Manager advised that this would likely be dependent on the size of the parish but that until the legislation was published, the full extent of the changes would not be known.

AGREED (unanimously) that the contents of the report be noted.

In accordance with Section 100(B)(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair has agreed to take the following item as a late item of business in order to enable Eakring Parish Council to take decisions and co-opt new councillors to fill the current vacancies as soon as possible.

9 LATE ITEM - EAKRING PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The Committee considered the late item presented by the Business Manager – Elections & Democratic Services which sought Members' approval to make an Order under Section 91 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to temporarily appoint the Ward Members for Rainworth North & Rufford onto Eakring Parish Council to enable the parish council to meet to take decisions and co-opt to fill current vacancies.

The report set out that following the May 2023 parish elections, Eakring Parish Council had seen a number of changes and recent resignations resulting in there only being two elected members and therefore being unable to act. As noted at paragraph 1.3 of the report, in such circumstances the district council is able to temporarily appoint persons to fill all or any of the vacancies until other councillors are elected and take up office. It was therefore proposed to make the Order to temporarily appoint Councillors Claire Penny and Linda Tift to Eakring Parish Council.

AGREED (unanimously) that the making of an Order under Section 91 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 to temporarily appoint the Ward Members for Rainworth North & Rufford onto Eakring Parish Council be approved.

10 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee's Work Programme; and
- b) the Audit & Accounts Committee be recommended to include issues surrounding the hacking of data centres to their Work Programme.

Meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Chair



Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 27 November 2025

Director Lead: John Robinson, Chief Executive

Lead Officer: Nigel Hill, Business Manager - Elections & Democratic Services, Ext. 5243

Report Summary	
Report Title	Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Purpose of Report	To enable the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee to consider the latest position in respect of local government reorganisation following the Cabinet Meeting held on 26 November 2025
Recommendations	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee: (a) note the decision of the Cabinet in respect of local government reorganisation; and (b) consider next steps following the submission of the Final Proposal to government.
Reason for Recommendations	To provide the Committee with the detail of the Final Proposal submitted to the government and an opportunity to consider the nature of any debate at the Cabinet and next steps.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Attached as an Appendix to this report, is the cover report and appendices for the Cabinet meeting to be held on 26 November 2025. The decision of the Cabinet and any substantive issues that arise at this meeting will be reported verbally to the Committee.
- 1.2 The Cabinet are being asked to endorse the submission (Appendix A to the Cabinet report) of the Final Proposal for a new unitary structure of local government for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
- 1.3 The Final Proposal is based on Option 1e which was approved by the Cabinet on 15 July 2025 following the resolution of the Full Council on the same evening. As Members will be aware Option 1e would see the creation of two new unitary authorities, the first consisting of Ashfield; Bassetlaw; Gedling; Mansfield; and Newark & Sherwood; and a second consisting of Broxtowe; Nottingham City; and Rushcliffe.
- 1.4 All Members of the Council were also invited to attend a presentation on the content of the Final Proposal held on 18 November 2025.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 The Committee are invited to consider the latest position in respect of local government reorganisation following the decision of the Cabinet in respect of the Final Proposal and the submission to the government.
- 2.2 In addition, the Committee may also wish to consider next steps in accordance with the timetable below.

Activity	By when
Submit final business case to Government	28 November 2025
Work around implementation and transition	November 2025 – May 2027
Decision by Government	Spring/ Summer 2026
Elections for shadow authority	May 2027
New unitary authority vesting day	April 2028

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.

The full implications are contained in the report to the Cabinet.

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.

Refer to the Cabinet Report attached as the appendix to this report.



Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 26 November 2025

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

Director Lead: John Robinson, Chief Executive

Lead Officer: Nigel Hill, Business Manager Elections & Democratic Services, Ext. 5243

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report / Key Decision
Report Title	Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Purpose of Report	To endorse submission to Government of the Final Proposal for this Council's preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
Recommendations	That Cabinet: (a) endorse the submission of a Final Proposal for a new unitary structure of Local Government for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, as attached as Appendix A to the report, based on two new authorities, the first based on the existing boundaries of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood and the second based on the existing boundaries of Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe; (b) notes the reference within the Final Proposal to the potential for future changes to council size and electoral arrangements as part of the first Electoral Review, and requests the Leader to write formally to the Secretary of State as part of our submission expressing our Council's support to consolidate all of the Newark constituency within the proposed Sherwood Forest unitary Council; (c) expresses support for continued collaborative working with other local authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire on the implementation proposals for any new authorities; (d) notes the additional workload and risks associated with reorganisation and commits to ensure

	appropriate governance, communication, financial and management arrangements are put in place to mitigate potential impacts during the transition period; and (e) delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments to Final Proposal if necessary, prior to submission.
Alternative Options Considered	The Council could decide not to respond to the Secretary of State's invitation; however, a new structure will be implemented irrespective of this. Notwithstanding concerns about some aspects of reorganisation, the Council has determined that the responsible thing to do is to participate fully in the process. This includes making its position known on a preferred option that reflects the criteria given for reorganisation. Councils could have developed proposals in isolation rather than collectively across the whole area of Nottinghamshire. This would have risked options being developed which meet the needs of part of the area but not the whole, and which have less alignment with the criteria set out by MHCLG in the statutory invitation. The proposed options for Local Government Reorganisation outlined in this report and detailed in Appendix A have been developed through a structured and detailed work programme overseen by Leaders/Mayors with support from Chief Executives, other statutory officers, a wide range of other officers and technical advice and analysis from advisors PwC, Peopletoo and CIPFA. Although support for differing options has emerged, this work has continued.
Reason for Recommendations	To ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the statutory invitation from government to submit a final proposal for local government reorganisation by 28 November 2025. The proposed Option 1e is the best for Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It is also noted that from the public engagement of those respondents expressing a view on the future structure, it is Option 1e that makes most sense to them. The proposal takes into account the Government's criteria for submissions, namely: 1) Sensible single tier of local government. 2) 'Right sized' and financially viable local government. 3) High quality, sustainable services. 4) Meets local needs.

	5) Supports devolution arrangements. 6) Local engagement and empowerment.
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1.0 **Background**

1.1 On 16 December 2024, the Government published the [English Devolution White Paper](#). The White Paper aims to devolve greater powers to regions and local areas to improve public services and drive economic growth. The White Paper described a new architecture of streamlined government, including Mayoral Strategic Authorities and the replacement of all two-tier areas of local government with unitary Councils (Principal Authorities).

1.2 On 5 February 2025, the Minister of State issued a formal, statutory invitation to the nine Council Leaders within Nottinghamshire, asking each Leader to work collectively with other Council Leaders in the area to develop a proposal for Local Government Reorganisation. The first step in the process was a request to submit an Interim Plan containing options for new unitary councils to be submitted on or before 21 March 2025.

1.3 The Interim Plan was developed by officers from across the nine councils, with independent support and advice from PwC. It shortlisted three options for further assessment:

- Option 1b – Unitary one consisting of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Rushcliffe. Unitary two consisting of Broxtowe, Gedling, Nottingham City.
- Option 1e – Unitary one consisting of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood. Unitary two consisting of Broxtowe, Nottingham City, Rushcliffe.
- Option 2 – Unitary one consisting of Nottingham City only (current boundary). Unitary two consisting of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Broxtowe, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Rushcliffe.

1.4 At an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council on 19 March 2025, Newark and Sherwood District Council agreed to endorse the submission of an interim plan for local government reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to Government by 21 March 2025.

The Interim Plan contained the three options referenced above, referred to as Options 1b, 1e and 2.

1.5 On 3 June 2025, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) issued its feedback on the Interim Plan. The feedback reiterated Government's encouragement for areas to work together to submit a single proposal, whilst acknowledging the opportunity for individual Councils to submit

their own proposals. One key theme that emerged more prominently was the need to demonstrate how new unitary structures would enable neighbourhood empowerment, with local areas being invited to come forward with proposals to create local area committees or other local engagement and decision-making forums.

- 1.6 Following submission of the Interim Plan, PwC were commissioned by all authorities to conduct further appraisal of the three options within the Interim Plan. This appraisal was undertaken with input from officers across all authorities. PwC's appraisal concluded that Option 2 (the single county unitary option) demonstrated the weakest alignment against the MHCLG criteria by leaving Nottingham City Council on its existing boundary and evidencing a lack of balance between the two unitary Councils. This option was quickly rejected by all Nottinghamshire Councils. PwC's appraisal also concluded that Option 1b and Option 1e both met the Government's criteria and *"that the differences between Options 1b and 1e within each criteria are marginal"*.
- 1.7 On 15 July 2025, a further report was brought to Full Council and Cabinet on the same evening to determine which option Newark and Sherwood wished to develop as its Final Proposal for submission to Government by 28 November 2025. Full Council agreed that this should be Option 1e and this was ratified by the Cabinet.
- 1.8 Each council is only allowed to express support for one option in its submission to government on 28 November 2025. Currently we have indications of the following (to be determined w/c 24 November 2025):
 - Option 1b – Nottinghamshire County, Rushcliffe.
 - Option 1e – Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood.
 - Option Bii – Nottingham City are considering a two unitary option with one authority based on the City with expanded boundaries into parts of Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe (now referenced as Option Bii).
 - Ashfield - have not determined a preference at the time of preparing this report.
 - Broxtowe - have no desire to be part of any reorganisation, though have expressed a 'marginal preference' for 1e.

Since the Council and Cabinet meetings on 15 July 2025, work has continued on Option 1e and a submission has been developed by officers from across the four councils of Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood with input from Ashfield and Broxtowe on an advisory basis. PwC and CIPFA have continued to develop the financial analysis of Option 1b and Option 1e to ensure independence and commonality of data for both options. Unfortunately, given the timescales, it has not been possible for the same level of detail to be applied to Option Bii. This is because of the arbitrary nature of the proposed boundaries and the difficulties created by splitting the Borough Councils and calculating budgets.

Partner councils progressing the 1e option have also commissioned specific support from advisors Peopletoo who are currently supporting local authorities across the

Country. The focus of their engagement has been adult and children's social care to address concerns raised at the time of the Interim Plan and to explore alternative approaches to current methods of service delivery.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 The proposed Option 1e submission has taken account of the Government feedback on the Interim Plan. It seeks to meet the Government's requirements by covering the following elements:
- a. identification of any barriers or challenges where further clarity or support would be helpful.
 - b. identification of the likely options for the size and boundaries of new councils that will offer the best structures for delivery of high-quality and sustainable public services across the area, along with indicative efficiency saving opportunities.
 - c. inclusion of indicative costs and arrangements in relation to any options including planning for future service transformation opportunities.
 - d. inclusion of proposals as to the councillor numbers that will ensure both effective democratic representation for all parts of the area, and also effective governance and decision-making arrangements which will balance the unique needs of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, in line with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England guidance.
 - e. inclusion of views on how new structures will support devolution ambitions.
 - f. inclusion of a summary of local engagement that has been undertaken and any views expressed, along with further plans for wider local engagement to shape developing proposals.
- 2.2 The proposed Option 1e submission addresses the issues raised by MHCLG in response to the interim plan, and the Executive Summary of the appended submission highlights why Option 1e is considered to present the best option to meet the Government's criteria and provide a future platform for the delivery of housing and economic growth ambitions in conjunction with EMCCA.
- 2.3 Following submission by 28 November 2025, the government will take decisions on how to proceed, including laying any necessary legislation and working with councils to move to new "shadow" unitary councils in May 2027. At this stage it is anticipated that the announcement will be made in the spring/summer of 2026 with the aim of new unitary councils being in place by April 2028.
- 2.4 In addition to updating Cabinet on the latest position with regard to the Government's requirement for Local Government Reorganisation, Cabinet is asked to endorse the Final Proposal that is attached for submission to Government by 28 November 2025. Delegation to the Chief Executive is sought to ensure that any minor changes to the Final Proposal can be made prior to submission. These changes are to ensure there are no typographical errors and ensure consistency in formatting/design.

