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Wednesday 8 April 2026

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

Members of the Committee:

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

**Councillor D Moore
Councillor P Peacock
Councillor M Pringle
Councillor K Smith
Councillor J Hall**

Substitutes

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

MEETING:	Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee
DATE:	Thursday, 16 April 2026 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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None

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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, 5 February 2026 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor A Freeman, Councillor J Hall, Councillor P Harris, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor J Kellas, Councillor D Moore, Councillor K Smith, Councillor L Brazier and Councillor M Shakeshaft (substitute)

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor L Dales

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor D Darby, Councillor P Peacock and Councillor M Pringle

20 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.

21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

22 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2025

AGREED that the minutes from the meeting held on 27 November 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought to provide Members with the latest position in respect of local government reorganisation following the submission to Government in November 2025.

It was noted that the Cabinet had considered this matter at their meeting held on 26 November and had agreed to endorse the submission of the Final Proposal for a new unitary structure of local government for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. All Members of the Council had been invited to attend a presentation on the content of the Final Proposal held on 18 November 2025. The report set out the timetable of the next steps following the submission of the proposal to Government.

MHCLG had provided an initial list of statutory consultees as contained in Appendix A to the report. The Council were working with them to ensure that all relevant parties were identified and contact details provided. There were a broad range of organisations across health, education, business, the voluntary sector, and other public sector and national bodies. To help guide councils with a starting point of what

the next steps were after submission, MHCLG had shared a list which was attached as Appendix B to the report, which had been developed with input from sector advisers, Local Partnerships and the Local Government Association. It was based on current and previous experience of LGR and was intended to be iterative rather than exhaustive.

A letter had also been received today regarding LGR from Alison McGovern – Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness.

A Member raised concern regarding the design of the consultation and how it had been handled. Parish and Town Council representation needed to be taken into consideration. Concern was also raised regarding the proposed reduction of multi-Member Wards, it was felt unacceptable for multi-Member Wards to be reduced. It was commented that under LGR the new Council would have this Council and NCC to represent, Members could not work 24/7 on Council business, multi-Member Wards were required for Members to represent their constituents effectively.

The Chief Executive confirmed that ward arrangements in the 2027 shadow elections would be temporary and would be reviewed in the following two to three years.

A Member sought clarification regarding whether the Chief Executive would be involved with the MHCLG Listening Meetings and what emphasis would he be taking responsibility for. The Chief Executive confirmed that he would be involved in the Listening Meeting and would represent the feedback from local areas regarding their requirements. A presentation would be ready separated in different parts, showing sensible geography, neighbourhoods etc and would be well represented at that session. The Chief Executive commented that there were limitations with consultations, the Council needed to get into conversations with people face to face. The Business Manager for Elections and Democratic Services had met with the Boundary Commission and asked for the Council to have an input into the boundary warding. A lot of work had been undertaken and submitted to the Boundary Commission to date.

A Member sought clarification regarding any update or indication what will happen for NSDC Members between 2027/28. The Chief Executive confirmed that several exchanges had taken place with MHCLG and there was a clear assumption that there would be a Shadow election May 2027. Members terms of office would be extended by one year.

In answer to the Chair's question, the Transformation and Service Improvement Officer confirmed that briefings and communication would be cascaded to Town and Parish Councils.

AGREED that the progress update provided in respect of local government reorganisation be noted.

24 REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Director - Resources & S151 Officer which sought to provide Members with the latest position in respect of activity by the Council under Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) from January 2025 to December 2025; and on mandatory training for Officers.

A programme of monitoring and review was set out in the Council's RIPA policy and guidance. Annual reports of RIPA authorisations were made to the Audit & Governance Committee previously and now to this Committee.

There had been 0 authorisations sought by the Magistrates court during this period. The Council's use of authorised RIPA surveillance had always been and remained extremely low. This was in line with the majority of other authorities; particularly those who do not have services such as Trading Standards or Consumer Protection teams. The Council had already submitted the annual statistical return to the IPCO for 2025 which was a NIL return. There had been Nil returns to the IPCO since 2016.

Appropriate training had been provided to all Authorising officers. The last training was provided in July 2024. Ongoing advice and training was provided to investigating officers on a case-by-case basis throughout the year. More formal training was planned to be completed by April 2026 to investigating officers in relevant teams.

Sue Bearman was the named Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the purposes of RIPA. Following her departure, Sanjiv Kohli had been appointed the new SRO. Appendix A provided an amended list of the Senior Authorising Officer; the Authorising Officers; Senior Responsible Officer and RIPA Co-Ordinator for the purposes of RIPA.

AGREED that the contents of the report and the minor amendment to the policy be noted.

25 WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer which provided the annual report on the implementation of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy.

The Policy was clear and provided detailed information on how whistleblowing complaints would be dealt with. The Policy provided assurance to those raising a complaint that they would be treated fairly. Review of the Policy was previously a function of the Audit & Governance Committee. With the establishment of two separate committees to cover audit and governance functions, this annual report fell within the remit of the Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reform Committee and as such the Policy needed to be updated to reflect that. Further amendments were required to reference sexual harassment as a protected disclosure under the policy and an update to contact details within the policy were required.

There had been two reports under the Whistleblowing Policy in 2025. Details of whistleblowing complaints were confidential, but a record of the complaints was available for internal and external auditors if inspection was required. One complaint related to staff and one to contractors, it was confirmed no further action was required. In order to ensure continued awareness of the Policy and reporting process for Whistleblowing complaints it was proposed that further communication of the Policy to staff would be undertaken in 2026.

A Member asked how the Council could ensure no detrimental effects on the whistleblower. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there was a legal requirement, within the policy to protect whistleblowers following disclosure and the process was confidential. There was also support for the whistleblower which included Occupational Health if required.

A Member commented that in the list of external organisations the whistleblower could go to as contained within the report, there was nothing for the Council's HRA and housing function in the list. Clarification was sought regarding if there was a problem with housing allocation, where would that person go externally if they wanted to seek advice. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Housing Ombudsman could be the relevant body for housing allocation. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the whistleblower presents the case, and the Monitoring officer looks at how that should be dealt with. The process was to deal with serious wrong doings. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Housing Ombudsman could be included in the list of external organisations.

A Member commented on the importance for Managers to be trained and understand the importance of the whistleblowing process to spot a whistleblower and for the individual and Council to be protected under the policy.

AGREED that:

- a) the contents of the report be noted;
- b) minor changes to the Whistleblowing Policy to reflect changes to Committees and Monitoring Officer contact details and to reflect changes in employment legislation and inclusion of the Housing Ombudsman to the list of external organisations; and
- c) further promotion of the Policy to staff in 2026.

26 GIFTS & HOSPITALITY ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer which provided an annual report updating Members on the implementation of the Council's Gifts & Hospitality Policies.

The Monitoring officer confirmed that having reviewed the Member's and Officer's Protocol on Hospitality and Gifts which were two separate policies, there were no proposed amendments. The process for reporting gifts and hospitality by Members and Officers was being followed and information published correctly. Reminders would be sent to Members and Officers to ensure that they maintained awareness of the requirements to declare gifts and hospitality.

Further promotional work would be undertaken in 2026 with Officers and Members to maintain awareness of the requirements to record offers of gifts and hospitality.

A Member commented that the current reporting system was not open and transparent and was difficult to find on the website and should be included in the annual report. It was further commented that the register declaration did not indicate whether the gift/hospitality had been accepted or refused, the current wording was that the gift had been offered, the assumption being the gift had been accepted but that might not be the case.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Member declaration was on their profile page, and the Officer declaration was on one spreadsheet, which could be replicated for Members. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that she would clarify the issue of the gift/hospitality being accepted or refused.

AGREED that:

- a) the report and the proposed actions for promotion of the Policy in 2026 be noted; and
- b) the issue of the gift/hospitality being accepted or refused be clarified.

27 UPDATE FROM GOVERNANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES & LGR WORKING GROUP - ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS, SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOCOL AND MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer which sought to update Members on the work undertaken by the Working Group to update the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints, the Social Media Protocol for Members and the Member Development Plan.

The Working Group Chair – Councillor L Dales, provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Working Group and commented that excellent work had been undertaken by the Monitoring Officer and colleagues and that all three areas reviewed provided simpler and clear arrangements.

Members discussed the three areas individually.

Code of Conduct Complaints

The Chair sought clarification on what sanctions were in place if Members failed to undertake mandatory training. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that it was difficult to sanction Members for non-attendance of training, she hoped Members would welcome training. If there was a data breach or issue, that could lead to wider consequences or sanctions if mandatory training had not been undertaken. The Chair suggested the repercussions should be made clear regarding certain breaches.

A member asked that it be included in the assessment criteria for investigation that reasonable challenge of officers views should be listed.

Social Media Protocol

The Monitoring Officer thanked the Principal Legal Officer and Communications team for their work on this Protocol.

A Member commented that the list of examples of social media should include more examples including Whatsapp. A member also recommended that reference should be made to Two-factor authentication (2FA) in relation to improving safety and security of information.

Member Development Plan

A Member commented that two days allocated for all training in person was a problem and suggested that on-line training be made available.

The Monitoring Officer commented that more than one in-person training session would be offered to Members and confirmed that the in-person training could be recorded for Members to watch at their convenience or online training being made available as suggested. How training would be made accessible would be addressed by Democratic Services.

A Member commented that Appendix 2 paragraph 15 and 17, should be offered to all Members and not just those with special responsibilities as detailed. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that amendments to those paragraphs would be made so that a wider group of Members could attend that training.

A Member commented that due to LGR there would not be any future induction training in 2027 and hoped that budget had not been reduced. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that there would be a budget for training. A Member suggested that training was an investment and not a cost and that could be addressed at a future meeting.

AGREED that:

- a) the work undertaken to date by the Working Group be noted;
- b) the changes to the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints at Appendix 1 of the report, subject to the proposed amendments by the Committee;
- c) the Member Development Plan at Appendix 2 of the report, subject to the proposed amendments by the Committee; and
- d) recommend the updated Social Media Protocol for Members at Appendix 3 to the report, subject to the proposed amendments by the Committee, to Full Council for adoption.

28 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Monitoring Officer informed the Committee that the Member, Officer Protocol was still outstanding and would be forwarded to this Committee.

AGREED that, subject to the inclusion of the Member, Officer Protocol, the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee's Work Programme be noted.

Meeting closed at 7.33 pm.

Chair



Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 16 April 2026

Director Lead: John Robinson, Chief Executive

Lead Officer: Carina Tona, Transformation & Service Improvement Officer

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 submission to Government in November 2025.
Recommendations	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee note the progress update provided in respect of local government reorganisation.
Reason for Recommendations	This is in line with the Committee's role to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) oversee the plans for, and impact of, Local Government Reorganisation within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire; and b) liaise with and advise the Council's Cabinet, Audit & Accounts Committee, Policy & Performance Improvement Committee and other committees so all Members are kept informed and provide an opportunity for them to input their views on LGR.

1.0 Background

1.1 At a meeting on 26 November, Cabinet were asked to endorse the submission of a final proposal for a new unitary structure of Local Government for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. All Members of the Council were also invited to attend a presentation on the content of the Final Proposal held on 18 November 2025.

1.2 Newark & Sherwood District Council, along with Bassetlaw, Gedling and Mansfield submitted the [north-south proposal](#) to government on 28 November.

1.3 The north-south proposal (option 1e) would see the creation of two new unitary authorities:

- Sherwood Forest (North Nottinghamshire) – comprising Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood.
- Nottingham and South Nottinghamshire (South Nottinghamshire) – comprising Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe.

1.4 There were two other proposals submitted in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

1.5 Full proposal, appendices and summaries are available here: [Proposals | LGR](#)

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

2.1 Since submitting proposals in November, we, along with other councils have begun focusing on the subsequent phases of work and planning the steps required between now and the government's decision.

2.2 Statutory Consultation

2.2.1 Government consultation, which launched in February for 6 weeks, closed 26 March.

2.2.2 The Government wrote directly to some statutory consultees across a broad range of organisations across health, education, business, the voluntary sector, and other public sector and national bodies, but anyone was able to take part and share their views.

2.2.3 Furthermore, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire jointly, encouraged everyone with an interest in the future of local services to take part and have their say on the proposals for our area.

2.2.4 The consultation was promoted through the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire [dedicated LGR website](#) and other existing communication channels, including social media.

2.2.5 As a named consultee for the consultation, the Chief Executive of the council responded via the Governments platform in response to all the options.

2.3 Engagement with Other Key Stakeholders

2.3.1 We have recently completed the latest round of staff drop-in sessions with the Chief Executive, attended by over 100 staff and delivered through a combination of in-person and online sessions. In addition, more than 40 people attended virtual Town and Parish Council briefings with the Chief Executive. Both sets of sessions were positively received and provided a valuable opportunity to share updates and respond to questions or concerns at this stage.

2.4 MHCLG Listening Meetings

2.4.1 As part of the process, councils that submitted proposals were invited to take part in a virtual 'listening meeting' with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). On Friday 27 February, our Chief Executive joined colleagues from Bassetlaw, Gedling and Mansfield, alongside our Business Manager for Financial Services and Deputy Section 151 Officer, and Maggie Kenney, Chief Executive of Peopletoo, for a one-hour virtual session with MHCLG representatives.

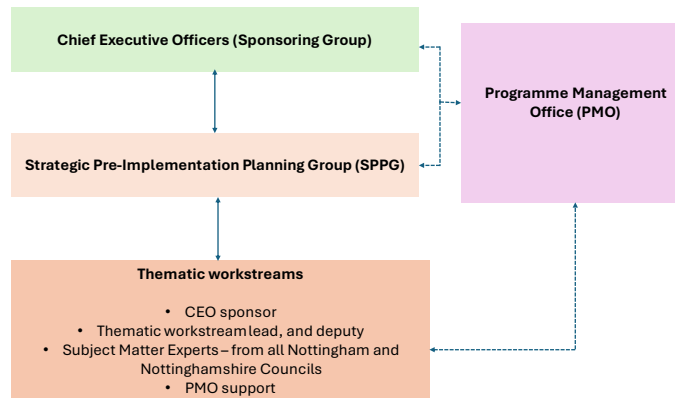
There was a shared view that the meeting was positive and provided a valuable opportunity to outline our proposal, emphasise key points, and raise questions directly with MHCLG.

2.5 Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LGR programme

2.5.1 Councils are working collaboratively and have agreed an interim, pre-implementation governance approach for the LGR Programme to undertake “no-regret” activities that can be progressed ahead of the decision point and are not dependent on the option ultimately selected.

2.5.2 Interim Overarching Structure

Two LGR Programme Director posts are being recruited to: one for Nottingham City Council and one for Nottinghamshire County Council and the District and Borough Councils. Both posts are expected to be in place by April/May.



2.5.3 Thematic Workstreams

Nine thematic workstreams have been established so far. The priority workstreams are set out below:

- Assets
- Digital Data and Technology
- Finance
- Housing & Housing Revenue Account
- Legal & Governance
- People Services (Adults and Children’s)
- Procurement & Contracts
- Service Delivery Models
- Workforce & HR

2.5.4 LGR Principles

There is a commitment to work in accordance with the following principles, which will be applied throughout the LGR Programme structure:

- Collaborative
- Open, honest and transparent
- Focussed on improving outcomes, services, financial sustainability
- Acting in longer-term interest, particularly in use of resources, reserves and decision-making in the interim
- Evidence-informed, based on data
- Resident-focussed
- Valuing and preparing employees for the future at a time of uncertainty and change

2.6 Internal Arrangements

2.6.1 The Council is actively engaged in the LGR programme, with representation on each of the priority workstreams, SPPG and PMO. In addition, the Council is leading or co-leading two workstreams. Internally, LGR progress is overseen through a standing weekly agenda item at the Senior Leadership Team meeting, supported by a weekly internal coordination meeting involving representatives from each workstream to ensure alignment, information sharing and effective oversight from an NSDC perspective.

2.6.2 In parallel, the Council has also established a new organisational structure to support the transition to a future unitary council. This structure is intended to strengthen capacity, and ensure the Council is well positioned to manage transition activity effectively.

2.7 LGR Working Group – Newark and Sherwood’s Legacy

2.7.1 As set out at the last Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee, 5 February 2026, it is recognised that, on appropriate topics, there will be a need for alternative forums to provide oversight of specific aspects of LGR activity. One such area is the approach to members’ legacy, which has previously been raised by a number of members.

2.7.2 Subject to the Government’s decision, it is anticipated that a dedicated working group comprising both members and officers could be established, potentially from around September 2026, to explore this in more detail and agree a coordinated approach. Further details on how member nominations will be collated for the working group will be provided in the next update report, 18 June 2026.

2.8 Guidance from MHCLG

2.8.1 MHCLG have shared a guidance note on implementation bodies and predecessor councils during local government reorganisation: [Local government reorganisation: implementation guidance - GOV.UK](#). The note explains the roles and responsibilities of Predecessor Councils, Joint Committees or Implementation Executives, and Implementation Teams. Two statutory periods of transition are expected:

1. When the Structural Changes Order (SCO) comes into force, up to the inaugural elections to the new council. For this period there needs to be an implementation body representative of the existing councils in the area. these bodies are mostly constituted as Joint Committees (one Joint Committee for each new unitary council).
 2. A defined date following the inaugural elections, up to vesting day – referred to as the reorganisation date in the SCO. The Joint Committee will be dissolved and replaced by a new, different implementation body made up of the members elected in the inaugural elections to the new unitary council – a Shadow Council.
- 2.8.2 Surrey is the first two-tier area to move into statutory implementation under the Government’s LGR programme: [Surrey Structural Changes Order 2026](#) The SCO provides the statutory framework to implement LGR in Surrey, replacing the existing two-tier system with two new unitary authorities from 1 April 2027.
- 2.8.3 The Order represents the formal transition from proposal development to implementation, establishing clear legal duties, timescales and governance requirements for the councils involved.

The Surrey SCO sets out:

- The establishment of a single tier of local government, abolishing existing councils
 - Within 14 days of order must establish Joint Committees for each new council. The SCO defines its membership (numbers of nominees from county and districts in the new council area), to manage certain functions until the Shadow Authority meet. Joint Committees will be dissolved day after first meeting of new shadow authorities
 - Within 21 days of order coming into force Joint Committee must form a single team of officers the Implementation team to assist the joint committee including officers from all authorities
 - Electoral matters, including ward boundaries, councillor numbers
 - Within 14 days following the shadow election, they must create a Leader and cabinet executive, adopt a code of conduct, designate an interim Monitoring Officer, Section 151 and interim Head of Paid Service.
- 2.8.4 It also places explicit legal duties on all predecessor councils to cooperate throughout transition, and that shadow elections and subsequent costs of the shadow authority must be agreed and shared proportionally by all other authorities
- 2.8.5 While Surrey is the first area to progress on the LGR journey, its geography, scale and political context differ from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Nevertheless, there are clear lessons to be drawn from its governance arrangements, mobilisation approach and sequencing, and it provides an indication of the level of prescription Government may apply once a statutory order is made.

- 2.8.6 The Council is continuing to develop its understanding of the SCO, including undertaking further research into its implications and the expected transition process. To support both officers and Members, consideration will be given to holding a dedicated session on the SCO at a later stage, to help build a shared understanding of what it means in practice and what can be expected as the process progresses.
- 2.8.7 Once a government decision has been made and often once a Structural Changes Order is in draft, existing councils will remain legally responsible for services until vesting day but:
- Their decisions can bind or constrain the new authority
 - There is a risk of councils making long-term or high-value commitments that the new council inherits
- 2.8.8 A section 24 direction under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 restricts certain categories of decisions unless consent is given by the shadow authority, such as disposing of land, entering capital and non-capital contracts exceeding a certain value. This prevents actions that could have financial or operational implications on the new unitary council.
- 2.8.9 A SCO legally creates the new council(s), and a Section 24 direction manages behaviour before vesting day. The two work together to ensure an orderly transition.

3.0 The Timeline

- 3.1 The Committee may also wish to consider next steps in accordance with the timetable below:

Key milestones:	By when
All councils work on transition planning	November 2025 – vesting day
Government launches statutory consultation for several weeks	5 February – 26 March 2026
MHCLG holds “listening meeting” with representatives of each proposal submitted	27 February 2026
Two LGR Programme Directors in post	April/May 2026
In person visit with MHCLG	April/May 2026
Decision by Government	By Summer recess 2026
Government to share a draft direction and explanatory note for councils to consider and to provide representations upon	Summer/Autumn 2026
Structural Changes Order – Legislation laid in Parliament	Autum 2026
Legislation made, subject to Parliamentary approval	Late 2026, early 2027
Elections for shadow authority	May 2027
New unitary authority vesting day	April 2028

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	NA	Equality & Diversity	NA
Human Resources	NA	Human Rights	NA
Legal	NA	Data Protection	NA
Digital & Cyber Security	NA	Safeguarding	NA
Sustainability	NA	Crime & Disorder	NA
LGR	NA	Tenant Consultation	NA

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.

[Cabinet 26 November: Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – Final Proposal](#)



Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 16 April 2026

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Housing, Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Julie Davidson, Business Manager – Housing Services

Report Summary	
Report Title	Enhancing Tenant Engagement – New Engagement Framework
Purpose of Report	To set out the proposed changes to the tenant engagement structure and seek endorsement of the proposals and recommendation to Full Council to amend the Constitution to reflect the changes.
Recommendations	That Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) review and endorse the proposed changes to the Councils tenant engagement structure set out section 2 of this report; b) recommend approval of the changes to the constitution to Full Council on 19 May 2026;. And c) note the contents of Appendix A and that the recognition proposals will be presented to Cabinet on 21 April 2026 for consideration.
Reason for Recommendations	To ensure the Constitution strengthens tenant influence, participation and assurance within housing services and directly support the delivery of the Council’s Community Plan 2023-2027, placing tenants at the heart of decision making, improve accountability and service quality and ensure housing services are responsive to the needs of Newark & Sherwood District Council tenants.

1.0 Background

1.1 The current governance arrangements for tenant engagement have been in place since 2021, providing tenants with opportunities to engage directly with Council representatives and contribute to important discussions about housing services. Further details of the how the Council ensures tenants have a voice and influence are set out in Section 1.1-1.4 of the Enhancing Tenant Engagement Report attached at **Appendix A** that was presented to Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) on 13 April 2026, verbal feedback will be given to the Committee from PPIC on the day.

1.2 TPAS (leading tenant engagement specialists) in partnership with tenants, officers and tenant engagement team, have co-designed a new structure for tenant engagement.

- 1.3 The Tenant Engagement Board and its terms of reference are set out in the Council’s Constitution in Section 3 of Part B – Public Participation (Page B6) and section 3.4 of Part B- Public Participation (Page B7).
- 1.4 The proposed changes are explained in section two, highlighting proposed changes from the existing Constitution.
- 1.5 This committee should note that the recognition proposals also contained with Appendix A report, are being presented to Cabinet on the 21 April 2026 for decision and are for noting.

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

- 2.1 The proposal set out in Section 2.1 – 2.2.3 of Appendix A, refer to the following changes to the Constitution. For ease, the changes have been highlighted below where directly referenced in the Council’s constitution.

Part B – Public Participation Page No B6

3. Tenant Engagement Board to be replaced with Tenant Influence and Assurance Board.

3.2 Membership, Chair and Quorum:

	Current arrangements	Proposed changes
Number of members	7	12
Substitute Members permitted	Yes	No change
Political Proportionality Rules Apply	No	No change
Appointments	Tenant Representatives shall be appointed by the Chair PPI Committee. Members shall be appointed by the PPI Committee annually	A recruitment process will apply to Tenant Members Policy, Performance and Improvement Committee (PPIC) members shall be appointed by their committee annually.
Removals		By the Portfolio Holder for Housing in consultation with TIAB Chair. Where the removal involves the TIAB Chair, the Portfolio Holder for Housing will work with the Business Manager for Housing Services
Membership	Portfolio Holder for Housing (Chair) • 3 Members of the PPI Committee • 3 Tenant Representatives*	At least 5 tenant representatives At least 4 members including the Portfolio Holder for Housing, and at least 3 councillors who are members of PPIC.
Chair	Portfolio Holder - Housing	Tenant Chair - elected annually by the Board members. A Vice-Chair will also be appointed to support and deputise

Quorum	3 1 elected member and 2 tenant representatives At least 4 per year	6 – 3 tenant representatives, 2 elected members and 1 staff member. No change
Number of Ordinary Meetings per Council year		
Officer Support	Either the Business Manager for Housing & Estates or a Tenant Engagement Officer will also attend each meeting	At least 3 officers, relevant Business Manager and Tenant Engagement Officer will be members of the TIAB

2.2 To support the changes to the structure, there will be a comprehensive recruitment process to increase and widen tenant participation, including Tenant Engagement Champions and scrutineers. Formal roles will carry fixed terms: Tenant Influence and Assurance Board members: two-year term, renewable once (maximum four years) and will hold one formal role within the engagement structure. More detailed information on the roles and expectations can be found in section 2.6 of Appendix A.

2.3 The role of the new Tenant Influence and Assurance Board has been redefined, and the proposed Terms of Reference are at **Appendix B**. These bring forward tenant opportunities to chair the board, increase tenant representation, consider data and determine topics for scrutiny and, manage the agenda.

2.3.1 In addition to the amendments proposed in section 2.1, the new terms of reference provides a stronger influence and assurance body, explicitly linked to transparency, accountability and co-production, shifting from functional remit to strategic oversight and assurance. There are clear explanations for different roles and a move toward sustainable, respectful and inclusive governance.

2.4 Further minor changes to the constitution relate to the replace of references to the Tenant Engagement Board with Tenant Influence and Assurance Board.

- i. **Contents Page** – replace Tenant Engagement Board with Tenant Influence and Assurance Board
- ii. **Part B – Public Participation Page No B10**
5.2 - Reference to Tenant Engagement Board to be replaced with Tenant Influence and Assurance Board
- iii. **C – Responsibility for Functions Page No C61**
Section 4: Other Bodies
Reference to Tenant Engagement Board to be replaced with Tenant Influence and Assurance Board

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.

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

Financial Implications - FIN26-27/8953

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from the changes to the Tenant Engagement Structure and amendments to the Constitution.

Legal Implications – LEG2526/799

- 3.2 Any changes to the Constitution require Full Council approval. The Tenant Engagement Board is specifically referred to in the Constitution at B6 and therefore any changes in respect of this Board will require Full Council approval. Further legal advice may be required.