In accordance with previous decisions, it is further recommended that the Leader writes an accompanying letter of support to Government, logging this Council's

support for a boundary change (as part of the first electoral review) that would bring the whole of the Newark Constituency within the area of the proposed Sherwood Forest Council.

3.0 Community Engagement

- 3.1 A public engagement exercise supported and approved by all nine authorities was carried out by '*Public Perspectives*' over a six-week period which closed on Sunday 14 September 2025. It invited residents, businesses, and local organisations to share their views on reorganisation. The main mechanism for capturing responses was an online questionnaire open to all interested parties, promoted through councils' websites, communication channels and promotional/marketing activity, including a dedicated website (lgrnotts.org), as well as outreach events and engagement with stakeholders. The questionnaire was also available in alternative formats on request, such as paper copies, alongside e-mail, phone, British Sign Language and translation support. In total there were 11,483 responses to the engagement exercise. This is a much higher level of response than many other areas. Relatedly, four focus groups were conducted involving 34 residents reflecting the diversity of Nottinghamshire and organised by urban and rural areas. These focus groups allowed the emerging findings from the engagement process to be unpacked and views about the proposals to be discussed in-depth, both adding further insight as well as validating the findings from the engagement survey.
- 3.2 Over 96% of respondents lived in Nottinghamshire, with responses received from all nine affected areas. Unsurprisingly, the highest number of responses came from Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. The survey explored peoples' views on their local area, the effectiveness of current council structures, their awareness of LGR, and the potential impact of the proposed changes. Respondents were also asked to comment on the two options being put forward by the councils (the City Council also included questions for their own residents as part of the countywide survey).
- 3.3 Respondents highlighted the need for the new councils to focus on delivering good quality core and universal services like roads and pavements, crime/anti-social behaviour, clean streets, travel and transport. They also highlighted the importance of involving residents in decision-making to ensure that future councils understand and are responsive to the needs of different communities and areas, including urban and rural areas.

58% of all respondents disagreed with the proposal to reduce the number of councils in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Nevertheless, the exercise showed that there is more positivity/support towards Option 1e compared to Option 1b, with approximately a third of respondents supporting it or at least stating that it is the best of the two options. Some respondents stated that it made more sense geographically and/or is a cleaner North-South split with a better division of populations and resources.

4.0 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.

Implications Considered Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable			
Financial	Yes	Equality & Diversity	Yes
Human Resources	Yes	Human Rights	N/A
Legal	Yes	Data Protection	N/A
Digital & Cyber Security	N/A	Safeguarding	N/A
Sustainability	Yes	Crime & Disorder	N/A
LGR	Yes	Tenant Consultation	N/A

Financial Implications (FIN25-26/9823)

4.1 The PwC modelling, together with work completed by Peopletoo have forecasted a potential £485m cumulative savings by year five of the new authority post vesting day, with £148m as annual savings from that point onwards. This is split across three main themes:

- Aggregation benefits - £31m
- Transformation benefits - £67m
- Adult Social Care and Children's Services benefits - £50m

Additionally, CIPFA have been engaged throughout the creation of the financial business cases for both options (1b and 1e) to act as a critical friend, reviewing assumptions to ensure the reasonableness of this in comparison to other financial business cases for LGR up and down the country. They subsequently used the modelling produced by PwC in order to assess the risk and resilience of the proposed authorities. The table below shows the outcomes of this:

Figure 23a: Table showing the resilience and risk assessment undertaken by CIPFA.

Scenario	New authority	Comprised of	Risk score	Top 3 risk metrics
1b	Expanded City	Gedling, Broxtowe, Nottingham City and 27% of Nottinghamshire County Council	8.18	Reserves/Income, Growth Above Baseline, Overspend (£000)
1b	Rest of Nottinghamshire	Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Ashfield, Rushcliffe and 73% of Nottinghamshire County Council	7.07	Reserves Sustainability Measure, Unallocated Reserves, Change in Reserves
1e	South Nottinghamshire	Broxtowe, Nottingham, Rushcliffe and 28% of Nottinghamshire County Council	8.35	Change in Unallocated Reserves, Growth Above Baseline, Reserves/Income
1e	North Nottinghamshire	Bassetlaw, Mansfield, Newark & Sherwood, Ashfield, Gedling and 72% of Nottinghamshire County Council	5.89	Change in Earmarked Reserves, MRP/CFR, Change in HRA Reserves

This is also the case in terms of how Council Tax is harmonised. Authorities will have a maximum of seven years for which to harmonise Council Tax over the area for which it serves, to ensure that all residents within that area pay an equal amount of taxation to fund the services they receive.

- 4.2 At this stage there are no direct financial implications for the Council in submitting a final proposal to Government. As matters become clearer on timescales and the inevitable detailed work that will be undertaken by officers within and across Nottinghamshire, a fuller understanding of the financial implications attributable to this Council will be known. These will be reported to the Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee at the appropriate time as the programme of reform develops. As part of a strategic review of reserves, the Council has set aside £0.500m of its existing reserves to fund any future activity necessary to assist with the creation of the new authority that this Council will reside.

Legal Implications (LEG2425/6484)

- 4.3 Cabinet is the appropriate body to determine the proposals as the decision is an executive function. Full Council has previously recommended to Cabinet in July 2025 that Option 1e should be developed as this Council's preferred option and a Full Council briefing has been arranged for 18 November 2025 to involve and update all members. In addition, the Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee received an update on the progress of the Option 1e work in September 2025. The same Committee will receive full information in relation to the Cabinet decision on 27th November 2025.

The submission to Government has to be made by 28th November 2025, all authorities are required to present one option for reorganisation. Option 1e has already been accepted by this Council as its preferred option to progress to submission and engagement with all Councillors on the final proposal has been undertaken, as such, in line with the Council's call-in procedure, the substance of the decision has already been subject to scrutiny and as such call-in would not apply.

Under the Local Government Act 2000 (the 2000 Act) any function which is not specified in the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 (the Functions Regulations) is to be the responsibility of the executive (Leader and Cabinet). The invitation to submit proposals to MHCLG falls under Part 1 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This part of the 2007 Act is not referred to in the Functions Regulations and as such is an executive function— exercisable by Cabinet as a key decision.

- 4.4 Structural and boundary change in England is governed by the 2007 Act and regulations made thereunder. If, following due process including statutory consultation by Government, a structural change is approved by Government, a structural change order will be made by way of secondary legislation to implement the change and establish a single tier of local government and abolish the relevant councils. An order would include provision for transitional arrangements and elections.

On 10 July 2025, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill was published. This piece of legislation is currently progressing through Parliament and has now reached the Report stage in the House of Commons. Once it has received

Royal Assent, it will provide further detail on the roles and responsibilities of new authorities as well as other governance arrangements.

Human Resources Implications (HR2526/2377SL)

- 4.5 At this early stage, it is difficult to predict the full impact on the Council's workforce, however there will be at least some changes in the uppermost tiers of management. For the remaining majority of the workforce, it is not expected that there will be any significant changes prior to the new unitary Council being formed. This message has been communicated to staff through staff briefings from the Chief Executive and through cascade feedback from managers. Staff are reassured that the need for services remains, bins will need to be collected, streets cleaned and officers will be required to continue this.

A new larger organisation will offer many new opportunities for staff to progress their careers, with larger and/or broader management roles, a wider range of specialist roles and opportunities to step into different business units such as social services, etc. The Council is working to support staff with this by focusing on workforce development.

- 4.6 At this stage, the Council's workforce has been provided with regular updates. Further work will ensure that there is a clear understanding of the implications for staff from the reorganisation streams of work, however there is no getting away from the fact that the process of reorganisation over the next two years will provide a period of uncertainty for some colleagues. This may result in a higher turnover of staff and potential difficulties in the recruitment of new staff. Work is underway to develop staff and give them the confidence moving forward with any new opportunities that may arise.

Regulation 3 of the Local Government (Structural and Boundary Changes) (Staffing) Regulations 2008 (Employment Regulations) confirms that the transfer of functions to a new unitary council shall constitute a relevant transfer under the TUPE Regulations. The only exception in respect of this relates to the position of the Head of Paid Service.

- 4.7 Moving forward, there will be a considerable impact on staffing capacity to develop the necessary implementation programme for the new authorities once the Secretary of State announces the final proposals. That work will have to commence immediately.

The transition period will create a significant amount of additional work and risks. There will be a period of uncertainty for staff, members and partners, etc. This could affect morale, service continuity and create financial and resource pressures.

Equalities Implications

- 4.8 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared to support this submission. It has reviewed the potential impact of Local Government Reorganisation on residents across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with the potential merger of

areas. At this stage, high level data has been used to inform the submission and further work to fully assess equality implications will be undertaken. A copy of the EIA is attached at Appendix B.

The assessment identifies both potential positive and negative impacts. Potential positive impacts include improved coordination of services particularly around vulnerable service users, for example linking up Social Care and Housing services more closely and improving opportunities for greater partnership working with other service providers such as the NHS. Potential risks include the dilution of minority voices within a larger authority with reduced representation for some groups, rural access challenges, the loss of specialist services if rationalised, and uncertainty during the transition period.

Actions identified that will mitigate any negative impacts and/or promote inclusion include:

- Maintaining parish and neighbourhood voice and representation;
- Enhanced local involvement and empowerment through the identified neighbourhood model;
- Ensuring day-one continuity of services, especially safeguarding and support for vulnerable groups;
- Retaining local access points for essential services, with accessible transport and non-digital routes for engagement;
- Protecting minimum funding levels for specialist services.

Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 4.9 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) presents a valuable opportunity for councils to strengthen their carbon reduction plans through enhanced collaboration and shared expertise. By working together within established networks such as the Local Area Energy Partnership and the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), the new unitary council can develop more ambitious, joined-up strategies for decarbonisation. Ongoing initiatives like Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) exemplify this collaborative approach, enabling councils to co-design evidence-based, cost-effective pathways to Net Zero that reflect local priorities and resources. Evidence has already shown that these partnerships foster innovation, unlock additional funding and ensure that best practice is shared across the region. LGR will set the conditions for accelerated progress towards carbon reduction targets while delivering wider benefits for communities.

Background Papers

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.

[English Devolution White Paper](#)
[19 March 2025 Report to Full Council – Item 72](#)
[15 July 2025 Report to Full Council – Item 8](#)

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool designed to assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of a change to your service / policy / plan / strategy to ensure it is fair and does not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any groups in relation to protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. It enables a systematic approach in identifying and recording impacts and actions.

Why do we need it?