Equality and Diversity Implications (taken from PPIC report of 13.04.26)

- 3.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the revised Tenant Engagement Framework to ensure it is fair, inclusive, and accessible to all tenants, supporting legal duties and removing barriers to participation. This can be found at Appendix C.
- Framework purpose and approach: The framework establishes a clearer, consistent method for tenant involvement, strengthening tenant voices and offering multiple engagement routes to accommodate varying abilities, time, and confidence levels.
 - Consideration of protected characteristics: The assessment covers impacts on tenants across all protected characteristics, including age, sex, disability, race, religion, and additional NSDC-specific groups such as carers and care leavers.
 - Identified impacts and mitigations: Positive impacts include clearer structure and multiple participation methods, while mitigations address potential exclusion from digital or written engagement, incentive imbalances favouring confident participants, and under-representation by monitoring participation and targeted outreach.
 - Wider considerations and monitoring: The framework addresses socio-economic challenges through flexible, accessible engagement, supports human rights by enabling tenant influence, requires staff training for inclusivity, and includes ongoing monitoring to ensure fairness as the framework is implemented.

Tenant Consultation (taken from PPIC report of 13.04.26)

- 3.4 In relation to the structure, feedback from tenants included:
- Tenants co-created the new improved framework and support its adoption
 - Engagement is vital for effective recruitment and skill development.

- The framework recognises tenants' contributions to improving and scrutinising housing services.
- Offers support so tenants can make informed decisions on whether to accept the financial rewards available within the new framework

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.

Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee – 13 April 2026

Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Housing Health & Wellbeing

Lead Officer: Jane Diver and Robyn Henry, Tenant Engagement Officers

Report Summary	
Report Title	Enhancing Tenant Engagement
Purpose of Report	To set out a series of measures to build on and strengthen the role and influence of Newark & Sherwood tenants in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods and seek endorsement for their introduction.
Recommendations	<p>That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) note the progression of tenant engagement arrangements and the clear service improvements resulting from tenant insight and involvement; b) endorse the refresh of the current Tenant Engagement Board in the following ways: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of tenant representatives from three to five • Re-allocate the Chair of the Board to a tenant representative • Rename the current Tenant Engagement Board (TEB) to Tenant Influence and Assurance Board; c) endorse the proposed Tenant Engagement Framework including noting the proposed programme of recruitment; d) endorse the proposed recognition and incentivisation to widen the participation and representation of tenants as Tenant Engagement Champions with five places on the Tenant Influence and Assurance Board; e) note the report will progress to Cabinet on 21 April 2026 for decision on the recognition scheme; and f) consider and note the amended report which will progress to the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee on 16 April 2026 with a recommendation for endorsement and an onward recommendation to Full Council on 19 May 2026 for approval of the proposed changes to the constitution.
Reason for Recommendation	The proposed recommendations strengthen tenant influence, participation and assurance within housing services and directly support the delivery of the Council’s Community Plan 2023–2027, Serving People, Improving Lives. They place tenants at the heart

of decision-making, improve accountability and service quality, and help ensure housing services are responsive to the needs of Newark & Sherwood District Council tenants.

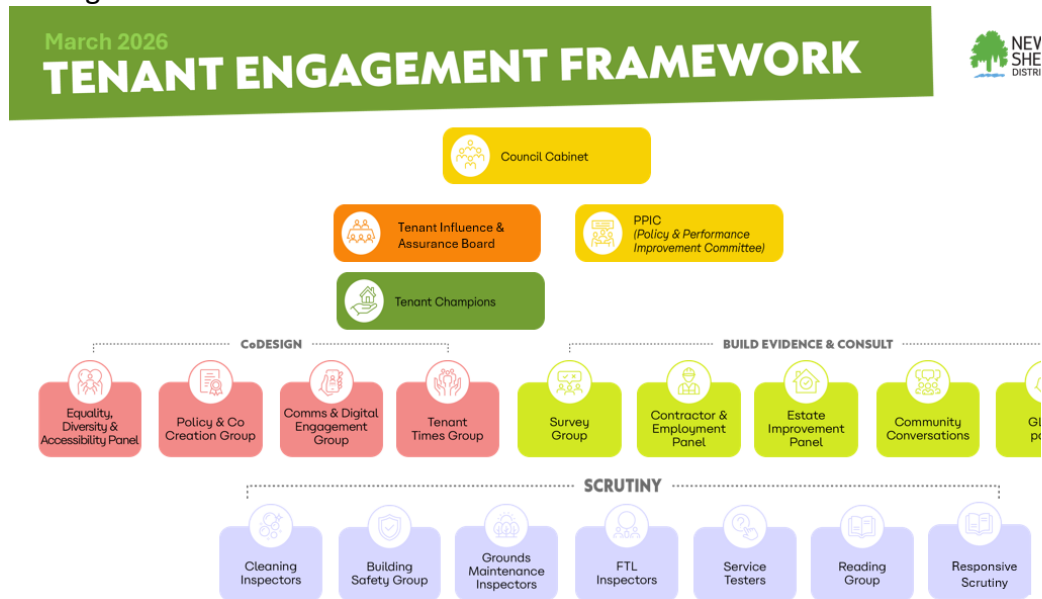
1.0 Background

1.1 Tenant Engagement at Newark & Sherwood

Tenant engagement at NSDC is designed as a deliberate and structured process to promote meaningful communication and cooperation between the Council and its tenants. The core objective of this approach is to ensure that the perspectives and opinions of tenants are not only heard but actively included in the Council’s decision-making and governance processes. This extends to all aspects of housing service delivery and plays a significant role in nurturing vibrant, thriving communities where tenants feel heard and can drive improvements and changes to the services they receive.

The structure has been in operation since 2021, providing tenants with opportunities to engage directly with Council representatives and contribute to important discussions about housing services.

See Figure 1 below:



1.2 Tenant Champions operate across key service areas and neighbourhoods, supporting service improvement, inspections and scrutiny activity and acting as a link between tenants and council officers. This ensures that tenant insight informs both operational delivery and wider service development.

Tenant Champions also provide tenant representation within the Council’s formal governance and assurance arrangements, sitting on the Tenant Engagement Board alongside councillors and officers. The monthly Champion meetings with housing services staff provide a structured opportunity to discuss emerging issues and develop items for consideration by the Board.

Increasing the number of Tenant Champions from three would strengthen representation, resilience and meaningful tenant influence within the engagement framework.

1.3 Currently the Council seeks to ensure that tenants have a voice and influence in a number of ways, including:

- Getting To Know You visits – where a Tenancy Officer visits the home in person, and discussing engagement activities available to them
- Surveys, consultations and topic-based workshops
- Community Link Group Meetings – held across the district quarterly by the Tenancy Team
- Boughton Hub, Ollerton Drop Ins
- Chatham Court, Newark Drop Ins
- Estate and area action e.g. days of action
- Estate Walkabouts
- Road naming consultations
- Grounds Maintenance Inspections
- Communal Space Cleaning Inspections
- Empty Homes Inspections
- Tender evaluations
- Considering grant applications for ‘Local Opportunity & Wellbeing’ funding panel membership – consider fund applications
- Co-design workshops – for example policy reviews, Empty Homes inspection forms redrafting, wording and tone for damp and mould communications
- Editing the Tenant Times e-letter
- One-off engagement activities – Yorke Drive (Newark) Fun Day, Alexander Lodge (Newark) open day, Ollerton Repairs Day.
- Representing the Council at Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) conferences
- Representing the Council at TPAS conferences and events

Formal tenant involvement is provided through the Tenant Engagement Board (which also meets with a focus on Housing Assurance), which sits within the Council’s governance framework and enables tenants to review performance, provide assurance, and influence service priorities.

Recent examples of items of business considered by these boards are: -

- Review and refresh of compliance letters and gas capping
- Consumer standards gap analysis
- External consultations e.g. Housing Ombudsman and MHCLG
- Quarterly Compliance Assurance Reports
- Budget Updates
- Outcomes from Cabinet that affect tenants
- Grounds maintenance performance updates
- The Council’s Community Plan Performance
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures Action Plan update
- New Policies e.g. Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

As should always be the case, a review has taken place of the effectiveness of the current arrangements and this has been undertaken in conjunction with TPAS – the tenant engagement specialists and involved tenants; offering their time, lived experience and skills to feedback and support the Council to improve housing services.

The aim has been to strengthen tenant influence and improve service outcomes, reflecting the Council’s commitment to ensuring tenant insight shapes decision-making.

A dedicated Design Team—made up of tenants, officers and tenant engagement staff—was formed in July 2025. Through a series of co-design sessions, the team developed a revised engagement framework and recommendations for implementation, which the TEB approved on 18 September 2025 providing the platform to begin progression through the Council’s governance process.

This work recommends a clearer and more consistent engagement model.

Co-designed by tenants and staff, the revised approach strengthens transparency, inclusivity and digital accessibility, building a more trusted and effective engagement framework.

1.4 While the Council’s current engagement model has achieved several successes including:

- instigating a review of the empty homes Fit-to-Let standard, and the resultant tenant inspection regime;
- collaborative creation of the 2024–25 Tenant Annual Report;
- the introduction of a bespoke Housing Services Facebook page which also resulted in a strapline on all Housing email signatures;
- influenced the tone and language of the damp and mould communications to tenants;
- influenced via Grounds Maintenance monitoring, resulting in improved performance and satisfaction with the service;
- influencing the tender process for the Estate Improvement Panel, and influenced the increased distribution of the tenant-edited Tenant Times, there is scope for improvement to:
 - Increase participation rates represent a low percentage of our tenant population, and feedback primarily represents a limited group of dedicated individuals.
 - Increase representation of voices from quieter, unrepresented, and working tenants who are not being reached effectively.
 - Ensure that we demonstrate value and impact from tenant influence.

While feedback from tenants that have been involved in the review points to more active and consistent engagement, we fall short of our ambition to be ‘best in class’ in terms of tenant influence and engagement.

1.5 In addition to the revised framework, TPAS also recommended that the Council consider a recognition and incentivisation system that acknowledges tenants’ time, knowledge, and dedication to support the Council with improving and scrutinising housing services.

1.6 At present, the Council reimburses tenants for their travel and subsistence which on its own, no longer appears appropriate or commensurate with the expectations placed on tenant representatives. TPAS guidance and industry research both highlight that a well-structured and transparent recognition system supports creating and maintaining meaningful involvement for the purpose of producing real service improvements.

Researching best practice, Winchester City Council has introduced an in-house Tenant & Council Together (TACT) Board, which commenced as a pilot in 2024. This governance board provides an annual payment of £800 to tenant members to encourage tenant engagement in decision-making. Although many councils continue to maintain voluntary participation for advisory panels and scrutiny groups, the Winchester example indicates a shift toward professionalised and accountable tenant boards.

1.7 Figure 2 below shows the approach taken by Nottingham Community Housing Association (NCHA), Newark’s primary social housing provider, which combines attendance payments and support with home broadband for panel chairs and committee members.

Group / event	Formal meetings p/a (x6)	Adhoc meeting p/a (x8)	Broadband (per month)	Annual member payment	Annual budget impact
H&N Panel 12 members	£50	£30	£16	£892	£10,704
Scrutiny Panel 6 members	£50	£30	£16	£892	£5,352
Care & Support 2 members	£50	£30	£16	£892	£1,784
Informal c8 attendees	Nil	£20	Nil	£160	£1,280
TOTAL					£19,120

Figure 2

1.8 Involving tenants and securing their influence matters in and of itself. Irrespective of housing regulation, it is something that good quality landlords should do. Tenant engagement is fundamental to delivering the Regulator of Social Housing’s Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard and the proposed revised framework in section 2 will assist with this.

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

2.1 Figure 3 sets out a proposed new framework, the objectives of which are to:

- Broaden activities for inclusivity
- Widen participation
- Increase representativeness of the tenant population
- Increase opportunities for involvement
- Meet and exceed regulatory requirements
- Develop a clear and recognised framework for engagement which formally links the Tenant Board to PPIC for evidenced Council wide scrutiny
- Establish the Tenant Influence and Assurance Board with the same status and accountability as other boards and committees

2.1.1

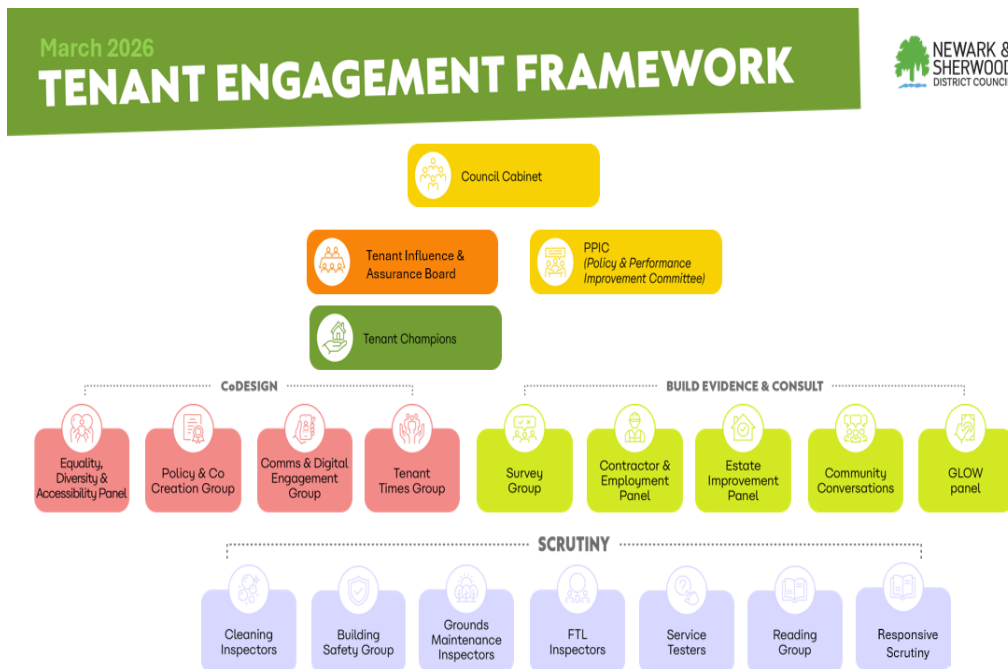


Fig.3

2.2 The specific proposals are:

- Rename the Tenant Engagement Board (TEB) with the Tenant Influence and Assurance Board (TIAB).
- Redefine the role of the Tenant Influence and Assurance Board in accordance with the attached Terms of Reference.
- Undertake a comprehensive recruitment process to increase and widen tenant participation, including Tenant Engagement Champions and Scrutineers.
- Introduce a structured recognition and incentives scheme for involved tenants and leaseholders.

2.2.1 Rename the Tenant Engagement Board (TEB) to be the Tenant Influence and Assurance Board

As the TEB forms part of the Council's constitution, this proposal is subject to the endorsement of this committee. There is a clear governance process to follow regarding this proposal so this report following presentation at this committee will then progress via Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee on 16 April 2026 through to Full Council on 19 May 2026

2.2.2 Redefine the role of the Tenant Influence and Assurance Board.

Revised Terms of Reference are appended to this report at **Appendix B**. These will bring forward tenant opportunities to chair the board, increase tenant representation, consider data and determine topics for scrutiny and manage the agenda.

2.2.3 Undertake a comprehensive recruitment process to increase and widen tenant participation, including Tenant Engagement Champions and Scrutineers.

The Council's current Tenant Champions have been in post for several years and have worked tirelessly in support of our services and tenants. The diversity of work in this area has meant that the 3 champions have been stretched at times and need some additional support. Recruitment in this area however has been difficult.

A targeted tenant recruitment campaign, supported by TPAS, will be designed to reach under-represented groups by using tailored messaging, accessible formats and multiple engagement routes, ensuring a wider and more diverse range of tenants are able to get involved and influence housing services.

We recognise the input and value the younger generations living in our properties could provide to our engagement activities and will work with agencies such as YMCA and Youth Services at a local level to offer recruitment opportunities.

2.2.4 Introduce a structured recognition and incentives scheme for involved tenants and leaseholders

The scheme introduces modest financial recognition – please see figure 4 below - alongside non-financial incentives such as training and acknowledgement, ensuring involvement remains accessible and inclusive.

Clear guidance will be provided on benefit and tax implications, with tenants able to opt out of financial recognition without affecting their involvement. This approach supports meaningful tenant influence, strengthens assurance and scrutiny, and aligns with regulatory expectations and emerging best practice.

The non-financial benefits subject to final agreement by the TEB may include:

- CPD-accredited training opportunities
- Invitation to exclusive tenant insight events
- Active 4 Today discounted membership
- Free garden waste bin or compost bin
- Entry into prize draw
- Community café or local business vouchers
- Broadband contribution/Microsoft licence
- Annual Tenant Engagement Meet Up Event

Any costs associated with these non-financial benefits will be contained within existing budgets and will be subject to maximum take up e.g Garden Waste bins

2.2.5 Figure 4

Involved Tenants	Formal Meetings x6 Per annum	Ad hoc Meetings pa x4 / x8	Broadband per month	Annual payment per tenant member	Annual Budget Impact
10x Champions in total (5x IAB members, 5x Champions/ Scrutineers)	£50	£30 x4	Circa £20	£660	£6,600
Informal Attendees	Nil	£20 x 8	Nil	£160	£1600
Christmas Celebration					£750
Annual Awards Event					£1000
Budget Impact Total per annum					£9950

2.3 Recruitment and Appointment Process

NSDC will run a targeted, inclusive recruitment campaign to appoint Tenant Engagement Champions and TIAB Members.

- Information will be jargon free and available in multiple formats and routes to apply.
- For the first campaign, TPAS will independently manage the shortlisting, ensuring fairness, transparency, and consistency.
- Recruitment will focus on attracting younger tenants and under-represented groups, with support available for all applicants.
- A criteria-based selection framework will assess communication, reliability, ability to represent wider views, confidentiality, and constructive engagement.
- Representation factors such as geography, age, lived experience and diversity will be considered.

Non-appointed applicants will be directed to wider engagement and scrutiny work including training to fill skills gaps to enable recruitment to the TIAB later. We will encourage participation in alternative engagement activities, helping to retain interest, capture insight, and ensure willing tenants can continue to influence housing services.

2.4 Budget and Link to Levels of Involvement

All recognition will be funded within the existing Tenant Engagement budget with a ceiling of —£9,950 per year.

Three levels of involvement link directly to budgeted recognition:

- 1) Tenant Engagement Champions, made up of five TIAB members and five Scrutineers
 - Eligible for up to £660 per year, based on active participation of 80% attendance per annum
 - Recognition reflects preparation, responsibility, and scrutiny work
 - This will be paid quarterly in arrears based on data collated by Tenant Engagement Officers in line with an agreed performance framework
- 2) Informal Involvement
 - Informal attendees can take part in drop-ins, surveys, workshops, and one-off activities, within a budget ceiling of £1600 per annum defined by an agreed forward plan
 - Engagement activities advertised will clearly state whether reward and recognition payment is applicable – and these will be spread throughout the annual calendar
 - The Tenant Engagement team to collate data to analyse the levels of involvement associated with paid activities
 - When budgets are spent, remaining opportunities for involvement are voluntary with reimbursement costs covered only
 - No financial recognition—supports tenants who want to contribute flexibly or occasionally
- 3) Voluntary Participation
 - Tenants can opt out of recognition entirely while still being active contributors
 - Ensures involvement remains accessible for all motivations and circumstances
- 4) Budget Review
 - The budget for the reward and recognition scheme will be closely monitored in line with existing budget monitoring processes and reviewed formally at year end
 - The forward plan, in line with the corporate governance approach will support budget management and monitoring

This structure keeps governance proportionate, widens representation, and ensures spend remains within the established budget, supporting alignment with the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard:

- Demonstrating that involvement is structured, accountable and not tokenistic
- Showing tenants are valued without compromising independence

2.5 Term Length

To support continuity and long-term development, formal roles carry fixed terms:

- TIAB Members: two-year term, renewable once (maximum four years)
- Champions/Scrutineers: one year term, reviewed annually
- TIAB Members and Champions/Scrutineers will hold one formal role within the engagement structure

To ensure future candidates remain engaged and ready for future vacancies, tenants who are not appointed—or whose term has ended—will be encouraged to stay active through:

- Informal involvement (drop-ins, surveys, workshops)
- Voluntary opportunities aligned with their interests
- Officer support, learning opportunities, and wellbeing check-ins

This approach ensures NSDC maintains a pipeline of skilled and motivated tenants, ready to step into Champion or Scrutiny roles when places become available.

2.6 Clear Distinction Between the Three Tenant Roles

Engaged Tenants – Flexible and Informal

- Drop-ins, surveys, workshops, conversations
- One-off or occasional involvement
- Share personal experiences

Tenant Engagement Champions – Active, ongoing involvement

- Prepare for, attend and actively participate in meetings
- Contribute to scrutiny, co-design and service reviews
- Represent wider tenant views, including unheard voices
- Support and encourage other tenants to get involved

TIAB Members – Strategic Voice of Tenants

- Set the agenda and work programme for tenant engagement and scrutiny based on data supporting a larger tenant voice
- Respond to and challenge performance, policy proposals and service changes
- Participate in formal scrutiny and assurance activities
- Make evidence-based recommendations
- Represent tenants collectively, not as individuals
- Maintain confidentiality and objectivity

This is important as these roles require different levels of skill, have different responsibilities and time commitments. TIAB and Champion roles are more complex and accountable, supporting a recognition mechanism.

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

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

3.1 **Financial Implications - FIN25-26/8311**

The recommended proposal results in an annual cost of £9,950 from 2026/27. These charges will be reviewed at the end of each tenant champion cycle (every 2 years). The cost can be accommodated within the existing tenant engagement budget for 2026/27 and future years

3.2 **Equality & Diversity Implications**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the revised Tenant Engagement Framework to ensure it is fair, inclusive, and accessible to all tenants, supporting legal duties and removing barriers to participation. This can be found at **Appendix C**.

- **Framework purpose and approach:** The framework establishes a clearer, consistent method for tenant involvement, strengthening tenant voices and offering multiple engagement routes to accommodate varying abilities, time, and confidence levels.
- **Consideration of protected characteristics:** The assessment covers impacts on tenants across all protected characteristics, including age, sex, disability, race, religion, and additional NSDC-specific groups such as carers and care leavers.
- **Identified impacts and mitigations:** Positive impacts include clearer structure and multiple participation methods, while mitigations address potential exclusion from digital or written engagement, incentive imbalances favouring confident participants, and under-representation by monitoring participation and targeted outreach.
- **Wider considerations and monitoring:** The framework addresses socio-economic challenges through flexible, accessible engagement, supports human rights by enabling tenant influence, requires staff training for inclusivity, and includes ongoing monitoring to ensure fairness as the framework is implemented.

3.3 Legal Implications LEG2526/1062

Any changes to the Constitution require Full Council approval. The Tenant Engagement Board is specifically referred to in the constitution at B6 and therefore any changes in respect of this Board will require Full Council approval. Further legal advice may be required.

3.4 Tenant Consultation

Feedback from tenants included:

- Tenants co-created the new improved framework and support its adoption
- Engagement is vital for effective recruitment and skill development.
- The framework recognises tenants' contributions to improving and scrutinising housing services.
- Offers support so tenants can make informed decisions on whether to accept the financial rewards available within the new framework
- Tenants have a choice to opt out of financial recognition if preferred.

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

Tenant Influence & Assurance Board Terms of Reference

Newark and Sherwood District Council

1. Purpose

The Tenant Influence & Assurance Board (TIAB) exists to strengthen tenant involvement, enhance transparency, and ensure accountability in housing services. The Board provides a collaborative forum for tenants, staff, and elected members to influence decision-making, monitor performance, and assure service quality.

2. Objectives

- To provide oversight and assurance on housing service delivery and performance.
- To ensure tenant voices are central to shaping policies, services, and improvements.
- To review and challenge service standards, performance data, and customer feedback.
- To formally link the TIAB to PPIC for evidenced Council wide scrutiny.
- To promote transparency, fairness, and continuous improvement in housing services.
- To support the Council’s commitment to co-production and tenant empowerment.

3. Membership

Number of members	12
Substitute members permitted	Yes
Political proportionality rules apply	No
Appointments	A recruitment process will apply to Tenant Members Policy, Performance and Improvement Committee (PPIC) members shall be appointed by their committee annually.
Removals	By the Portfolio Holder for Housing in consultation with TIAB Chair. Where the removal involves the TIAB Chair the Portfolio Holder for Housing will work with the Business Manager for Housing Services
Membership	Tenants: At least 5 representatives from across the district, forming 5 of the 10 Tenant Engagement Champions. Staff: At least 3 officers, including a business manager from relevant housing service areas and a officer from the tenant engagement team. Councillors: At least 4 elected members will sit on the Board. This must include the Portfolio Holder for Housing, and at least 3 councillors who are members of PPIC.

Terms of office	Board member terms of office shall be reviewed every two years and confirmed by formal vote.
Chair	The Tenant Chair will be elected annually by the Board members. A Vice-Chair will also be appointed to support and deputise as needed.
Quorum	6 – 3 tenant representatives, 2 elected members and 1 staff member.
Number of ordinary meetings per council year	At least 4 per council year.

5. Member Roles

Each member of the Tenant Influence & Assurance Board plays a vital role in ensuring the Board functions effectively and inclusively. Roles are defined to promote clarity, accountability, and shared responsibility.

Tenant Representatives

- Act as a collective and independent voice for tenants across the district.
- Provide constructive challenge to the Council by questioning data, decisions, priorities and performance.
- Request, review and use relevant performance, satisfaction and engagement data to help shape Board agendas and ensure discussions reflect the priorities of all tenants.
- Share lived experiences, insights and feedback to help shape, improve and assure the quality of services.
- Hold the Council to account by seeking clarity, evidence and updates on how tenant feedback has influenced decisions and outcomes.
- Engage with wider tenant networks to gather views and test whether services and changes reflect tenant needs.
- Promote transparency, trust and mutual accountability between tenants and the Council.

Staff Members

- Provide operational insight and context to support discussions.
- Respond to queries and provide relevant data or updates.
- Support the implementation of Board recommendations.
- Facilitate communication between the Board and Council departments.