As a local authority that provides services to the public, we have a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate that we have paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

The EIA will help to ensure that we understand the potential effects of any new or significantly changed services, policies, plans, or strategies by assessing:

- the impacts on different groups, both internal and external
- any adverse impacts are identified
- actions are identified to remove or mitigate any adverse impacts

The EIA ensures decisions are transparent and based on evidence with clear reasoning.

What are the protected characteristics?

- ✓ Age
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Gender reassignment
- ✓ Marriage and civil partnership
- ✓ Pregnancy and maternity
- ✓ Race
- ✓ Religion and belief
- ✓ Sex
- ✓ Sexual orientation

1. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Name of service /policy / plan /strategy	Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)
Lead Officer and others undertaking this assessment?	John Robinson Carl Burns (EEDI Lead)
Date EIA completed	06.11.2025

2. SUMMARY OF THE POLICIES, PROCEDURES, FUNCTIONS, AND SERVICES BEING ASSESSED

What are the aims and objectives of the policies, procedures, functions, and services
Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is a national initiative directed by government which is intended to streamline the delivery of local services and enhance efficiency across the country. While LGR is driven by national policy, this Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is specifically focused on Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. The objective is to review and, where appropriate, reorganise existing local council structures to ensure that public services are more effective, accessible, and responsive to the needs of local residents and communities. In line with government guidance, a final submission is required by 28 November 2025, with any new arrangements anticipated to commence 1 April 2028. LGR's overarching aim remains to create fair and inclusive services that support the wellbeing of all individuals and groups in Nottinghamshire.
Who is affected by this policies, procedures, functions, and services and what is the intended change or outcome for them? (i.e. staff / service users or other stakeholders)
Local government reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire impacts a broad range of individuals and groups, including council staff, residents, businesses, and other stakeholders. Council employees may experience changes in their roles, responsibilities, or even workplace location, as the structure and delivery of services are reviewed and potentially streamlined. Residents could see alterations to local services, such as waste collection schedules or changes to how social care and housing support are managed, whilst aimed at improved efficiency, could conversely result in temporary disruption during transition periods. Businesses may be affected by changes in regulatory processes, licensing arrangements, or local economic support schemes, potentially opening new opportunities or requiring adaptation to revised procedures. Other stakeholders, such as voluntary organisations and community groups, might encounter shifts in funding arrangements or partnership working, necessitating adjustments to their operations. By way of example, a local community centre may need to liaise with a newly formed council

department to secure grant funding, while a small enterprise may benefit from streamlined business rates processes following reorganisation. Overall, the effects of local government reorganisation are wide-reaching, requiring clear communication and thoughtful management to ensure that all affected parties are supported throughout the transition.

Which groups have been consulted with as part of the creation or review of this policies, procedures, functions, and services

(Please include how they were consulted and their responses. If you haven't consulted yet and are intending to do so, please complete the consultation table below)

NSDC has prioritised engagement with communities and stakeholders throughout the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process, aiming for transparency and collaboration. As part of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Communications Cell, NSDC contributed to the development of a joint microsite, providing accessible information and supporting partnership working during LGR.

All nine Nottinghamshire councils commissioned an independent engagement exercise using quantitative and qualitative research. NSDC coordinated with the consultation provider, supported survey design and promotion, and helped achieve 11,483 responses, representing significant community input.

NSDC has also communicated regularly with parish councils, staff, and elected members to gather a broad range of perspectives and will continue to seek stakeholder feedback up to vesting day.

In 2026, central government will hold a statutory consultation on LGR proposals, with NSDC committed to supporting stakeholder engagement throughout this process.

In light of the answers given above, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs/issues? If not please explain why

Meaningful engagement with the community throughout the implementation phase of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is vital to ensure equality remains at the heart of any changes. Ongoing consultation will help to recognise and address the specific needs of those most likely to be disproportionately affected, supporting the development of effective mitigation measures. The following section highlights the priority groups for engagement, outlining where changes may have the greatest impact.

Priority groups for engagement include:

- Disabled people (physical, sensory, and learning disabilities): Changes to service delivery locations or formats may reduce accessibility to essential support and facilities.
- Older people: Alterations to public transport or community services could impact their ability to remain independent and socially connected.
- Children and young people: Restructuring of education or youth provision may affect the availability and quality of local opportunities and support.
- Minority ethnic communities: Modifications to community engagement or translation services might limit access to information and participation in decision-making.
- Faith groups: Changes in community space provision could disrupt places of worship or faith-based activities.
- Low-income households: Adjustments to benefits administration or local support schemes may affect financial stability and access to advice.
- Rural residents: Centralisation of services could increase travel distances and reduce local service availability.
- LGBTQ+ communities: Potential changes in funding or support for specialist services could impact access to safe spaces and tailored support.
- Carers (adult and young): Alterations to respite or support services may put additional pressure on carers and affect their wellbeing.

Due to the strict timelines required for the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process to date, it has not been possible to engage directly with every individual priority group. However, county-wide engagement has taken place to gather broad perspectives. Moving forward, it is recommended that more targeted group engagement is explored during the implementation phase. This will help ensure that services are shaped with equality and inclusivity at the forefront, reflecting the diverse needs of all communities.

Where full consultation has not been feasible, a clear rationale is documented, by utilising existing knowledge and data and/or recent engagement. In summary, ongoing and focussed consultation with affected groups during implementation will strengthen the evidence base, promote transparency, and ensure services remain responsive to community needs.

CONSULTATION

Negative impacts identified will require the responsible officer to consult with the affected group/s to determine all practicable and proportionate mitigations. Add more rows as required.

Group/Organisation	Date	Response
Residents of Nottinghamshire	August – Sept 2025	11,483 respondents with a majority supporting the 1e proposal. Throughout the engagement results, there are differences in experience, perceptions and opinion by different demographic groups. The reasons for this are not unpicked in this report, although it highlights the importance of understanding local

		issues and priorities and tailoring services and support to different communities (both equality groups, different localities and urban-rural communities) as part of any future arrangements.
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3. WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW AND WHERE THERE ARE GAPS

List any existing information / data about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? i.e. in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc

Examples of information / data such as consultation, previous EIA's, demographic information, anecdotal or other evidence

Nottinghamshire is a county with a population of 844,494 (ONS Mid-2023 estimate), featuring both urban and rural communities. Population density varies widely, from 110 people per sq km in rural Bassetlaw to 4,338 per sq km in urban Nottingham City. The county's age profile is shifting, with 19% aged over 65, and this proportion is expected to rise by over 30% by 2034. Ethnic diversity is greatest in Nottingham City (65.9% White, 14.9% Asian, 10% Black), while districts like Bassetlaw are less diverse. Income levels also vary, with Rushcliffe having the highest gross disposable household income (£23,828) and Nottingham City the lowest (£15,015), compared to a national average of £20,425. Participation in further education and benefit claimant rates also differ across districts, reflecting varied socio-economic contexts.

Newark & Sherwood: Local Profile

Newark & Sherwood is home to 126,168 residents and is characterized by market towns, villages, and rural communities. The district has a growing older population, mirroring county-wide trends, and retains 59% of its workforce locally. Housing needs and development pressures are ongoing, requiring careful strategic planning to balance growth and preserve rural character.

How LGR Could Affect Certain Groups

- **Older People:** As the proportion of residents over 65 increases, LGR could support more integrated adult social care services. However, changes in council boundaries may affect eligibility or access, especially for those in rural areas.
- **Ethnic Minorities:** While Newark & Sherwood is less diverse than Nottingham City, migration and demographic change mean services must remain culturally competent. LGR offers opportunities to standardize best practice, but risks losing local knowledge if not managed inclusively.
- **Disabled People & Those with SEND:** The current distribution of SEND services is balanced, but reorganisation could disrupt provision if resources are not equitably allocated. Newark & Sherwood's needs may differ from urban centres, requiring tailored approaches.

- **Low-Income Households:** Areas with higher deprivation may benefit from pooled resources and improved service coordination. However, larger authorities could dilute targeted support unless robust equality monitoring is in place.
- **Rural Communities:** Rural residents often face barriers to accessing services. LGR could improve strategic planning for transport and connectivity but must ensure rural voices are heard and local needs are not overshadowed by urban priorities.

Summary

- Nottinghamshire's population is ageing, with significant rural and urban contrasts.
- Newark & Sherwood is a predominantly rural district with a growing older population and strong local employment.
- LGR presents opportunities to improve service integration, efficiency, and equity, but risks must be managed—especially for vulnerable groups.
- Examples include potential improvements in adult social care, risks to SEND provision, and the need for culturally competent services.
- Ongoing equality monitoring and community engagement will be essential to ensure all groups benefit from reorganisation.

*Statistics taken from PwC options appraisal 2025

4. ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Protected Characteristic	Is there potential of positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of evidence / data used	Action to address negative impact (<i>i.e. adjustment to the policy/plan – the action log below should be completed to provide further information</i>)
Age	Yes	• Young people may feel disengaged if services such as youth centres or education support are disrupted. • Older adults could face increased isolation if transport or community services are reorganised without their needs in mind.	• Engage with youth and older people's groups during consultation processes. • Ensure continuity and accessibility of age-specific services during and after reorganisation. • Provide clear communication tailored to different age groups.
Disability	Yes	• Changes in service delivery may create new barriers for disabled people, especially regarding physical access and digital inclusion. • Risk of reduced support for those with specific needs if resources are merged or redistributed.	• Conduct accessibility audits for all new or changed services and facilities. • Involve disabled people and advocacy groups in planning and decision-making. • Maintain or improve reasonable adjustments in employment and service provision.
Gender Reassignment	Yes	• Potential loss of access to support services tailored for trans people.	• Ensure all staff receive training on gender identity and inclusion.

			•Protect and promote trans-inclusive policies and support services. •maintain confidential channels for feedback and reporting concerns.
Marriage / Civil Partnership	Yes	•Changes to benefits, leave policies, or employment terms may impact those in marriages or civil partnerships. •Possible confusion over rights and entitlements during transition.	•Review and standardise policies to ensure equal treatment for married and partnered employees. •Communicate clearly any changes to entitlements or benefits.
Pregnancy / Maternity	Yes	•Women who are pregnant or on maternity leave may be overlooked during restructuring or redeployment. •Risk of disruption to maternity-related services, such as childcare or parental support.	•Ensure that pregnant employees and those on maternity leave are included in all communications and decisions. •Safeguard maternity-related services and employment protections. •Provide flexible working arrangements to support new parents.
Race	Yes	•Minority ethnic groups may face barriers to accessing services if communication is not inclusive. •Risk of under-representation in decision-making processes.	•Use inclusive language and provide translation or interpretation services where needed. •Proactively engage with ethnic minority communities during consultations. •Monitor and analyse data to ensure equitable service delivery.
Religion / Belief	Yes	•Reorganisation may inadvertently clash with religious observances. •Potential reduction in culturally sensitive services or spaces.	•Consult with faith groups to identify needs and concerns. •Ensure facilities and services respect religious practices and beliefs. •Provide flexibility for staff and service users to observe religious events.
Sex	Yes	•Men and women may be differently affected by changes in employment, service provision, or safety measures. •Risk of inadvertently perpetuating gender inequalities through policy changes.	•Conduct gender impact assessments for proposed changes. •Ensure equal opportunities for employment and advancement. •Promote safeguarding policies to support vulnerable groups.