Councillors

- Offer strategic oversight and democratic accountability.
- Ensure alignment with Council policies and priorities.
- Champion tenant engagement within wider Council decision-making.
- Support the Board's recommendations through formal Council channels, this may include suggesting working groups to the PPIC for scrutiny measures.

Chair

- Facilitate meetings in a fair and inclusive manner.
- Ensure all voices are heard and discussions remain focused.
- Lead on conflict resolution and consensus-building.
- Represent the Board in external communications where appropriate.

Vice-Chair

- Support the Chair and deputise when necessary.
- Assist in preparation and follow-up of meetings.
- Help maintain continuity and momentum between meetings.

6. Member Responsibilities

Board Members

- Attend at least 80% of meetings and actively participate.
- Represent the views of their communities or service areas.
- Respect confidentiality and uphold the Council's values.
- Review reports, data, and proposals in advance of meetings.
- Contribute to debate and challenge the views of others appropriately.

Council Officers

- Provide relevant reports, data, and updates outlining what influence tenants can have.
- Support the Board with administrative and facilitation duties.
- Ensure actions and recommendations are followed up and influence is evidenced.

7. Meetings

The Board will meet at least quarterly. Additional meetings may be scheduled as required. Meetings will be held in accessible venues or online, with support provided for digital inclusion.

8. Decision-Making and Recommendations

The Board is advisory and does not hold formal decision-making powers. However, its recommendations will be formally recorded and considered by the Council's Housing Management Teams and relevant committees.

9. Reporting and Communication

Minutes and actions will be shared with all members and published where appropriate. Insight, feedback and outcomes from wider tenant engagement activities will be reported to the Board to inform discussion, challenge and assurance. A summary of Board activity, wider engagement themes and resulting outcomes will be communicated to tenants through newsletters and annual reports. The Board may produce an annual statement of assurance.

10. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the board, to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

11. Recognition and Incentives

Tenant representatives shall be entitled to claim their reasonable expenses incurred in the fulfillment of their role, in line with the Tenant Engagement Recognition and Incentives scheme.

12. Conflict Resolution

In the event of disagreements or conflicts among Board members, the following steps will be taken:

- Encourage open and respectful dialogue to understand differing perspectives.
- The Chair will facilitate mediation and seek consensus.
- If unresolved, the matter may be referred to an independent mediator or Council officer for guidance.
- All members are expected to adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct and maintain professionalism.

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	Improved Tenant Engagement Framework – with incentives
Lead Officer and others undertaking this assessment?	Jane Diver, Robyn Henry, HD Tenant Champion
Date EIA completed	10.02.2026

NSDC is moving towards a more consistent and defined model of engagement, shaped by a collaborative design team comprising tenants, Council staff, and Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) in a project executed in 2025. This evolution reflects growing expectations for transparency, inclusivity, and digital accessibility. By modernising engagement practices, NSDC will strengthen trust and accountability while delivering a more responsive and equitable housing service that meets the diverse needs of its tenant residents. We are adopting an improved Tenant Engagement Framework, with a structured recognition and incentives scheme.

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

What are the aims and objectives of the policies, procedures, functions, and services
<p>We carried out this Equality Impact Assessment to make sure the Improved Tenant Engagement Framework is fair, inclusive and accessible to all tenants.</p> <p>The framework introduces a clearer and more consistent approach to tenant involvement. It explains how tenants can get involved and what they can expect. It aims to strengthen tenant voice and apply the same standards across services. It offers different routes into engagement so tenants with different abilities, time and confidence levels can participate.</p> <p>It helps us check that the framework does not create barriers for any group. It supports NSDC's legal duties to consider people with protected characteristics before making changes. It ensures that every tenant has opportunities to take part in ways that suit their needs.</p>
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)
<p>We assessed the impact on NSDC tenants and leaseholders based on these Protected Characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age Sex Disability Sexual orientation Gender reassignment Marriage and civil partnership Pregnancy and maternity Race and ethnicity

Religion or belief
 Carers and Care Leavers (NSDC-specific)
 Armed Forces Covenant (NSDC-specific)

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)

- Tenant feedback during the design phase informed the assessment.
- Officer experience during the design phase informed the assessment.
- Existing equality guidance supported our approach.
- We will continue working with the Equality Group if new impacts emerge during implementation.
- Ongoing tenant feedback will help keep the framework relevant and inclusive.

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

Completed during the design phase.

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
Tenant Engagement Champions		
Design Team		

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

Tenant feedback collected during engagement activities informed the assessment.
 Officer experience in day-to-day work with tenants contributed insights about barriers and needs.
 Plans to continue engaging through the Equality Group as new impacts emerge.
 Ongoing tenant feedback will remain part of monitoring and review.

The assessment used existing equality guidance already held and used across NSDC.

The EQIA identifies known challenges for groups with protected characteristics, based on previous insight and officer knowledge:

Age: Some tenants may prefer or require non-digital formats or more support.

Disability: Awareness of accessibility needs such as large print, Easy Read, assisted digital support.

Sex / Sexual Orientation / Gender Reassignment / Religion or Belief / Race and Ethnicity: Listed and considered as part of the protected characteristics review, though no specific datasets were referenced.

Pregnancy & Maternity: Included as part of the protected characteristic assessment.

Marriage & Civil Partnership: Acknowledged as part of the assessment.

Armed Forces Covenant & Care Leavers: NSDC-specific groups recognised within existing organisational equality considerations.

The assessment reflects known patterns within NSDC services, such as:

Some tenants having limited digital access or relying on offline communication.

Tenants facing language barriers, indicating previous awareness of translation needs.

The risk that digital-only engagement could exclude disabled tenants or those with lower confidence.

Staff experience identifies some engagement activities attract tenants who are already confident or active, which may unintentionally disadvantage quieter or less confident tenants.

Officer knowledge identifies that some groups may be under-represented, existing awareness from previous data collection and engagement trends.

Socio-economic Information Considered

(While not protected characteristics, these are relevant contextual data the EQIA acknowledges):

Low confidence

Financial hardship

Caring responsibilities

Lack of transport

Irregular working hours

These were included due to existing understanding of tenant challenges.

Summary - existing evidence used includes:

Tenant feedback

Officer experience

Existing equality guidance

Understanding of barriers affecting disabled tenants, digitally excluded tenants and tenants with language needs

Awareness of under-represented groups

Socio-economic challenges known from previous service interactions

Planned use of demographic monitoring to track participation

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.</i> adjustment to the policy/plan – the action log below should be completed to provide further information)
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Age	Positive Potential Uneven/ Negative	The clearer structure makes it easier for more tenants to understand how to get involved. Offering multiple ways to participate supports different needs, abilities and confidence levels. A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	See Action Log
Disability	Positive Potential Uneven/ Negative	The clearer structure makes it easier for more tenants to understand how to get involved. Offering multiple ways to participate supports different needs, abilities and confidence levels. A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	See Action Log
Gender Reassignment	Positive	A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	
Marriage / Civil Partnership	Positive	A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	
Pregnancy / Maternity	Positive	Offering multiple ways to participate supports different needs, abilities and confidence levels.	
Race	Positive	A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	
Religion / Belief	Positive	A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	
Sex	Positive	A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	
Sexual Orientation	Positive	A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	

Other groups which may be impacted? (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, veterans, care leavers)	Positive	A consistent approach helps build trust, especially for people who felt unheard or unsure how to take part.	See Action Log
	Potential Uneven/	Offering multiple ways to participate supports different needs, abilities and confidence levels.	
	Negative	The clearer structure makes it easier for more tenants to understand how to get involved.	

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. Add more rows as required.

Negative/Uneven Impact	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
Some tenants may find certain engagement routes harder to use, including: People with disabilities, People with limited digital access, People facing language barriers. They may be excluded if engagement relies too much on digital or written methods.	Offer a range of engagement options, including in-person, telephone, hybrid and online methods.	JND/RH	April 2026
	Provide accessible formats such as large print, Easy Read, translated materials or assisted digital support.	JND/RH	April 2026
	Ensure digital tools supplement—rather than replace—face-to-face and accessible routes	JND/RH	April 2026
It ensures no tenant is excluded because of disability, digital access or language needs.			
Without monitoring, some groups may continue to be under-represented. We could miss important voices and experiences.	Monitor participation trends by demographic group (where data is available).	JND/RH	Monitoring will commence April 2026
	Identify patterns that show gaps or barriers.	JND/RH	April 2026
	Carry out targeted outreach where groups are missing.	JND/RH	Will commence April 2026
It helps balance opportunities so that quieter or less confident tenants can still take part.			
Incentive-based opportunities may work better for tenants who already have more confidence, free time or stability.	Make sure incentives do not favour only confident or highly active participants.	JND/RH	Monitoring will commence April 2026
	Offer low-pressure, informal and flexible engagement options.	JND/RH	Will commence April 2026

It might lead to the same people participating more often.	Support participation through staff outreach and confidence-building approaches.	JND/RH	Will commence April 2026
It helps balance opportunities so that quieter or less confident tenants can still take part.			
Socio-economic Factors Tenants may face challenges such as: Low confidence Financial hardship Caring responsibilities Lack of transport Irregular working hours	Flexible engagement methods and accessible options will help reduce these barriers.	JND/RH	Will commence April 2026
Human Rights	The framework supports fair treatment and increases tenants' ability to influence decisions affecting their homes and communities.	JND/RH	Will commence April 2026
Impact on Staff and the Organisation	Staff may need training in accessible communication and inclusive engagement methods.	Housing Services Business Managers	Ongoing
	A skills audit will help identify development needs.	Housing Services Business Managers	Ongoing
	Consistent practice across teams will support fairness and build tenant trust.	SLT	Ongoing

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

We will monitor who is taking part to identify under-represented groups. Equality considerations will be reviewed regularly as the framework rolls out. This will help ensure the framework remains fair and accessible, especially as NSDC prepares for Local Government Reorganisation.

Overall, the Improved Tenant Engagement Framework is designed to be fair, inclusive and accessible. With the planned mitigations and regular monitoring, the framework will support equal participation and help ensure that all tenants—regardless of background or circumstances—have a meaningful voice.

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
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Is it possible the proposed new service / policy / plan or strategy or the proposed change could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Potentially if the mitigations are not implemented.	
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	X	See above mitigations

Did you consult with an Equality and Diversity Ally prior to completing this assessment?

Yes/~~No~~

7. SIGN OFF

Name and job title of person completing this EIA	Jane Diver Tenant Engagement Officer
Officer Responsible for implementing the change to policies, procedures, functions, and services etc.	Jane Diver Robyn Henry
Business Manager	Julie Davidson
Date Agreed (by Business Manager)	10/02/2026
Date of Review (if required)	01/04/2027



Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 16 April 2026

Lead Officer: Francesca Whyley, Monitoring Officer

Report Summary	
Report Title	Update from Governance, General Purposes & LGR Working Group – Member/Officer Protocol
Purpose of Report	To update Members on the work undertaken by the Working Group to update the Member Officer Protocol
Recommendations	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee recommend the updated Member/Officer Protocol at Appendix 1 to Full Council for adoption.
Reason for Recommendations	<p>a) To keep Committee updated as to the work undertaken by the Working group in reviewing the above documents; and</p> <p>b) To ensure up to date Member/Officer Protocol in line with the Local Government Association guidance.</p>

1.0 Background

1.1 In November, this Committee agreed to establish a Working Group to review the following documents:

- Council Arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints
- Social Media Protocol for Members
- Member/Officer Protocol
- Member Development Plan

At its meeting on 5 February, Committee reviewed and approved or recommended approval for three of the documents listed. This report relates to the Member/Officer Protocol which has now been reviewed, updated and shared with the Working group for consideration.

1.2 The Working Group included Councillor Linda Dales (Chair), Councillor Penny Rainbow, Councillor Andy Freeman, Councillor Paul Peacock, Councillor Kay Smith and Councillor Jean Hall. The document at **Appendix 1** was shared with the Working Group for consideration.

1.3 The Member/Officer Protocol has been significantly altered from the current version contained within the constitution. The changes have been made having regard to the Local Government Association Guidance on Member/Officer protocols and provides clear guidance on the distinction between the role of officers and the role of members and some practical examples of the dos and don'ts of member/officer relationships.

- 1.4 The guidance has been developed having regard to member and officer Code's of Conduct and provides a clear explanation as to the importance of good member/officer relations and the significance of good relations in ensuring strong governance.

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

- 2.1 It is proposed that Members note the work undertaken by the Working Group in reviewing this protocol. The engagement from the group was key to ensure the documents were fit for purpose.
- 2.2 It is proposed that Members recommend to Full Council the adoption of the updated Member/Officer Protocol at Appendix1. The Committee could choose not to agree the updates or propose additional changes; however, the document has been developed in full consultation with officers and the Working Group and the amendments proposed are considered sound.
- 2.3 It should be noted that this Protocol along with the Social Media Protocol and Corporate Code of Governance (if approved) will be presented to Full Council for final approval as part of the annual update of the Constitution.

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.

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

Legal and HR Implications

- 3.1 Whilst Local Authorities are not legally required to agree a protocol on member-officer relations it is recognised as good practice and most authorities have adopted such a protocol including Newark and Sherwood District Council and neighbouring district and borough councils.
- 3.2 The protocol has been drafted having regard to other statutory provisions in relation to member conduct (Localism Act 2011), the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which provides clarity on the role of statutory officers and political restrictions with regard to those posts and the Equality Act 2010 which sets out the public sector equality duty and the requirement of authorities to eliminate discrimination and advance equality in their decisions.

3.3 The protocol has been prepared in consultation with HR.

Financial Implications

3.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from the approval of this protocol.

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.

[Good practice guidance on member-officer relations protocols | Local Government Association](#)

PROTOCOL ON MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONS

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to guide members and officers of the Council in their relationships with one another. The Protocol is not prescriptive or comprehensive but supports and reflects the Codes of Conduct for officers and members contained within the Constitution.
- 1.2 The Protocol applies to all members and officers when acting in their official capacity.
- 1.3 A breach of this Protocol by members may constitute a Code of Conduct breach. A breach of this Protocol by officers may constitute a disciplinary matter.
- 1.4 The Council as an employer has a duty of care to protect employees from harm and regard has been had to the Council's Dignity at Work, Health and Safety Policies and other relevant Employee policies when developing this protocol.

2. PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE MEMBER-OFFICER RELATIONS

- 2.1 Members and officers are public office holders and as such the Seven Principles of Public Life (Nolan Principles) apply to both. These principles are that members and officers act with selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. This Protocol provides clear expectations around consistent behaviour which supports mutual respect and trust between members and officers and supports strong ethical conduct which is the overarching principle of member-officer relations.
- 2.2 Mutual respect and trust is the cornerstone to effective member-officer relations. Mutual respect and trust is a two-way street requiring active commitment from both members and officers to maintain healthy, professional working relationships. Trust has to be earned and maintained by both parties through consistent, respectful behaviour. Trust enables open, constructive dialogue. Members can feel confident that officers will provide honest, impartial advice and officers can trust that members will use that advice responsibly.
- 2.3 Constructive challenge is a vital part of this relationship: members have a responsibility to scrutinise recommendations and advice objectively, in support of transparency and accountability. Where it applies to their actions or advice, it is important that officers recognise that constructive challenge is not personal, but a legitimate and necessary aspect of good governance and continuous improvement.
- 2.4 When members and officers work together respectfully, it reflects positively on the authority. The public is more likely to trust an authority that demonstrates professionalism, unity and integrity in its internal relationships.

- 2.5 A breakdown in trust between members and officers can seriously undermine the effectiveness of the authority. When trust erodes, officers may hesitate to offer honest advice, fearing criticism. Members may disregard professional advice, leading to decisions which do not consider all potential implications (with a risk of unlawfulness). Operational boundaries can be blurred, causing inefficiencies, confusion and confrontation over respective roles. Public meetings can become arenas for confrontation, where officers feel personally challenged rather than having their advice or implementation constructively examined. Public confidence in the authority can suffer, especially if internal tensions become visible, damaging its reputation. Morale among officers may decline, resulting in disengagement and higher turnover. Ultimately, without mutual trust and respect, the authority's ability to govern effectively and serve its community is compromised.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Members are elected by the public to represent their local communities. Their role is primarily strategic and political, and includes:
- deciding the authority's priorities, approving overarching budgets and setting the authority's high level strategic direction
 - acting as advocates for residents, raising concerns and ensuring local voices are heard
 - holding the executive and officers to account through scrutiny committees and other governance mechanisms
 - involvement in senior officer appointments/ dismissals as set out in the constitution.

Some members, especially those in executive or committee roles, also make decisions on services, policies and/or applications.

- 3.2 Officers are employed to provide expert professional advice, implement decisions, and manage day-to-day operations. Their role is operational and administrative, and includes:
- supporting members by providing professional, legal, and technical advice
 - implementing the decisions made by members and ensuring services are delivered effectively
 - day to day staff management, leading teams and overseeing budget, staff, performance standards and service delivery
 - ensuring the authority operates within legal and regulatory frameworks
 - providing information to members which they need to perform their roles.
- 3.3 Some officers also have specific responsibilities which are set out in legislation. For example, by law every local authority must appoint a Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), a Monitoring Officer and a Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer), each of whom have specific statutory duties to support lawful, ethical and financially sound decision-making. Regard must be had to the advice provided by or on behalf of these officers.
- 3.4 Both members and officers should respect the boundaries of their own roles. Members must not involve themselves in operational matters and officers must not engage in political activity in the authority. Senior officers in what are known

as ‘politically restricted posts’ are barred by law from engaging in any political activity and should demonstrate a higher level of impartiality.

4. MEMBER/OFFICER RELATIONSHIPS

- 4.1 It is important that there are close working relationships between members and officers, particularly where officers are providing advice to Committee Chairs, Portfolio Holders or the Leader of the Council. Such relationships should however maintain professionalism and not become so close or appear to become so close that impartiality of the officer or Member is brought into question.
- 4.2 Where there is a close personal relationship between an officer and a member this should be reported to the Monitoring officer and the Chief Executive and can be recorded if appropriate in the relevant Register of Interests with appropriate mitigatory measure put in place to ensure impartiality.

5. BEHAVIOURS

Below are some other examples of acceptable and unacceptable Member/officer behaviours.

Table 1: Acceptable member behaviour

Do	Don't
Treat all officers with dignity, respect and courtesy.	Personally attack or undermine officers.
Ask officers for advice on matters relevant to their role as member.	Ask officers to change professional advice.
Have regard to evidence and professional advice provided by officers when making decisions (but may accept or reject recommendations at formal meetings).	Attempt to bypass council processes or improperly influence decisions.
Provide political leadership and make timely decisions.	Get involved in day-to-day management or pressure officers making delegated decisions.
Act with integrity and maintain appropriate confidentiality.	Instruct officers to act unlawfully or improperly.
Declare personal interests relevant to council business.	Participate in processes or decisions involving relatives, friends or close associates.
Respect officers' free (i.e. non-Council) time.	

Table 2: Acceptable officer behaviour

Do	Don't
Treat all members with dignity, respect, and courtesy.	Form friendships or close relationships with members or appear to hold such relationships through conduct, for example visiting members home addresses for meetings.
Serve the Council as a whole, working to the instructions of their senior officers and alert to issues which are, or are likely to be contentious or politically sensitive.	-
Provide professional, impartial advice on policy, make recommendations and ensure operational delivery.	Let personal or political opinions interfere with service delivery or advice.
Follow procedures for member enquiries efficiently and within agreed timescales and keep members fully informed about significant issues which affect their wards.	Conceal information that should be disclosed to members.
Act with integrity and maintain appropriate confidentiality.	Seek to improperly influence members or disclose member information improperly.
Respect members' free (i.e. non-Council) time.	-

6 ADVICE TO PARTY GROUPS

- 6.1 Officers may be called upon to give advice to political party groups. The support provided by such Officers can take many forms, ranging from a briefing meeting with a chair or spokesman prior to a committee meeting, to a presentation to a full party group meeting. Such support is available to all party groups.
- 6.2 Certain points must however be clearly understood by all those participating in this type of process, members and officers alike. In particular:-
- (a) Officer support in these circumstances must not extend beyond providing information and objective advice in relation to matters of Council business. Officers must not be involved in advising on matters of party business. Officers are not expected to be present at meetings, or parts of meetings, when matters of party business are to be discussed.
 - (b) party group meetings, whilst they form part of the preliminaries to Council decision making, are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council. Conclusions reached at such meetings do not therefore rank as Council decisions and it is essential that they are not interpreted or acted upon as such; and
 - (c) similarly, where Officers provide information and advice to a party group meeting in relation to a matter of Council business, this cannot act as a

substitute for providing all necessary information and advice to the relevant Council decision making body when the matter in questions is considered.

- 6.3 Special care needs to be exercised whenever officers are involved in providing information and advice to a party group meeting which includes persons who are not members of the Council. Such persons will not be bound by the Code of Conduct for Members adopted by the Council (in particular, the provisions concerning the declaration of interests and confidentiality) and for this and other reasons officers may not be able to provide the same level of information and advice as they would to a Councillors only meeting. The Senior Council Member at the Group meeting should inform the Officer(s) if any non-members of the Council are present.

7 COMMUNICATION

- 7.1 Communication between members and officers should be respectful and professional at all times.
- 7.2 Officers should respond to members within appropriate timeframes and having regard to any specific statutory or corporate response times.
- 7.3 Officers should ensure members are aware of local issues to ensure they can effectively carry out their roles
- 7.4 All media relations must be conducted in accordance with the Council's agreed procedures and the rules on Local Authority Publicity.
- 7.5 Both officers and members must ensure compliance with Data Protection legislation, access to Information Rules (as set out in the Constitution) and confidentiality requirements when communicating with each other and should only communicate using appropriate channels.
- 7.6 Members and officers should have regard to the Social Media Protocols and guidance.

8 WHAT IF THINGS GO WRONG?

- 8.1 If a member is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of an officer they should raise the matter privately with the relevant Director or Business Manager and not in a public forum. Other parties (including other members) should not be cc'd into correspondence relating to the conduct of an officer. If a member's concern relate to the conduct of a Director, the concern should be raised with the Chief Executive. If the concern relates to the conduct of the Chief Executive then the concern should be raised with the Monitoring Officer and Business Manager responsible for Human Resources.
- 8.2 If an employee is unhappy with the conduct or behaviour of a Councillor they should raise the matter in the first instance with their Director and the Monitoring Officer who will consider what action should be taken.

- 8.3 Complaints in relation to the conduct of members and officers should be confidential.
- 8.4 Not all concerns raised about conduct will amount to a Code of Conduct issue or a disciplinary matter. Many concerns raised can be addressed informally between parties, however where there is evidence of misconduct by members or officers the appropriate processes will be followed.
- 8.5 As an employer the Council will take all reasonable steps to provide a safe, healthy and fair working environment in which employees are treated with dignity and respect, and in which unacceptable behaviour is not tolerated.



Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 16th April 2026

Lead Officer: Monitoring Officer

Report Summary	
Report Title	Review of the Local Code of Corporate Governance
Purpose of Report	This report seeks approval to refer an amended Code of Corporate Governance to Council for adoption.
Recommendations	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) recommend to Full Council the updated Code of Corporate Governance at Appendix 1 which forms part of the Council’s Constitution; b) notes that the Local Code of Corporate Governance will be reviewed annually going forward; and c) support a delegation from Council to the Monitoring Officer to make any necessary amendments to the document between annual reviews, if necessary, to reflect changes to governance arrangements
Reason for Recommendations	The Corporate Code of Governance is a key document which provides evidence of the arrangements the Council has in place to ensure good governance and supports the Council’s Annual Governance Statement. The document required review following a number of changes to governance arrangements across the Council to ensure it remained up to date and fit for purpose.

1.0 Background

1.1 Corporate governance is the system by which organisations are directed and controlled and it became an important concept following the Cadbury Committee’s report in 1992 on financial aspects of corporate governance. As a consequence, all local authorities have sought to demonstrate compliance with best practice by drawing up a Local Code of Corporate Governance, based on CIPFA/SOLACE Guidance first published in 2007.

1.2 In April 2016, CIPFA and SOLACE published the publication “Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework” which is in essence an updated version of the original 2007 publication. However, amendments to the framework include an update to the Core Principles and sub principles to ensure organisations demonstrate good governance by “Achieving the Intended Outcomes While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times”. The Framework makes it clear that it is up to each local authority to:

- Set out its commitment to the principles of good governance;
 - Determine its own governance structures and local Code; and
 - Ensure that it operates effectively in practice.
- 1.3 In May 2025 an addendum to the CIPFA/SOLACE guidance was published. This addendum covered the annual review of governance and the annual governance statement. No changes were made to the seven principles of good governance contained in the original framework. The addendum reiterates the need for an annual review of governance against the seven governance principles and recommends the adoption of Local Codes of Governance.
- 1.4 The Local Code of Corporate Governance should set out the governance structures the Council has in place to demonstrate how it complies with the Core principles and sub-principles. It is a 'living document' in that it must be periodically reviewed and amended to ensure that it satisfies the changing financial and corporate environment. The Local Code is comprehensive and provides evidence of the Council's alignment with good governance principles. It supports the Annual Governance Statement which provides assurance based on the core arrangements listed in the local code.
- 1.5 This Council has included its Local Code of Corporate Governance within the Constitution at section H9. The current version of the Code aligns with the seven core principles of local government but does not reflect changes in governance arrangements across the organisation in recent years including following recommendations at peer review and changes to committees and governance arrangements.
- 1.6 The review of the Code of Governance has been undertaken with support from Senior leadership Team and Business Managers to ensure it accurately reflects the current arrangements in place.

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

- 2.1 The Local Code of Corporate Governance is a factual document in that it is essentially a list of the processes, protocols and policies in place to demonstrate good governance. Given the nature of the document wider consultation on the proposed changes is not proposed. Directors and Business Managers are best placed to ensure the document is up to date and reflects current arrangements.
- 2.2 The key amendments to the document are to reflect a change in governance arrangements which were not all captured in 2022 and changes following peer review. The update also reflects changes to governance processes in Housing to ensure tenant engagement and regulation of complaints is effectively captured. Changes have also been proposed to reflect updates to the Community Plan.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the amended Local Code of Corporate Governance be recommended to Council for adoption as it forms part of the Constitution changes to which must be approved by Full Council. In addition, it should be noted that the document will be reviewed annually going forward in line with best practice. It is proposed that in between review the Monitoring Officer be given authority to make amendments if necessary in year to reflect changes to governance arrangements.