Sexual Orientation	Yes	•LGBTQ+ individuals may experience increased marginalisation or loss of tailored support services. •Risk of discrimination if inclusivity is not prioritised.	•Maintain and promote LGBTQ+ support services and networks. •Embed anti-discrimination policies and training across all levels of the organisation. •Facilitate open dialogue and feedback from LGBTQ+ staff and service users.
Other groups which may be impacted? (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, veterans, care leavers)	Yes	Armed Forces Communities •LGR may change how services are delivered and accessed, affecting support for armed forces personnel, veterans, and their families. •Disruption to established partnerships and communication channels could lead to inconsistencies and confusion for the armed forces community. Carers •Local government reorganisation could disrupt existing support services and networks that many carers rely on, potentially making it harder for them to access essential information, advice, and respite care. •Changes to service delivery or eligibility criteria may create barriers for carers from marginalised or disadvantaged backgrounds, increasing the risk of unequal treatment or reduced support.	•Effective consultation and updates to local policies are needed to ensure ongoing support and commitment during the transition. •Engage with carers early in the reorganisation process to understand their needs and ensure their perspectives inform service redesign and decision-making. •Monitor and review the impact of reorganisation on carers, especially those from marginalised groups, so that adjustments can be made quickly if new barriers or inequalities arise.

5. PROPOSED MITIGATION: ACTION LOG

To be completed when barriers, negative impact or discrimination are found as part of this process – to show actions taken to remove or mitigate. Any mitigations identified throughout the EIA process should be meaningful and timely.

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policies, procedures, functions, and services?

The implementation of LGR in Nottinghamshire will be coordinated by representatives from all councils and will include officers from all key service delivery areas. This will enable equality considerations at every stage of planning and updated EIAs will be presented with all significant reports as required.

6. EVALUATION DECISION

Once consultation and practicable and proportionate mitigation have been put in place, the officer responsible should evaluate whether any negative impact remains and, if so, provide justification for any decision to proceed.

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed new service / policy / plan or strategy or the proposed change could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	During the transition imposed by Local Government Reorganisation it is essential to monitor the findings of this EIA and ensure all efforts are made to mitigate any lasting disadvantage to all groups identified within. If the transition is made with equality in mind there is opportunity to ensure that no lasting disadvantage exists.	
Final Decision	Tick	Include any explanation/justification required
1. No barriers identified; therefore, activity will proceed		
2. Stop the policy or practice because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. Adapt or change the policy in a way that will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified , however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision	✓	

7. SIGN OFF

Name and job title of person completing this EIA	Carl Burns
Officer Responsible for implementing the change to policies, procedures, functions, and services etc.	John Robinson
Business Manager	Carl Burns
Date Agreed (by Business Manager)	06.11.25
Date of Review (if required)	Ongoing



Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 27 November 2025

Director/ Lead Francesca Whyley, Monitoring Officer

Officer:

Report Summary	
Report Title	Review of Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints, Member/Officer Protocol, Social Media Protocol for Members and a Member Development Plan
Purpose of Report	To recommend amendment and further review through a working group of the Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct complaints to enable effective management of complaints. To establish a working group to support in the review of the Member/Officer Protocol, Social Media Protocol for Members and proposals for a Member Development Plan
Recommendations	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee: a) agree that the Monitoring Officer make the proposed amendments to the Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct complaints as detailed within this report at para 1.5 with immediate effect; b) agree the establishment of a cross-party Working Group, to support a wider review of the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints, the Member/Officer Protocol, Social Media Protocol for Members and proposals for a Member Development Plan; and c) subject to b) being approved, determine membership of the Working Group with a recommended membership of up to six Members.
Reason for Recommendations	To enable efficient management and reporting of Code of Conduct complaints and to provide updated support and guidance on Social Media usage and Member/Officer relations. To gain Member input into the creation of a Member Development Plan as recommended by the Peer Review.

1.0 **Background**

Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints

- 1.1 At the Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee on 11 September, several questions and queries were raised in relation to the Annual Code of Conduct Complaints report including suggestions and comments on effective reporting of complaints, the volume of complaints and how wider guidance on behaviours could be facilitated.
- 1.2 The Localism Act 2011 requires authorities to have appropriate arrangements in place for managing Code of Conduct complaints. The Council does have such arrangements which were last updated and approved by the Audit & Governance Committee in September 2024. The arrangements set out how Code of Conduct complaints will be managed, including complaints in relation to parish councillors, the arrangements define timescales and confidentiality requirements as well as providing information around hearings and sanctions.
- 1.3 The current arrangements provide for effectively a two-stage process for managing complaints. Complaints are received by the Council, and the Monitoring Officer or Deputies go through a process of initial assessment in consultation with the Independent Persons and Member being complained about. If complaints can be dealt with at this stage the matter is concluded either through local resolution or no further action. If the matter is more complex and further investigation is required, the matter will be referred for formal investigation (the second stage) and will conclude either with a local resolution or a full hearing process which may or may not result in a finding and sanctions. Currently, most complaints are dealt with at the initial assessment stage.
- 1.4 At the time of writing there are 34 Code of Conduct complaints under consideration. These complaints are in relation to a combination of parish and district councillors. The current arrangements do not provide a clear mechanism for early filtering and rejection of complaints. Essentially, if the complainant has raised what they perceive to be a Code of Conduct complaint it progresses straight to initial assessment which can be lengthy. On review of the current complaints, it is apparent that whilst an issue raised may be considered by the complainant to be a Code of Conduct complaint, that is not always the case. To rectify this as soon as possible and provide for a swifter administration of complaints it is proposed that additional wording be added into the arrangements by the Monitoring Officer providing clarity on how the Monitoring Officer and Deputies will deal with complaints which are not considered to be valid complaints, without engagement with the Independent Person or subject Member.
- 1.5 To be clear, the circumstances where complaints would be deemed invalid would be limited to specific circumstances as set out below:
 - where no evidence to support the complaint is provided or available following engagement with the complainant
 - where the Code is not engaged as the Councillor is not acting in capacity as a district or parish councillor, for example where a Councillor is acting in their capacity as a

County Councillor, or where the behaviour is carried out in a private capacity. (NB if there is any doubt on this the would proceed to assessment stage)

- where the Councillor is not a Councillor at the time of the complaint and/or at the time of the incident complained of
- where the issue giving rise to the complaint took place over 6 months prior to the complaint
- where the complaint is not about an individual Councillor's conduct but in fact about the Council as a whole
- where the behaviour complained about is not covered by the Code of Conduct for example where the complaint relates to dissatisfaction with the Council's decisions, policies or priorities

In every case where a complaint is deemed invalid, clear reasons for this will be communicated to the complainant. Where a complaint is not valid there will be no requirement to consult with the Independent Person or the subject Member being complained about, the complaint would be rejected and would not progress to initial assessment. Where there is any doubt as to the validity of the complaint, the complaint would proceed to the assessment stage. It is only in cases where complaints are clearly invalid that no assessment would be undertaken.

- 1.6 In addition to the immediate proposed changes to the arrangements, it is recognised that a broader review of the arrangements is required to ensure they remain up to date and fit for purpose. Clarity around the reporting and publicising of complaints should be considered. It is important that this Committee is involved in the development of the arrangements, as such, a working group to assist in this review is proposed with amendments to be brought to a future Committee meeting.

- 1.7 On 11th November 2025, the Government published its response to the consultation on changes to the Standards regime. The Audit and Governance Committee had previously agreed a response to this consultation be submitted on 19th February 2025. The consultation closed on 26th February 2025. In the published response, there is a clear indication that there will be significant changes to the regime which will be made through legislation. The key proposals from Government are:

- the introduction of a mandatory code of conduct, which will include a behavioural code, for all local authority types and tiers
- a requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees, to include provisions on the constitution of standards committees to ensure objectivity, accountability and transparency
- the requirement that all principal authorities offer individual support during any investigation into code of conduct allegations to both the complainant and the councillor subject to the allegation
- the introduction at the authority level of a 'right for review' for both complainant and the subject elected member to have the case reassessed on grounds that will be set out in legislation
- powers for authorities to suspend elected members for a maximum of 6 months for serious code of conduct breaches, with the option to withhold allowances during suspension for the most serious breaches and introduce premises and facilities bans either in addition or as standalone sanctions

- in response to the most serious allegations involving police investigation, or where sentencing is pending, the introduction of powers to suspend elected members on an interim basis for an initial period of 3 months which, if extended, will require regular review
 - a new disqualification criterion for any elected member subject to the maximum period of suspension more than once within 5 years
 - the creation of a new national appeals function, to consider appeals from elected members to decisions to suspend them and/or withhold allowances, and for complainants if they consider their complaint was mishandled. Any appeal submitted will only be permitted after complainant or elected member has invoked their 'right for review' of the local standards committee the decision has been invoked and that process is complete
- 1.8 Whilst these changes will significantly alter the way complaints are dealt with and the Government is proposing to issue best practice guidance on how to handle Code of Conduct complaints, it is unclear what the timescale for implementation of the legislation will be, as such it is still deemed necessary to review the current arrangements.

Member/Officer Protocol

- 1.7 Within the Council's Constitution, the Member/Officer Protocol sets out how the relationship between the two parties should operate. It is key that the relationship between officers and Members is one of mutual respect and collaboration. It is important that Members have the ability and confidence to hold officers to account and challenge performance appropriately and that officers clearly understand the role of councillors in the operation of the Council, who is accountable to whom, what is a reasonable request and what may be unreasonable. The Member/Officer Protocol has not been the subject of review as part of wider reviews of the Constitution in the last two years.
- 1.8 As part of the Protocol it is important that clarity is provided around the impact on officer capacity from dealing with member queries and where that capacity can become negatively impacted. A review of the protocol is proposed so that clear behaviour principles can be included on both sides to provide clarity around what is acceptable and what may result in escalating issues. It is key that Members are engaged in the review of this document, as such it is proposed that the review be considered by the Working Group established by this Committee.

Social Media Protocol for Members

- 1.8 The Social Media Protocol for Members is included as part of the Council's Constitution. It was recognised at the previous meeting of this Committee that a review of this Protocol should be brought back to Committee. The justification for this review stems from the volume of Code of Conduct Complaints which arise from social media usage. Officers have already begun to review the existing protocol and have updated it to reflect changes in social media tools as well as clarifying guidance for Members as to how social media can be used and when usage may result in Code of

Conduct issues. This review is well underway, but it is important that Members are fully engaged in this review, it is proposed that the Working Group also consider the updated Social Media Protocol which is currently in draft form.

- 1.9 In its published proposals for changes to the Standards Regime the Government have indicated that it would be desirable for that use of social media would be incorporated into the prescribed mandatory code, however, again the timescales for implementation are unclear and as such it is still considered necessary to review the current protocol.

Member Development Plan

- 1.10 The Council was subject to an LGA Peer Review Challenge in October 2024. The final report from the Peer Challenge was reported to Cabinet on 18 February 2025 and a working group of Members was tasked to address the findings in the report by way of an action plan.
- 1.11 One specific recommendation following the Peer Challenge was to establish an ongoing Councillor Development Programme. The final report acknowledged that the new cohort of Members elected in May 2023 received a sufficient induction programme, but ongoing training and development was needed. It was considered that an ongoing development plan would ensure that all Members were kept up to date with the many changes that are happening in local government and understand longer term budget pressures.
- 1.11 Officers have already start to look at the creation of a Member Development Plan which pulls together existing training opportunities and explores what further support could be given. Member input into the development of the plan is considered necessary to ensure that any development opportunities or training needs are fully identified.