- 2.4 Members could determine not to recommend changes to the current Code and ultimately Council could choose not to have a Local Code of Corporate Governance, however, it is recommended best practice and supports the Annual Governance Statement.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations and amendments to the Code, 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 references to governance arrangements across all these areas are included in the Local Code of Corporate Governance amendments.

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

Implications (LGR)

- 3.1 In reviewing the Local Code of Corporate Governance all implications have been considered as highlighted above. In terms of Local Government Reorganisation, having a clear index of governance arrangements across all authorities will be key when trying to align and amalgamate governance across the authorities.

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.

[Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: addendum | Solace](#)

APPENDIX 1

Appendix E

3.0 LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

1. Introduction

This Code of Corporate Governance is a document that explains how the Council is clear and accountable in its governance. Governance is about how the Council ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

Governance arrangements in public services are vitally important and local government organisations need to ensure that they meet the highest standards, are kept up to date and are relevant. Governance is about how the Council ensures resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and according to priorities, that there is sound and inclusive decision making and there is clear accountability for the use of those resources in order to achieve the desired outcomes for service users and communities.

It includes the systems, policies and processes, as well as the culture and values that underpin the Council's arrangements for effective:

- Leadership
- Management
- Performance
- Delivery of positive customer outcomes
- Community engagement
- Stewardship of public money

2. Good Corporate Governance

Newark & Sherwood District Council is committed to achieving good corporate governance and this local Code describes how the Council intends to achieve this in an open and explicit way. Good governance enables the Council to pursue its vision effectively as well as underpinning that vision with mechanisms for control and management of risk.

In developing this Code the Council has considered best practice and guidance, particularly the CIPFA/SOLACE framework "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government". This is an integrated system that brings together an underlying set of legislative requirements, governance principles and management processes. The governance framework produced by CIPFA/SOLACE remains a discretionary code and is offered to local authorities as good practice.

However, this Code is purposefully written in a way that best reflects the Council's own structure, functions, size and governance arrangements.

The Council carries out an ongoing review and monitoring of its governance arrangements. The results of this process are incorporated into the **Annual Governance Statement**, the preparation and publication of which is necessary to meet statutory requirements. The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to provide assurance that governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively; and where the review has revealed gaps, that action is planned that will ensure effective governance in future. The Annual Governance Statement is considered by the Council's Senior Leadership Team before being presented to Audit & Accounts Committee. Once approved it is signed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive and is published with the Annual Statement of Accounts prior to review by the Council's External Auditors.

This Local Code of Corporate Governance is based on the following key principles:-

A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.

Good governance means acting in the public interest with members and officers demonstrating integrity, putting ethical values into practice, leading by example and demonstrating commitment to upholding the law.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement

Good governance means developing an open culture, consulting, seeking views, evidence and experiences, encouraging feedback, being a trustworthy partner and accepting challenge.

C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

Good governance means developing a vision, specifying desired impacts, managing competing priorities and expectations, identifying risks, balancing impacts of policies and decisions, taking the longer term view and working within resource restraints.

D. Determining the interventions of the intended outcomes

Good governance means analysing options, understanding risks, planning, controlling and monitoring quality, performance, impact and effectiveness and remaining responsive.

E. Developing the entity's capacity, including the capacity of its leadership and the individuals within it

Good governance means reviewing the use of assets, benchmarking, workforce planning, ensuring clarity of roles, leadership development, supporting training and development of skills, feeding back and reviewing performance and supporting health and wellbeing.

F. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

Good governance means managing risks, using scrutiny to support better decision making, aligning controls to objectives, providing internal audit assurance, Audit and Accounts Committee assurance and recommendations, effective counter fraud and anti-corruption, managing and sharing data, ensuring data quality, integrating financial management with planning and control and supporting operational performance.

G. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

Good governance means supporting transparency, understandable and timely reporting, assessing the Council's performance, supporting public comparisons, being responsive to recommendations from external audit, internal audit, regulators and inspectors and peer reviews and maintaining accountability when working collaboratively.

The following schedule illustrates how the Council meets these core principles and the systems, policies and procedures it has in place to support this. This schedule is reviewed and updated annually in conjunction with preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

Schedule to the Code of Corporate Governance

Core Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law.

<p>Good governance is about:</p>	<p>To demonstrate its commitment to achieving good governance, Newark & Sherwood District Council has:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaving with integrity • Demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values • Respecting the rule of law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Published a Local Code of Corporate Governance to be approved by Council on May 2026 that demonstrates its commitment to the principles of good governance and the importance of operating in an open and accountable manner and demonstrating high standards of conduct. (ii) Developed and promotes a culture of behaviour based on shared values, high ethical principles and good conduct that include the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member code of conduct • Officers code of conduct • Purpose and Values embedded into the Council's Community Plan • Protocol on member/officer relations (reviewed 2026) • Social Media Protocol (reviewed 2026) • Procedure for dealing with Ombudsman matters (Housing and Local Government) • Protocol for members on hospitality and gifts (reviewed 2026) • Policy for officers on hospitality and gifts (reviewed 2026) • Protocol for members on dealing with planning matters • Whistleblowing policy (reviewed 2026) • Appointment of two Independent Persons (iii) Established a local complaints procedure updated in 2026 for considering any complaint that a councillor (District, Parish or Town) has breached the Code of Conduct with the Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee having responsibility for standards and probity issues to reflect the importance which the Council attaches to ethical governance issues. (iv) Provides regular training to district and town and parish councillors on ethical governance (v) Provides an advice service to district and town and parish councillors on code of conduct issues through its Democratic Services team.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (vi) Provides training on codes and protocols to Members as part of the Member development Plan approved in 2026. (vii) Is able to monitor and investigate officer and member behaviour through its customer complaints procedure (viii) Regularly reviews the completion and updating by members of their Register of Interest forms for staff as well as Members (including those of town and parish councillors) (ix) Maintains a register of gifts and hospitality for staff as well as Members (x) Has adopted a whistleblowing policy which is accessible to officers, Members and the public on the Council’s website. The policy provides guidance around how to raise concerns and to whom these should be addressed. (xi) Anti-fraud and corruption policies are up to date and working effectively. A counter fraud policy is in place and is available to all staff and on the Council’s website. A comprehensive programme of counter fraud training has been delivered to all staff. An annual fraud risk assessment is carried out, leading to an action plan to address any identified risks and to proactively work on fraud prevention. (xii) Has appropriate governance arrangements in place in respect of its significant partnerships including the Bassetlaw, Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership, its relationships with Arkwood Limited and Active4Today, Welland Procurement and East Midlands Building Control Services. (xiii) Publishes a a report which is presented to every Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee on ethical governance and code of conduct issues. (xiv) Has clear role specifications within the constitution in respect of the Statutory Officer roles. (xv) The effectiveness of the Council’s Constitution and Protocols is regularly reviewed through Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee. (xvi) Has an established breach reporting procedure in relation to data protection breaches
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Core Principle B: Ensuring Openness and Comprehensive Stakeholder Engagement

Good governance is about:	To demonstrate its commitment to achieving good governance, Newark & Sherwood District Council:
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness • Engaging comprehensively with institutional stakeholders • Engaging with individual citizens and services users effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Has developed an informative, user-friendly website to share information with the community. (ii) The council proactively communicates through Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram as the primary social media channels. The council regularly uploads videos to YouTube, informing the public on a wide range of issues.. (iii) Livestreams all formal public meetings of Full Council, Cabinet and Committees. (iv) Has arrangements in place to seek and respond to the views of stakeholders and the community by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulting residents about Council services and priorities • Having a Petition Scheme so that the community can have their say about any issues that concern them • Holds meetings in public wherever possible • Documents and publishes agendas, minutes and decisions as well as the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based. • Makes provision in its Council Procedure Rules for the public to ask questions at Full Council meetings • Has developed effective relationships with other public sector agencies and the private and voluntary sectors (v) Has a Consultation and Engagement Strategy which is published on the Councils website. Consultation is always appropriate to the subject and stakeholder and adheres to good practice, including representative sampling and complying with GDPR data collection. The council uses a range of methodologies to consult and engage including; face to face, digital and paper surveys, workshops and focus groups. The council has a resident panel which is made up of resident volunteers.. (vi) [Tenant Engagement framework including a dedicated Board where the Tenant Voice is directly heard. Wider tenant engagement includes involvement in working groups, performance and scrutiny of services, editing tenant facing communications such as Tenant Times and the Annual Report as well as a range of bespoke
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	<p>opportunities to have a say through local meetings throughout the district Undertakes Equality Impact Assessments to identify how the needs of particular communities have been considered to inform decision making.</p> <p>(vii) The Local Development Framework has a statement of Community Involvement that has been subject to external validation.</p> <p>(viii) The Council’s Policy and Performance Improvement Committee undertakes reviews of the work of other public service providers and holds those representatives to account.</p> <p>(ix) The Council proactively engages in the health agenda through officer and member involvement in the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Board and with the Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>The council has 4 electronic newsletters designed for specific audiences; Residents, Tenants, Businesses and Staff. These are widely promoted and available to anyone to sign up to and an electronic publication is distributed at least once per month for each of these, paper copies are placed in community centres. Tenants also receive an informational leaflet quarterly with their rent statements to high key information, services and performance. An annual leaflet is sent to all households with their council tax billing which sets how every £1 is spent.</p> <p>(x) .</p> <p>(xi) Safer neighbourhood groups have been established under the umbrella of the Bassetlaw, Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership.</p> <p>(xii) The Council works proactively with local communities and partners in establishing resilience in emergencies, for example flooding where flood wardens have been identified and local flood forums established.</p> <p>(xiii) Has a Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme on the Council’s website.</p> <p>(xiv) Issues a council tax leaflet.</p> <p>(xv) Calendar of dates for submitting, publishing and distributing timely reports is adhered to.</p>
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	<p>The council has a Partnership Register which is reviewed annually as part of the business planning cycle. It identifies significant partnerships and potential impacts on the council.</p> <p>Has worked proactively with other authorities on the preparation of bids for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and has established resource to support LGR implementation with other authorities.</p> <p>(xvi)</p>
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Core Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits

<p>Good governance is about:</p>	<p>To demonstrate its commitment to achieving good governance, Newark & Sherwood District Council has:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a vision • Managing competing priorities and expectations • Identifying risks • Balancing impacts of policies and decisions • Taking the longer term view • Working within resource constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Agreed its vision and priorities – the Council’s priorities are set out in the Community Plan 2023-2027 which was last refreshed in May 2025. The Plan sets out the Council’s Values and Ambitions and how performance is measured. (ii) Has developed and maintains proper financial management arrangements. These include a Medium Term Financial Strategy designed to set a sound financial planning framework for the Council which reflects its vision and priorities; agrees a balanced budget before the start of each financial year together with a Medium Term Financial Plan which looks ahead four years; and an annual Accounting Statement that details the Council’s financial position in the previous year. (iii) Regularly reviews risks at a Strategic, , Project and Operational level and ensures that appropriate plans are in place to mitigate risks. (iv) Has arrangements in place to publish the annual external auditor’s report which includes a formal conclusion on whether the Council has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. (v) Has developed and recently reviewed its Contract Procedure Rules. (vi) Undertakes regular monitoring and review of strategic and operational risks and risk owners are clearly identified.

	<p>(vii) Internal Audit regularly reviews the risk and control framework and produces a Combined Assurance Report in conjunction with Business Managers and the Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Communicates its priorities and values to staff via several channels such as annual staff roadshows, drop-in sessions, staff forums, fortnightly digital newsletters, directorate meetings. Reflects the council’s strategic priorities though individual business unit plans. Business plans are produced annually as part of the business planning process, which includes setting of annual performance KPIs and associated targets. These are approved through the Senior Leadership Team, Policy and Performance Improvement Committee and Cabinet.</p> <p>(viii) .</p> <p>(ix) Includes details of carbon reduction/environmental sustainability implications in reports where appropriate.</p> <p>(x) Includes implications of LGR in reports where appropriate.</p>
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Core Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes

<p>Good governance is about</p>	<p>To demonstrate its commitment to achieving good governance, Newark & Sherwood District Council has:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing options, understanding risks, planning, controlling and monitoring quality, performance, impact and effectiveness in order to: • Determine interventions • Plan interventions • Optimistic achievement of intended outcomes • Remain responsive 	<p>(i) The Council has established a Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee with the ability to convene informal working parties of the Committee to ensure there are sufficient forums for discussion between Members on governance matters. A further vehicle for such dialogue is through the holding of agenda meetings prior to the publication of formal agendas.</p> <p>(ii) Reports to committee include an analysis of options together with the reasons for the recommendation contained within the report.</p> <p>Key Performance Indicators aligned the council’s priorities are regularly monitored, reviewed and reported on. Behind the formally reported performance indicators sit a range of management indicators which are used to</p>

	<p>improve service delivery on a day to day basis, these are monitored by the Business Manager and Director. Members receive quarterly reports and have access to member intranet system which gives additional information including dashboards on reports/performance at award level.</p> <p>(iii) .</p> <p>(iv) The Council's budget is developed to reflect the Council's priorities and the Council has a clear financial strategy including a Medium-Term Financial Plan (see (ii) ante) – budgets, plans and objectives are aligned, and a 30-year Housing Revenue Account</p>
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Core Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it