2.0 Proposals/Options considered

- 2.1 It is proposed that Committee agree that the Monitoring Officer make the changes to the Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints as detailed at paragraph 1.5. These changes will enable a more efficient filtering of complaints.
- 2.2 It is proposed that a wider review of the Arrangements for dealing with complaints is undertaken with the support of a Working Group established from this Committee. The review should include a review of how complaint outcomes are reported and requires input from members.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the Working group established to review the Arrangements for dealing with complaints also considers a review of the Member/Officer Protocol, Social Media Protocol and Member Development Plan.
- 2.4 It is proposed that if it is agreed to establish a working group, that cross-party membership of the group with up to six members be confirmed at the meeting.

- 2.5 Members could determine not to agree immediate changes to the Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints or consider this initial filtering as part of the wider review, particularly given the recent announcements of forthcoming changes to the Standards regime. Given the current volume of complaints however, and impact on capacity it is important to try and make the process of managing complaints as efficient as possible and the timescales for changes by Government are as yet unknown.
- 2.6 Members could determine not to establish a working group to consider the Member/Officer Protocol, Social Media Protocol or Member Development Plan however it is essential that members are engaged with the protocols that affect them.

3.0 Implications

In progressing the review of the Arrangements and Protocols, regard will need to be had to the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability. Any changes to the Arrangements will need to ensure that the complaints process is accessible.

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report, however, in respect of the Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints, changes to these arrangements, particularly in relation to the introduction of an initial filtering stage should improve the efficiency of complaint handling and reduce the impact on current resources.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report, in accordance with its terms of reference. Any future changes to the Constitution would require approval from Council.

As detailed within the report, the Localism Act requires the Council to have arrangements in place to deal with Code of Conduct complaints.

Equalities

- 3.3 In preparing and implementing the Member Development Plan, careful consideration should be given to promoting equality of opportunity for all elected Members. The Plan should recognise that accessibility is crucial to ensuring full participation; as such, there is a requirement to deliver training in a variety of formats, including in-person, remote, and recorded sessions, to accommodate differing needs and commitments. Venues for in-person sessions should be assessed for physical and psychological accessibility, and reasonable adjustments made where required. Materials will be provided in accessible formats, and officers will remain available to discuss any specific requirements Members may have. This approach aims to remove barriers to participation and supports the Council's ongoing commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of Member development.

- 3.4 Any changes to the Arrangements for Dealing with complaints should have regard to equality, diversity and inclusion. The Arrangements should provide clear ways in which complaints can be made and reasonable adjustments offered where required. The process should be inclusive to ensure that both Members and complainants do not experience barriers to the process.

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.

The Code of Conduct and associated complaints are published on the Council's [website](#).

The procedure and the Constitution containing the current Member/officer Protocol and Social Media Protocol for Members is also published on the Council's [website](#).

[Strengthening the standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England – consultation results and government response - GOV.UK](#)

[Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 18th February, 2025, 6.00 pm - Newark and Sherwood District Council](#)
Agenda item 245.



Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee: 27 November 2025

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Jill Baker, Business Manager Customer Services, ext. 5810; and
Nicola Priest, Housing Regulatory Compliance Manager, ext. 5526

Report Summary	
Report Title	Annual Review of Housing Service Complaints & Improvement Report
Purpose of Report	To provide insight into complaints performance and confirm the Council's compliance with the Complaint Handling Code for 2024/25. To highlight themes, trends or risks identified through complaints, and to present to members the Housing Ombudsman Service 2024/2025 Landlord Performance Report.
Recommendation	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee approve the Annual Report and note the contents of the Housing Ombudsman Service Report for 2024-25.
Reason for Recommendation	It is a requirement of the Complaint Handling Code that the Housing Ombudsman Landlord Performance Report is reviewed by Members for scrutiny and to approve the Annual Complaints and Improvements Report.

1.0 Background Information

- 1.1 As a landlord, the Council is accountable to the Housing Ombudsman, who consider complaints from tenants in instances where either the Council's complaints procedure has been exhausted or where the complainant feels the Council has not dealt with a complaint appropriately.
- 1.2 To comply with the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, landlords must publish an Annual Housing Complaints & Improvement Report.
- 1.3 Each year the Housing Ombudsman undertakes an annual review of complaints. The 2024/25 Landlord Performance Report was published on 23 September 2025 – **Appendix 2.**

- 1.4 This committee report incorporates the Annual Housing Complaints & Improvement Report and the Housing Ombudsman Landlord Performance report for 2024-25.

2.0 Annual Review of Housing Service Complaints

- 2.1 This report, **Appendix 1**, which is a requirement of the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code, details the number of and category of the complaints received, performance, outcome and learnings. It also has a section on Housing Ombudsman complaints.

3.0 Housing Ombudsman Landlord Performance Report

- 3.1 The Landlord Performance Report, **Appendix 2**, details that the Housing Ombudsman upheld four complaints and made 22 orders, all which were complied with, within the timescales.
- 3.2 These reports, issued by the Housing Ombudsman Service, provide data on the determinations issued to landlords between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. Individual reports are provided to landlords with five or more findings in cases determined during the year. They issued reports to 281 landlords.
- 3.3 This is the first year the Council has received a Performance Report, and this replicates the findings from the Housing Ombudsman that local authority landlords are facing acute pressures in handling housing complaints following successful campaigns by the Housing Ombudsman and the Council to support tenants to raise issues of poor service.
- 3.4 Complaints provide valuable insights that drive service improvement. While service failures may occur, the Council's effective response—analysing trends and collaborating with tenants—enabling us to enhance our services and reduce repeat issues. We are working hard to develop and embed a positive culture around the value of complaints to the Councils services.

4.0 Further Learning and Developments

- 4.1 Complaints provide a perfect opportunity to improve the service delivered to our tenants. They are reviewed by senior managers and the Housing Advisory Board, to what learnings and improvements can be made. These are detailed in section 6 of the Annual Review of Housing Services Complaints report.

5.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendation's, 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 where appropriate.

Financial Implications - FIN25-26/7729

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. However, it is worth noting that if any maladministration is found by the Ombudsman, a financial remedy or compensation can be imposed, for which there would be no specific budget for.

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

Newark and Sherwood District Council

Housing Services Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report 2024/25

Forward

As a Council, complaints play a significant role in shaping and enhancing the services we deliver to our residents and tenants. Over the past few years, we have developed a positive culture towards encouraging complaints as this helps us target where we need to do better, improve our service and put things right. Our belief is that every tenant and resident should feel confident in approaching us with their concerns and have a simple and straight-forward way to do so. The complaints received are also viewed fairly and transparently. By assessing these complaints to understand where we went wrong, we have an opportunity to learn and make meaningful improvements.

The Housing Ombudsman is seeing a significant increase in the volume of complaints submitted to them from across the UK and this follows a very successful to encourage tenants to raise issues where services have fallen below standard and make a complaint.

We are committed to using all feedback to refine our approach and better serve our communities, we fully comply with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code and are preparing for the introduction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Code in April 2026. These frameworks guide our practices and ensure we maintain the highest standards in handling complaints, they also provide spotlight reports and reviews to direct the Council to learning and best practice.

Working closely with our housing teams, we are actively putting measures in place to improve the services we provide. This includes the creation of a dedicated Housing Complaints Coordinator role to support our handling of complaints, and in response to complaints around repairs, additional resources in the Repairs Team and a tenant led review of our Repairs Policy.

With these in place, we hope to see improvements soon, and we encourage tenants to continue to let us know when they are not happy with our service. It's only through this feedback that we can deliver a better service for everyone.



Councillor Lee Brazier, Portfolio Holder for Housing at Newark and Sherwood District Council
Councillor Mike Pringle, Chair of Policy and Performance Improvement Committee at Newark and Sherwood District Council

1. Overview of Feedback

- 1.1 The table below illustrates the total number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received by Housing Services during 2024/25.

Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints
350	52

- 1.2 All figures shown above exclude complaints that were withdrawn. These tend to be enquiries which are submitted as complaints, but upon investigation were found to be service requests or duplicate complaints. The customer is contacted and if they agree then the complaint is withdrawn and treated as a service request or combined into one complaint. The service has not refused to accept any complaints in 2024-25.

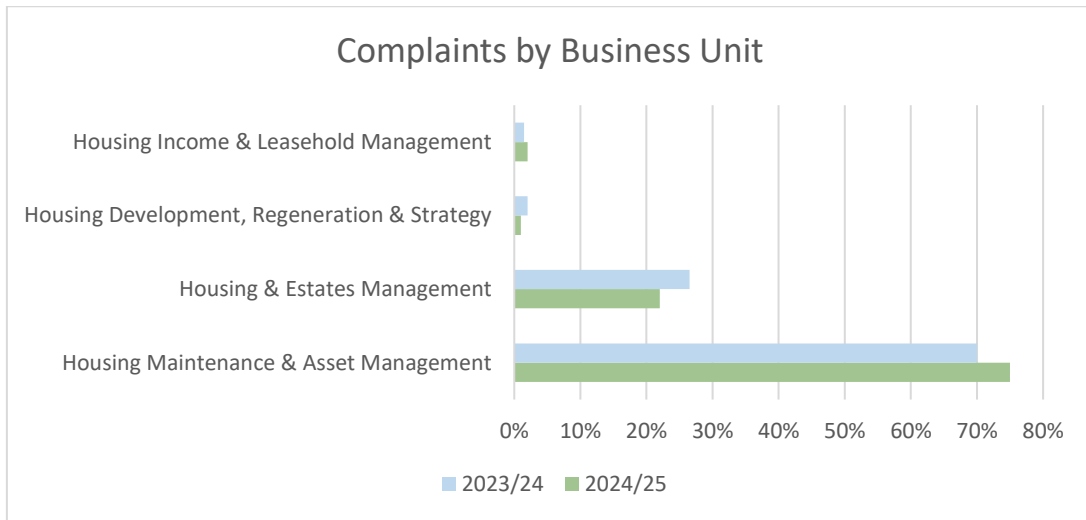
Trend	Comment
	Combined, this is a 79% increase in complaints compared with 2023/24 and 144% increase on complaints compared with 2022/23. The sector (including the Housing Ombudsman) has also seen a significant increase in complaints referred to their service.

2. Complaints by Business Unit

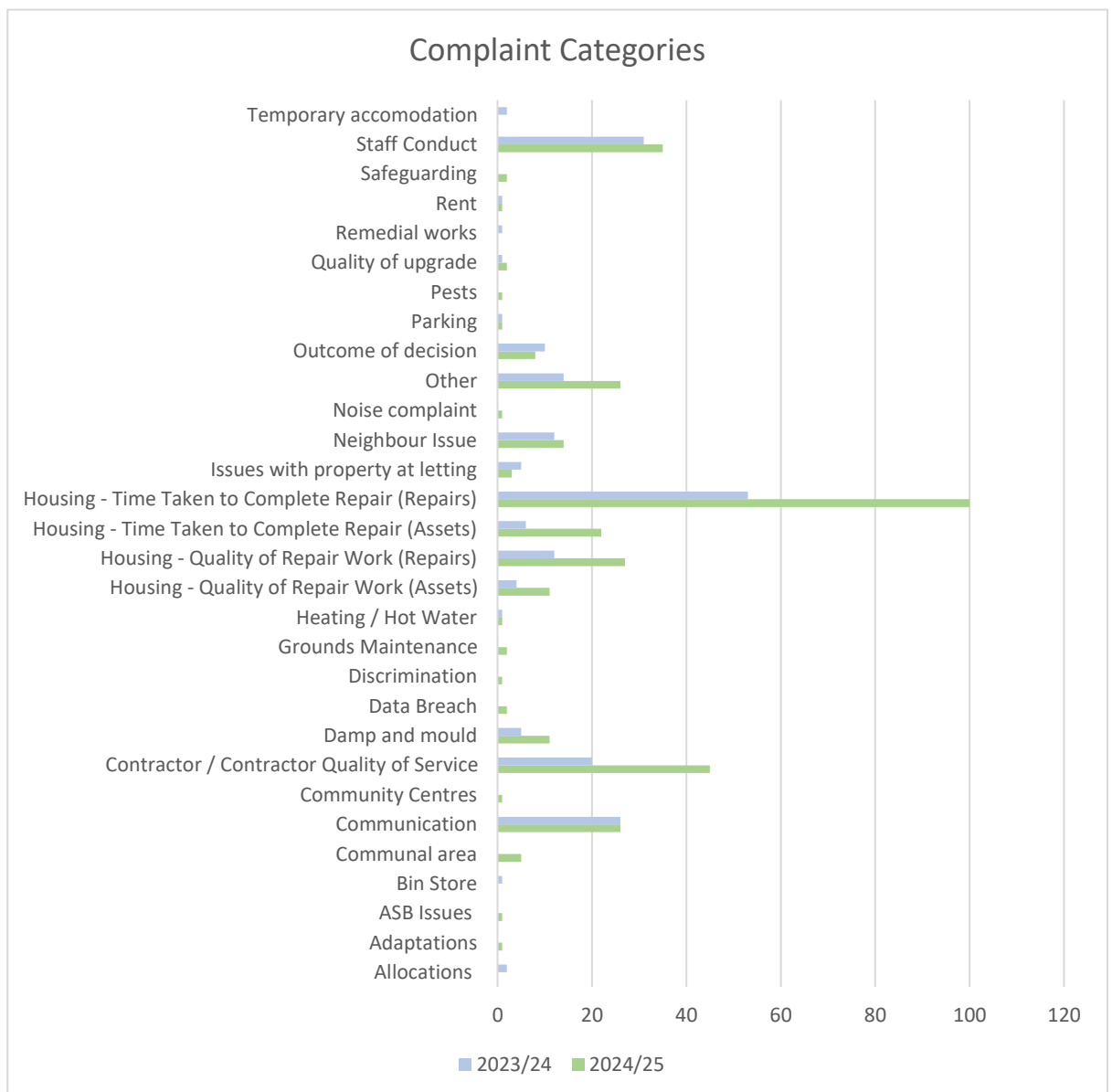
- 2.1 The largest proportion of complaints received were for Housing Maintenance and Asset Management. The service covers repairs, building safety and compliance (including gas) and major and cyclical works including new kitchens, bathrooms and heating upgrades and is very important service to tenants as most tenants will call upon repairs during their tenancy.

Business Unit	2024/25	2023/24
Housing Maintenance & Asset Management	75%	70%
Housing & Estates Management	22%	26.5%
Housing Development, Regeneration & Strategy	1%	2%
Housing Income & Leasehold Management	2%	1.5%

- 2.2 For context, the whole Housing Maintenance and Asset Management service received 263 complaints. The repairs service alone delivered more than 19,000 repairs during 2024-25 which means 1.36% of service transactions resulted in a complaint. Working alongside involved tenants, the repairs service continues to be the focus for service improvement.
- 2.3 It is great to see a reduction in complaints relating to housing and estates management from the previous year.



3. Breakdown of Complaints by category



- 3.1 Similar to 2023/24, of the 350 stage 1 complaints received, the highest volumes of complaints related to:
- length of time taken to complete repairs
 - contractor / contractor quality of service
 - staff conduct
 - communication
- 3.2 During the complaint handling and investigation process, several staff conduct complaints were found to be in relation to policy or legislative decisions that the staff member communicated rather than their own conduct or attitude. To address this, following a review of complaint categories, there is a new category called 'disagreement with council policy / legislation / officer decision' implemented from April 2025 to ensure these are recorded separately to staff conduct complaints and reflect the root cause of a complaint more accurately. Whilst all complaints of staff conduct are investigated thoroughly, it is expected there will be a reduction in the number of staff conduct complaints in future years.
- 3.3 Of the 350 Stage 1 complaints, 52 (15%) escalated to Stage 2 of the complaints process and 31 of these (60%) related to repairs. 39 (75%) of the Stage 2 complaints had ongoing actions, which had not been completed within a reasonable time after the Stage 1 response. Most of the ongoing actions related to repair works to be completed or outstanding compensation awards. A number of complaints also escalated to Stage 2 because they had not received a Stage 1 response within Complaint Handling Code timescales.
- 3.4 During the year, the service had difficulty managing the increase in complaints at the same time as system changes being implemented to reflect the new Code. The good news is that during 2025/26, the recruitment of a Housing Complaints Coordinator, the creation of a designated housing complaints email inbox, together with improved monitoring of complaints and communications has significantly improved response times and as a result, there have been no cases of complaints escalating to Stage 2 due to either a delayed Stage 1 response or delayed payment of compensation.

4. Complaint Response Performance

- 4.1 In line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code (CHC), our policy sets out specific timescales for responding to complaints. The amended Code came into effect on 1st April 2024, at the start of the reporting year which introduced an acknowledgement to both stages to the process.
- **Stage 1** - acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the request being received and provide a full response within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.
 - **Stage 2** - acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the escalation request being received and provide a full response within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.
- 4.2 The table below details the percentage of complaints which have been responded to within the CHC timescales.

Year	Stage 1 in CHC Target	Stage 2 in CHC Target
2024/25	41%	42%
2023/24	99%	100%

4.3 There are several factors that contributed to the decline in complaint handling performance:

- Increased number of complaints but limited senior staff available to investigate and respond. In response to this increase, in May 2025, a Housing Complaints Coordinator was introduced to enable the service to better handle and respond to complaints within timescales. The Council's performance for the current year has significantly improved as a result with positive feedback from tenants as a result.
- The introduction of an additional step of a formal acknowledgment requiring contact with the customer, as required by the Complaint Handling Code.
- The complaints system requiring significant modifications and updates to meet the Complaint Handling Code, including system target date reminders, acknowledgement and response templates. The system has now been updated.

5. Outcome of Complaints

5.1 The officer responsible for investigating and responding to a complaint will determine if the complaint is upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. The issues of the complaint and resolutions sought are established with the customer at the acknowledgement stage. The response clearly states the outcome and addresses each element recorded in the acknowledgement. Often complaints are regarding several issues, some of which may be upheld and some may not and in this instance, partially upheld will be determined.

5.2 The majority of complaints are either upheld or partially upheld, which gives assurance to customers that there is value in making a complaint and draws the complaint handler to areas of service delivery that need addressing.

Stage	Number Upheld	Number Partially Upheld	Number Not Upheld
Stage 1	213	87	50
Stage 2	34	8	10
Total	247	95	60

6. Learning from Complaints

6.1 Analysis of customer feedback and complaints enables us to identify specific issues and address them. Whilst complaints are encouraged, the service aims to avoid repeat complaints about the same or similar issues.

6.2 In addition to specific actions, the Council is investing in a new Housing Management System which will improve the accessibility to data and information we hold on tenants which we can use to adjust our services to meet the tenants needs.

6.3 The tables below show a selection of improvements the service has made as a direct result of a complaint.

Housing Maintenance & Asset Management	
Area of concern	Action taken to improve
Communication	Discussions took place between the Business Manager and the Contractor Manager to improve administration and customer service actions. The contractor appointed an additional manager to oversee day-to-day operations and changes were made to the automated letter service.
Housing - Time Taken to Complete Repair (Repairs)	The repairs process was amended to include adding a 'flag' to the housing management system when structural monitoring / works are in progress, which prompts a discussion with the asset surveyor before raising a repair.
Unhappy with Standard of Property	Changes have been made to the empty homes specification to ensure that all repair works are identified and carried out when properties are empty, not just repairs need to meet the Fit to Let / Empty Homes Standard.
Repairs - Time Taken (heating / hot water)	Changes made to processes for updating contractors of newly acquired properties and additional improvements have been made to the gas contract.
Housing - Time Taken to Complete Repair (Repairs)	Reminders issued to the team regarding the importance of communicating with tenants in relation to appointments. Supervisors have been instructed to ensure operatives notify when tasks are incomplete, preventing tenants being unaware of cancellations or changes to appointments.

Housing & Estate Management	
Area of concern	Action taken to improve
Use of Community Centre	Process changed to ensure all new groups using the centre receive a briefing on terms of use and expectations of the Council when using centres.

General	
Area of concern	Action taken to improve
Complaints response timescales missing target and poor satisfaction with handling and overall service	Created a role for a full time Housing Complaints Coordinator. This was successfully recruited to and the post commenced at the end of May 2025. The service is already seeing significant improvements in complaint handling timescales and there has also been positive feedback from officers and tenants regarding their professional, supportive and empathetic approach.

7. Ombudsman Complaints

- 7.1 The Housing Ombudsman Service outcomes, called ‘determinations’ for the past 5 years are shown in the table below.

Year	Decided by the HO	Number Upheld
April 2024 – March 2025	4	4
April 2023 – March 2024	1	0
April 2022 – March 2023	1	0
April 2021 – March 2022	1	0
April 2020 - March 2021	1	0

- 7.2 Tenant complaints to the Housing Ombudsman have increased and for the first time the Council has seen these complaints upheld. All orders made have been met and are published by the Housing Ombudsman as part of the Council’s Landlord Performance Report 2024/25.
- 7.3 The Housing Ombudsman has already published anonymised details of two the four complaints relating to the Council. These are shown below with links where applicable.

HO Reference (link where published)	HO Category	Summary of Complaint
Newark and Sherwood District Council (202324726) - Housing Ombudsman	ASB	The landlord’s response to the resident’s reports of antisocial behaviour and complaint handling.
Newark and Sherwood District Council (202404742) - Housing Ombudsman	Damp and mould	The landlord’s handling and response to the resident’s reports of damp and mould and complaint handling.
202221884	Repairs	The landlord’s handling of reports of damp and mould, repairs, remedial works, damage, complaint handling and compensation.
202333701	ASB	The landlord’s response to the resident’s reports of antisocial behaviour.

- 7.4 The Housing Ombudsman Landlord Performance Report which is attached as an appendix to this report, highlights that of the 4 determinations above, there were;
- 15 findings
 - 13 maladministration findings
 - 22 orders made
 - 2 recommendations made
 - 0 complaint handling failure orders
 - £3,900 compensation awards
- 7.5 Of the orders that were made, all 22 were complied with, within timescales. It is also worth noting that the recruitment of a Housing Complaints Coordinator is expected to address issues around the complaint handling findings.
- 7.6 Complaints made to the Housing Ombudsman may refer to complaints made in a previous calendar year as complaints have a window to escalate their complaints before the request is rejected because of time passed.