<p>Good governance is about:</p>	<p>To demonstrate its commitment to achieving good governance, Newark & Sherwood District Council has:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing use of assets • Benchmarking • Workforce planning • Working with others • Ensuring clarity of roles • Leadership development • Supporting training and development of skills • Feeding back and reviewing performance • Supporting health and wellbeing 	<p>(i) The Council has robust mechanisms in place to identify the development needs of members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles which it supports with appropriate training, in particular:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has a Member Induction Plan and a Member Training and Development which will be regularly reviewed and updated by Members.. There is a dedicated budget for member training and development. <p>The council understands the importance of learning and training and has a dedicated learning and development officer. All staff complete a range of mandatory training and are able to access a wide range of further additional learning opportunities through a learning management system. All staff can apply for funding for additional training throughout the year, training is supported at all levels. The council has a diverse apprenticeship programme, which compliments the graduate, gap year and career</p>

	<p>grading pathways into work at the council. The council supports ongoing conversations between managers and staff about performance and development throughout the year. This is managed by a digital tool which records appraisals and supervision/feedback sessions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . <p>(ii) There is a Workforce Development Strategy in place with an appropriate action plan. Progress against the action plan is reviewed annually. Members of the HR team work closely with service areas to ensure that team structures are fit for purpose and staffing resources are used to best effect to deliver Council priorities.</p> <p>(iii) The council operates a robust recruitment and selection process. All managers are trained before they are able to undertake recruitment. The council has committed to guarantee interviews for those applicants who are armed forces veterans, family of serving or veteran armed forces personnel, those in care or who are care leavers and anyone who declares a disability (as defined by the Equality Act 2010). The Council is an accredited mindful employer, adhering to a policy which reflects best practice in standards for the recruitment of staff..</p> <p>(iv) The Council has a raft of HR Policies and Procedures which are reviewed regularly to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.</p> <p>(v) The Council adopts and publishes an annual Pay Policy Statement that sets out the Council's approach to pay and provides links to relevant policies and procedures.</p> <p>(vi) Recently undertaken a Corporate Peer Review and has developed an action plan to address the key recommendations contained in that review.</p> <p>(vii) Uses systems and technology effectively – for example as a training tool and to enable members to scrutinise and challenge – including a members intranet to assist members in undertaking their roles.</p>
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	<p>(viii) The Council has adopted a hybrid working strategy to facilitate flexible and home working.</p> <p>(ix) The council operates a formal managing attendance policy, which includes employee assistance to help people return and remain in work. In addition there is a wide ranging staff benefit scheme and loan scheme along with support for staff who are carers and those experiencing the menopause. Staff awards and recognition events are run regularly and all staff have the opportunity to participate in paid volunteering days.</p> <p>(x) The Wellbeing at Work Team led by the Senior Health Improvement Officer provide regular updates around health and wellbeing related matters as well as running a calendar of events to encourage staff to become more active and take care of their mental health too.</p>
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Core Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management

<p>Good governance is about:</p>	<p>To demonstrate its commitment to achieving good governance Newark & Sherwood District Council has:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing risk • Managing performance • Robust internal control • Managing data • Strong public financial management 	<p>(i) Put in place assurance arrangements which conform with CIPFA's requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has an Audit and Accounts Committee which can report to full Council if it considers this necessary. • The Risk Management Strategy is reviewed by the Committee along with the strategic and operational Risk Registers • The Council has contracted with TIAA Limited to provide an internal audit service. Internal auditors are independent and have access to all people, premises and systems. An annual report from the Head of Internal Audit is presented to the Committee. • The Annual Audit Plan is shaped through an assessment of the Council's key strategic risk areas and critical services • All audit reports are considered by the Senior Leadership Team. • Results of audit reviews are reported to the Audit & Accounts and Committees along with follow up

	<p>work to ensure that the recommendations have been implemented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial systems are reviewed annually to ensure appropriate, effective controls are in place. • External audit report to the Audit and Accounts Committee annually on the results of the audit of the financial statements • The Annual Governance Statement considers the internal control framework, and is presented to the Audit and Accounts Committee annually with the Statement of Accounts. It is also reviewed halfway through the year, to ensure that significant control issues are monitored and reported on. <p>(ii) Ensured that effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of statutory officer roles by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining roles and responsibilities in the constitution • A meeting of the statutory officers not less than once a year to review governance issues <p>(iii) Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures and that expenditure is lawful by:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporating , HR, financial and legal comments in reports to members where necessary and appropriate • Ensuring that senior managers are briefed on significant legislative changes or changes in policies and procedures – there is a regular dialogue with the Senior Leadership Team through monthly business managers meetings. <p>(iv) The Council's financial management arrangements conform with the requirements of the CIPFA statement on the role of chief financial officer in local government and with statutory provisions in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1988 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.</p> <p>(v) Regulations covering all aspects of financial management including contract procedure rules are in place and reviewed regularly. Training on Financial Regulations has been provided to all relevant staff.</p> <p>(vi) Financial performance reports are sent to business managers monthly. Reports are then tabled quarterly with the Senior Leadership Team and Members (through Cabinet, PPIC and Audit and Accounts Committee) forecasting the outturn position to the year-end..</p>
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	<p>(vii) Clear performance management arrangements are set out within management agreements for the Council’s companies, Arkwood Limited and Active4Today Ltd.</p> <p>(viii) Members of the Senior Leadership Team carry out an annual review of strategic, corporate and project related risks to ensure that they are relevant, whilst at the same time reviewing risk appetite. Quarterly reports are submitted to the Senior Leadership Team to allow for effective monitoring. SLTeam have more regular updates in relation to high risk projects and activities to ensure that these are being mitigated effectively. Members of the Risk & Insurance team work closely with business managers to ensure that they regularly review operational based risks and provide assurance to SLT in this regard.</p> <p>(ix) An annual review of fraud risks is carried out to ensure controls are in place and are effective. The results of the review are reported to the Audit & Accounts Committee.</p> <p>(x) Biannual reports on counter-fraud activity are taken to the Audit & Accounts Committee.</p>
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Core Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability

<p>Good governance is about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing good practice in transparency • Implementing good practices in reporting • Assurance and effective accountability 	<p>To demonstrate its commitment to achieving good governance Newark & Sherwood District Council has:</p> <p>(i) Operates under the executive arrangements style of governance where overview and scrutiny undertaken by the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee.</p> <p>(ii) Appointed a Data Protection Officer and a Senior Responsible Officer and Single Point of Contact for CCTV and surveillance camera systems.</p> <p>(iii) Established a dedicated Information Governance Team to monitor compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection legislation and deal with access to information requests.</p> <p>(iv) The Council has a presumption of openness and transparency and publishes key information on its website. The Council adheres to the Government’s Transparency Initiative.</p> <p>(v) Seeks to minimise the number of and sections of reports which need to be considered in the confidential section of Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings.</p>
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	<p>(vi) The Authority’s assurance arrangements conform with CIPFA’s requirements (see F(i) ante) with regular training being provided to members of Audit & Accounts Committee.</p> <p>(vii) The council publishes an Annual Statement of Accounts, which details the goals and key achievements for the year. An annual Tenants Report is also published which details the work done to support the council’s housing tenants through the preceding year. A summary of the work of the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee and its impact is also produced annually. There is an end of year performance report which reports on all the key measurable activities and outcomes of the core services of the council Through reviews by external auditors, external agencies, internal audit and its performance team the Council constantly seeks ways of ensuring that value for money is achieved and for securing continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.</p> <p>The Council has an effective and compliant two stage complaints policy and process which is led by Customer Services which is compliant with Housing Ombudman Service Complaint Handling Code. All complaints are logged within a digital system and then allocated to appropriately trained officers and complaints can be escalated to a more senior officer if the complainant remains dissatisfied.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership Team along with the Policy and Performance Improvement, Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee and the Tenant Engagement Board committees receive regular reports on complaints. The council has an appointed Member Champion for complaints.</p> <p>(viii) .</p>
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Report to: Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee – 16 April 2026

Lead Officer: Francesca Whyley, Monitoring Officer

Report Summary	
Report Title	Update on Code of Conduct Complaints
Purpose of Report	To update Members on the current position in relation to Code of Conduct complaints
Recommendations	That the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee note the contents of the report
Reason for Recommendations	To keep Committee updated as to the volume, nature and outcome of Code of Conduct complaints

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In February 2026, Committee agreed to some changes to the Council’s arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct complaints. One of the changes to the arrangements was that the outcome of code complaints, where there are potential breaches of the Code of Conduct identified at the initial assessment stage would be reported to Committee.
- 1.2 In addition, in line with good practice and to ensure the Committee are up to date on the progress of complaints, moving forward, there will be an update report provided to every Committee meeting.
- 1.3 At the current time (of publishing) there are 20 ongoing Code of Conduct complaints. **Appendix 1** sets out a list of the current complaints and **Appendix 2** provides information on the complaints concluded since 5 February 2026 Committee meeting when enhanced reporting was approved. Where informal resolution is offered further information on those concluded complaints is provided at **Appendix 3 (to follow)**.
- 1.4 As this is the first update report, and to demonstrate the volume of work that has been undertaken in this area since October 2025 with the new arrangements in place for Monitoring Officers and Deputies, a total of 29 complaints have been concluded (including those 6 at Appendix 2).
- 1.5 It is recognised that due to the volume of complaints and depending on the complexity, some complaints are taking a significantly longer time to progress. This is being kept under review as it is recognised that it is not in the best interest of any party to a complaint to have a complaint ongoing for a significant period of time. All valid complaints require thorough assessment, engagement with the Independent,

Person as well as the complainant and subject member. Preparation of decision notices must also be considered and appropriate evidence presented to justify any conclusion. Each complaint does generate a significant amount of work.

- 1.6 A number of measures have been taken to try and reduce complaints including changes to the arrangements which have enabled non-valid complaints to be rejected more easily and swiftly. In addition, the arrangements now allow publication of the outcome of complaints where a potential breach is identified. This enables transparency and is in the public interest. The updated Social Media Protocol, once adopted, also provides further guidance to Members on how social media can link to Code of Conduct complaints.
- 1.7 Procedurally, a change in the process of handling complaints has been undertaken with all complaints now being progressed through the legal case management system. There is still further work to do to establish clear templates for letters and decisions at all stages, but a template decision report has now been rolled out for future complaints to ensure consistency across the process. Administrative support in the management of complaints is now being provided through the Legal Services apprentice.
- 1.8 The Member Development Plan was approved at the last Committee meeting. As part of this plan, it is important to update training for Members on the Code of Conduct. This is being progressed with the development of a training package for district and parish councillors which is easily accessible.

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

- 2.1 It is proposed that Members note the work undertaken to try and reduce complaints and note the current position with regard to volume and outcomes.
- 2.2 If there is any further information Members would wish to see in the update reports this can be provided going forward.

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.

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

Legal and HR Implications

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires appropriate arrangements to be in place for the handling of Code of Conduct complaints. The Act also places responsibility for the consideration of complaints against parish councillors with the Monitoring officer of Newark & Sherwood District Council.

Financial implications

- 3.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from the presentation of this report. There are, however, costs associated with the handling of complaints where they cannot be managed internally.

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

Complaint Received	Council	Complainant	Status
May 2025	NSDC	Councillor	Was on hold now re-opened and ongoing
18/7/25	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
12/9/25	Ollerton and Boughton Town Council	Councillor	Ongoing
23/9/25	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
02/10/25	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
06/10/25	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing *
10/10/25	NSDC	Non-Councillor	Ongoing
19/10/25	Edwinstowe Parish Council	Non -Councillor	Ongoing
23/10/25	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
28/10/25	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
03/11/25	NSDC	Councillor	Full Investigation ongoing
10/12/25	NSDC	Non-Councillor	Ongoing
04/02/26	NSDC	Non-Councillor	Ongoing
05/02/26	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
09/02/26	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
14/02/26	Elston Parish Council	Councillor	Ongoing
23/02/26	Blidworth Parish Council	Non-Councillor	Ongoing
05/03/26	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
17/03/26	NSDC	Councillor	Ongoing
28/03/26	Kneesall Parish Council	Non-Councillor	Ongoing

Complaint Received	Council	Complainant	Status
30/7/25	NSDC	Councillor	Potential breach - Informal Resolution 26/3/26
03/09/25	NSDC	Non-Councillor	Potential breach – Informal Resolution 31/03/26
19/09/25	NSDC	Non-Councillor	No breach – No further action 17/03/26
22/10/25	NSDC	Councillor	No breach – No further action 20/03/26
26/01/26	Bleasby Parish Council	Non-Councillor	Not valid complaint – 24/02/26
10/02/26	NSDC	Non-Councillor	Not valid complaint -10/02/26

Work Programme for Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee

18 JUNE 2026

Report Title/Topic

Annual Code of Conduct Complaints Report

Customer Feedback – Half Year 1 - 2025/2026

Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Annual Self-Assessment

LGSCO Annual Review Report

24 SEPTEMBER 2026

Report Title/Topic

Housing Ombudsman Annual Review Update

Annual Review of Housing Services and Complaints Report

17 DECEMBER 2026

Report Title/Topic

15 APRIL 2027

Report Title/Topic

Annual Review of the Council's Constitution

Annual Whistleblowing Report

Annual Gifts & Hospitality Report

Annual RIPA Report

Annual Review of Exempt Reports