- 7.7 Cases investigated by the Housing Ombudsman Service have a time lag, often resulting in improvements to services being made before the matter has been determined by the Ombudsman and the complaint could relate to a previous year. The Housing Ombudsman Service is making improvements to speed up their case work and triaging complaints to address their backlog whilst achieving an acceptable turnaround time on new complaints they receive.

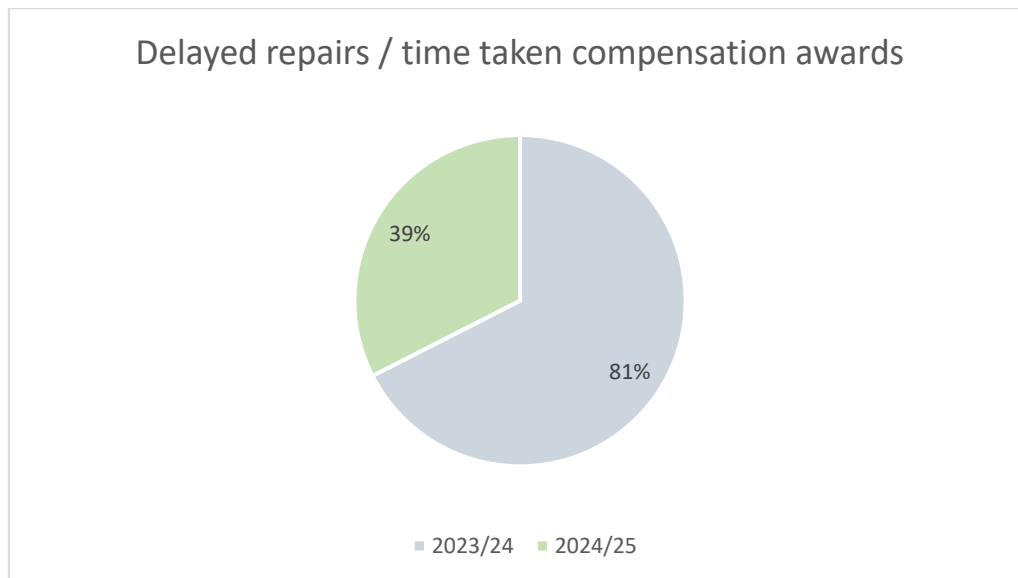
8. Making Things Right

- 8.1 Compensation is one of the remedies the Council considers for a housing service failure and complaints compensation is assessed on a case-by-case basis. The amount of compensation awarded reflects the level of inconvenience, disturbance and distress caused by not getting things right sooner and the extent to which the Council is solely responsible. The Council also considers whether the time taken to resolve the issue was excessive and any existing tenant / household vulnerabilities.

- 8.2 A total of 111 compensation awards were made, compared to 39 during the previous year. The table below shows the values and associated increases.

Year	Complaints Compensation Awards	Increase in Number of Awards	Complaints Compensation Value	Increase in Compensation Value
2024/25	111	185%	£30,094.11	189%
2023/24	39	-	£10,416.64	-

- 8.3 The majority of compensation awards are made at the point a complaint is closed, but some are agreed later once works have been completed, so that time and inconvenience can be fully considered. Any compensation to be paid and any ongoing actions resulting from complaints, such as visits, repairs and inspections are monitored internally once complaints have been closed, to ensure they are successfully completed within appropriate timescales.
- 8.4 The highest complaints category for compensation was delayed repairs / time taken, which was the same for the previous year. This is unsurprising as this is the category which receives the highest volume of complaints. In 2024/25, 39% of complaints compensation was regarding this (value £16,333) compared with 81% in 2023/24 (value £8,380.75).

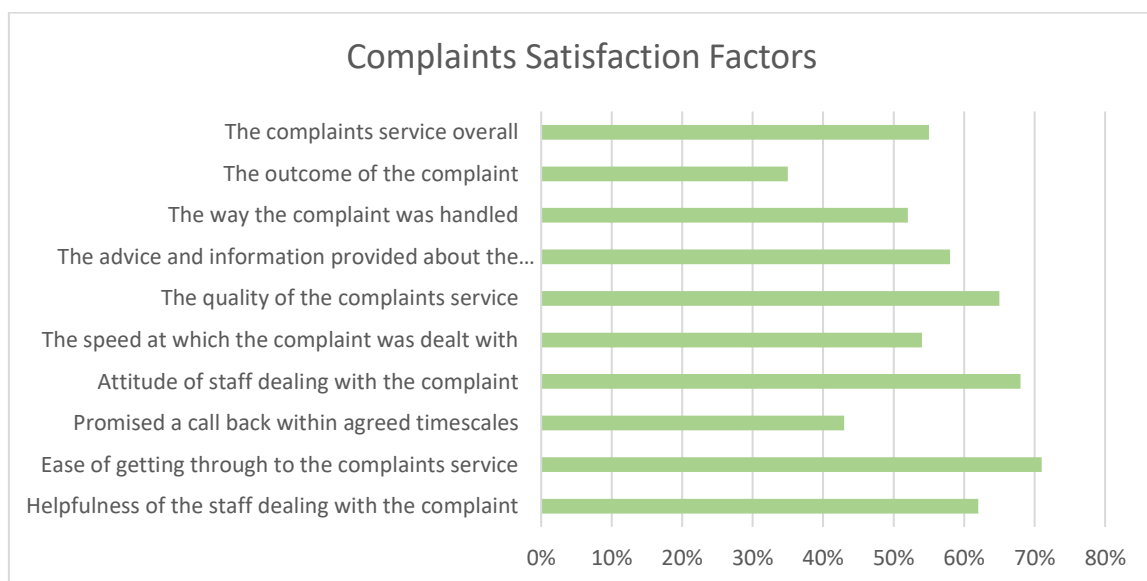


8.5 During 2024/25 a review of the repairs policy and service commenced. Performance and customer feedback is being considered when considering how the policy can be improved to address current issues.

9. Complaints Satisfaction

9.1 During 2024/25, 57% of customers were satisfied with the complaints handling process, compared with 55% in 2023/24. From the qualitative feedback, it is evident that many customers are dissatisfied with the whole process, from the root cause of their reason for making a complaint, rather than just the complaints process itself. This is unsurprising considering that the majority of complaints are regarding delayed repairs / time taken and by the time the customer has made a complaint, issues have often already been going on for an unacceptable period of time.

9.2 The chart below shows the key elements contributing to satisfaction with complaints overall. The outcome of the complaint and call backs within timescales had the least satisfaction.



- 9.3 Towards the end of 2024/25, complaints volumes, complaints customer feedback and complaints performance highlighted there was a need for a dedicated full-time officer to coordinate housing complaints. This role commenced in May 2025 and building on initial positive feedback, it is hoped that this will deliver an improvement in many of the above areas when this is reported in 2025/26.

Housing
Ombudsman Service

LANDLORD PERFORMANCE REPORT

2024/2025

Newark and Sherwood District Council

Newark and Sherwood District Council

Landlord: Newark and Sherwood District Council

Landlord Homes: 5,737Landlord Type: Local Authority / ALMO or TMO

PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

Determinations

4

Findings

15

Maladministration Findings

13

Orders Made

22

Recommendations

2

CHFOs

0

Compensation

£3,900

Maladministration Rate

100%

PERFORMANCE 2022-2023

Determinations

Maladministration Rate

Not Applicable

PERFORMANCE 2023-2024

Determinations

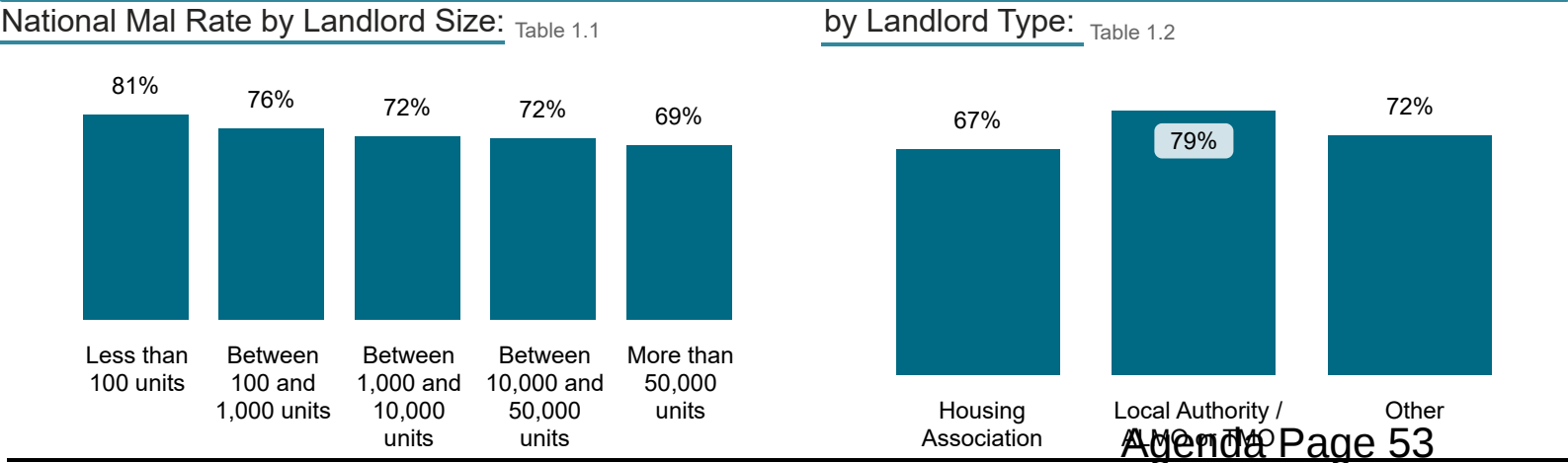
Maladministration Rate

Not Applicable

Maladministration Rate Comparison | Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025

NATIONAL MALADMINISTRATION RATE: 71%

National Maladministration rate for Landlords of a similar size and type: 77%



Findings Outcome Comparison | Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025

National Performance by Landlord Size: Table 2.1

Outcome	Less than 100 units	Between 100 and 1,000 units	Between 1,000 and 10,000 units	Between 10,000 and 50,000 units	More than 50,000 units	National	Landlord Findings
Severe Maladministration	5%	10%	5%	5%	4%	5%	0%
Maladministration	38%	36%	41%	41%	41%	41%	47%
Service failure	32%	24%	22%	22%	20%	21%	40%
Mediation	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%
Redress	3%	6%	10%	12%	17%	13%	0%
No maladministration	14%	17%	15%	13%	10%	13%	0%
Outside Jurisdiction	8%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	13%
Withdrawn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

National Performance by Landlord Type: Table 2.2

Outcome	Housing Association	Local Authority / ALMO or TMO	Other	National	Landlord Findings
Severe Maladministration	4%	6%	3%	5%	0%
Maladministration	39%	45%	35%	41%	47%
Service failure	21%	22%	27%	21%	40%
Mediation	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Redress	16%	7%	10%	13%	0%
No maladministration	13%	11%	15%	13%	0%
Outside Jurisdiction	5%	7%	8%	6%	13%
Withdrawn	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Landlord Findings by Category | Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025

Table 2.3

Category	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service failure	Mediation	Redress	No maladministration	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
Property Condition	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	0	6
Complaints Handling	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
Anti-Social Behaviour	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Charges	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Health and Safety (inc. building safety)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Information and data management	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	7	6	0	0	0	2	0	15

Findings by Category Comparison | Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025

Top Categories for Newark and Sherwood District Council

Table 3.1

Category	# Landlord Findings	% Landlord Maladministration	% National Maladministration
Property Condition	5	100%	73%
Complaints Handling	4	100%	77%
Anti-Social Behaviour	2	100%	66%

National Maladministration Rate by Landlord Size:

Table 3.2

Category	Less than 100 units	Between 100 and 1,000 units	Between 1,000 and 10,000 units	Between 10,000 and 50,000 units	More than 50,000 units	% Landlord Maladministration
Anti-Social Behaviour	100%	71%	70%	61%	70%	100%
Complaints Handling	100%	86%	84%	81%	70%	100%
Property Condition	65%	79%	73%	74%	72%	100%

National Maladministration Rate by Landlord Type:

Table 3.3

Category	Housing Association	Local Authority / ALMO or TMO	Other	% Landlord Maladministration
Anti-Social Behaviour	63%	71%	79%	100%
Complaints Handling	72%	87%	86%	100%
Property Condition	70%	79%	68%	100%

Findings by Sub-Category | Cases Determined between April 2024 - March 2025

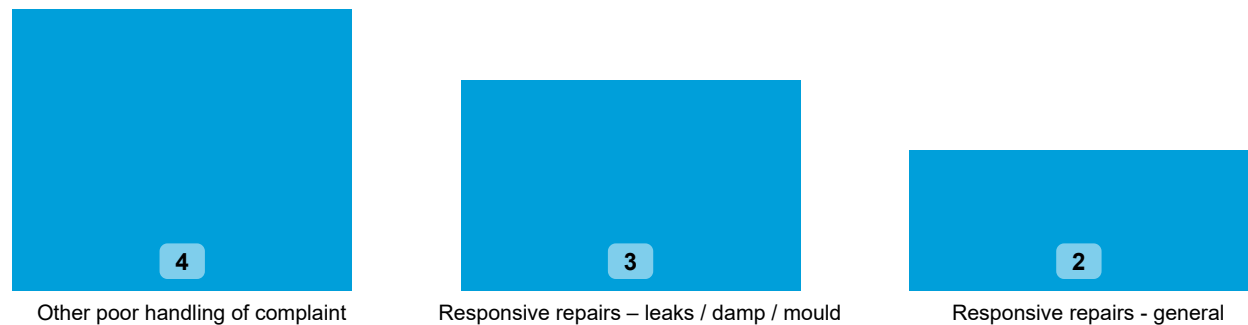
Table 3.4

Highlighted Service Delivery Sub-Categories only:

Sub-Category	Severe Maladministration	Maladministration	Service failure	Mediation	Redress	No maladministration	Outside Jurisdiction	Withdrawn	Total
Responsive repairs – leaks / damp / mould	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Responsive repairs - general	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Asbestos	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Noise	0	1	0		0	0	0	0	1
Service charges – amount or account management	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	0	4	3	0	0	0	1	0	8

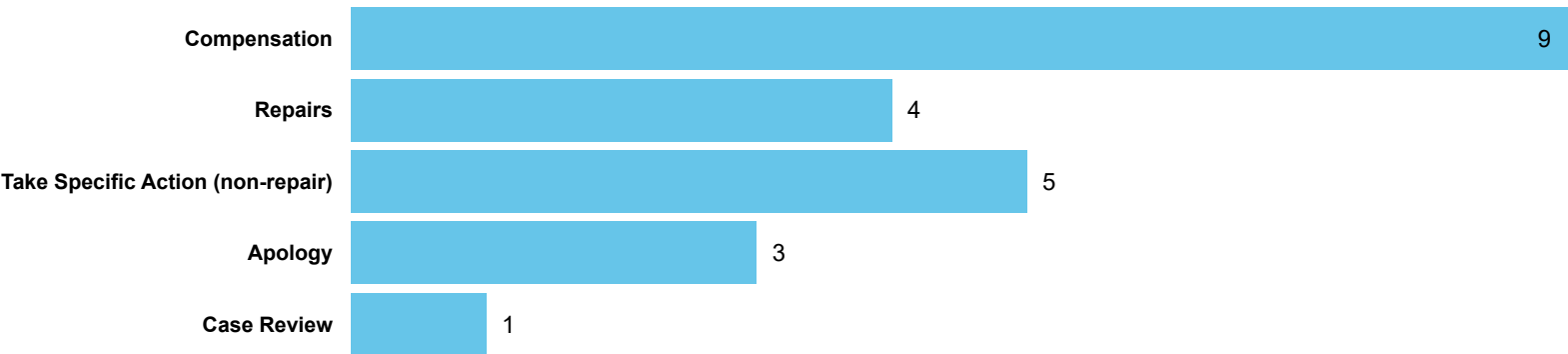
Top Sub-Categories | Cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025

Table 3.5



Orders Made by Type | Orders on cases determined between April 2024 - March 2025

Table 4.1



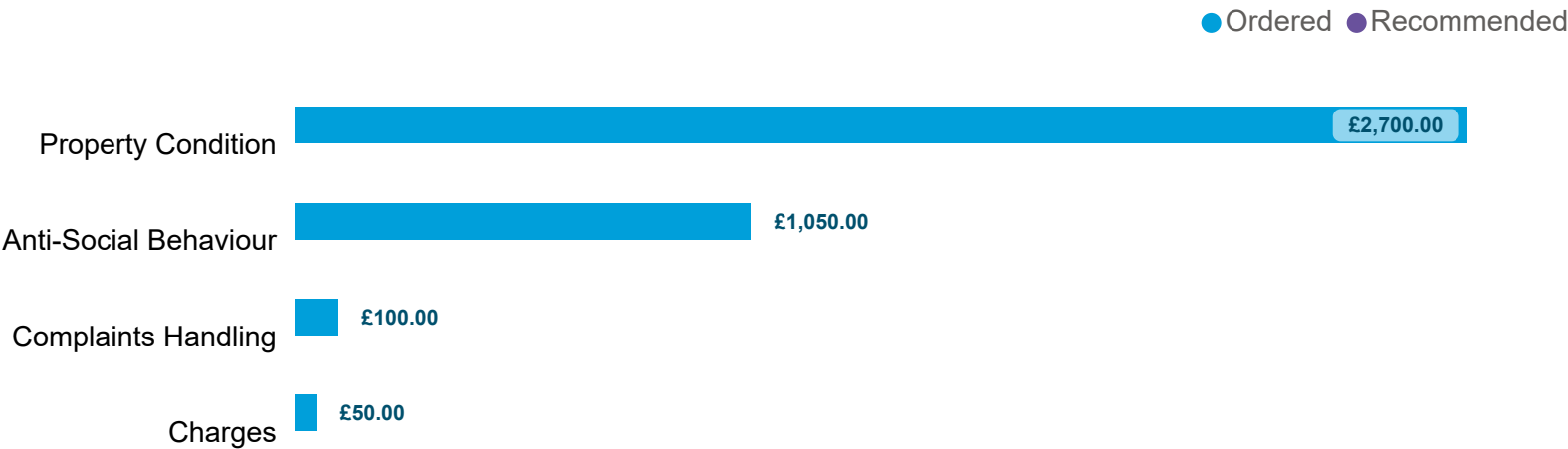
Order Compliance | Order target dates between April 2024 - March 2025

Table 4.2

Order Complete?	Within 3 Months	
	Count	%
Complied	22	100%
Total	22	100%

Compensation Ordered | Cases Determined between April 2024 - March 2025

Table 5.1



Introduction | *Notes on your figures in this report*

The Housing Ombudsman's 2024-25 landlord reports are for landlords with 5 or more findings made in cases determined between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.

The data comes from our casework management system. The reports include statistics on cases determined in the period. If we published a performance report for the landlord last year, then its individual report will also include limited statistics about cases determined between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2024 for year-on-year comparison. Where a landlord has merged, we have merged the 2022-24 data and it may therefore be different to the published figures last year.

Determinations | *Cases Determined*

The number of cases determined (decided upon) for this landlord by the Ombudsman. 4 determinations were recorded for Newark and Sherwood District Council, this includes OSJ and Withdrawn determinations. 4 determinations were made excluding OSJ and Withdrawn.

In this report we are only counting the determinations excluding OSJ and Withdrawn overall - this is a change from previous years to where we counted all Determinations. We have also adjusted the determined figures for 22/23 and 23/24 referenced on the first page of this report to exclude OSJ and Withdrawn so that it is comparable. This means these figures may not match the published reports for those years.

Findings | *Category Findings*

The number of findings on cases determined. Each category on a determined case has one finding. When we count findings, we exclude any cases where the entire case was declared outside our jurisdiction (OSJ) or all elements of the complaint were entirely Withdrawn, usually prior to the case being allocated for investigation.

On this basis, we are only counting the findings made in the 4 determinations. 15 findings were recorded for Newark and Sherwood District Council in these 4 determinations.

Maladministration Rate | *Calculated from Category Findings*

Under our Scheme, maladministration includes findings of severe maladministration, maladministration and service failure. The number of findings of maladministration are expressed as a percentage of the total number of findings (excluding findings of 'outside jurisdiction' and 'withdrawn'). This is referred to as 'mal rate'.

The number of findings recorded for Newark and Sherwood District Council to calculate the Maladministration rate is 13. This excludes the 2 findings of Outside Jurisdiction or where elements of the case were Withdrawn during our investigation, but we made other findings on the case.

The number of 'Mal' findings recorded for Newark and Sherwood District Council is 13, which gives the Maladministration rate of 100.0% (13 / 13). The national Mal rate is calculated on the same basis and is comparable to previous reports.

Orders | *Calculated from Orders issued on Cases Determined*

We issue Orders when the case investigation has resulted in a category finding of some level of maladministration or mediation. They are intended to put things right for the resident. We can issue multiple orders for each category of a case, so if we issue compensation of £50 for one category, and £50 for another category - we will count this as two orders even though the Landlord may just see it as one order of £100 compensation for the case.

The number of orders recorded for Newark and Sherwood District Council is 22, these orders are across 11 category findings.

Unit Numbers | *Homes owned by the Landlord*

The number of homes (or 'units') owned or managed by the member landlord under the Housing Ombudsman Service's jurisdiction as of 31 March 2024. This is based on information available from the Regulator of Social Housing and provided by landlords.

Reviews | *Determination reviews*

The Landlords and residents may request a review of our determinations in circumstances set out in the Housing Ombudsman Scheme. This report includes data on cases originally determined between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. If a determination is changed at review and the revised determination is issued on or before 31 March, the revised decision is included in the data. If the revised determination is issued on or after 1 April, only the original determination is included in the data.

5 FEBRUARY 2026

Report Title/Topic

Whistleblowing Annual Report

Gifts and Hospitality Annual Report

RIPA Annual Report

Local Government Outcomes Framework

Appeals Against Decisions of Planning Committee

16 APRIL 2026

Report Title/Topic

Annual Review of the Council's Constitution

Annual Review of Exempt Reports

Review of: Employment Procedure Rules; Protocol for Appointments to Outside Bodies; Regulatory Services & Responsibilities; and Code of Corporate Governance