



**Castle House
Great North Road
Newark
NG24 1BY**

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Friday, 2 January 2026

**Chair: Councillor M Pringle
Vice-Chair: Councillor N Ross**

Members of the Committee:

**Councillor A Brazier
Councillor C Brooks
Councillor A Freeman
Councillor J Hall
Councillor S Haynes
Councillor R Holloway
Councillor R Jackson**

**Councillor D Moore
Councillor P Rainbow
Councillor K Roberts
Councillor K Smith
Councillor T Thompson
Councillor T Wendels**

Substitutes

**Councillor N Allen
Councillor D Darby
Councillor P Harris
Councillor M Home
Councillor S Michael
Councillor M Shakeshaft
Councillor L Tift**

MEETING:	Policy & Performance Improvement Committee
DATE:	Monday, 12 January 2026 at 6.00 pm
VENUE:	Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY
<p>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.</p> <p>If you have any queries please contact Helen Brandham on helen.brandham@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk.</p>	

AGENDA

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1. Notification to those present that the meeting will be recorded and streamed online
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Declaration of Interest by Members and Officers
4. Minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2025

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5. Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Review and Revised Strategy
6. Customer Feedback Report - Half Year 1 - 2025/2026
7. Presentation by Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development

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Reports from Working Group

8. Life Chances for Girls - Final Report and Recommendations

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Review of Cabinet Work Programme and Recent Decisions

9. Cabinet Forward Plan (December 2025 to March 2026)
10. Minutes of Cabinet Meetings
 - a) 11 November 2025
 - b) 26 November 2025

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Topic Suggestions

None

11. Provisional Items for Future Agendas
 - General Fund Capital Programme 2026/2027-2029/2030
 - General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan 2026/2027-2029/2030
 - General Fund Revenue Budget 2026/2027
 - Q3 Community Plan Performance Report
 - Presentation by Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing & Leisure
 - Planning Infrastructure – Overview of Projects and Commitments
 - Newark Town Centre Masterplan and Design Code
 - Q3 Housing Compliance Performance Report

Note Fire Alarm Evacuation

In the event of an alarm sounding please evacuate the building using the nearest fire exit in the Civic Suite. You should assemble at the designated fire assembly point located in the rear car park and remain there until the Fire Service arrive and advise it is safe to return into the building

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Policy & Performance Improvement Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Monday, 1 December 2025 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor N Allen, Councillor A Brazier, Councillor C Brooks, Councillor A Freeman, Councillor J Hall, Councillor R Holloway, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor P Rainbow, Councillor K Roberts, Councillor T Thompson and Councillor T Wendels

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor L Tift

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor S Haynes, Councillor D Moore and Councillor M Spoors

165 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.

166 DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

167 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2025

The minutes from the meeting held on 6 October 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

168 OUT OF REMIT ACTIVITIES WORKING GROUP - FINAL REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Transformation & Service Improvement and the Senior Transformation & Service Improvement Officer which sought to share with Members the recommendations put forward by the Working Group and also the Committee's endorsement where relevant.

Councillor Rhona Holloway, Chair of the Working Group, presented the report to Members which outlined the rationale for the establishment of the Working Group, which was consideration of activities outside the Council's remit and the balance of the benefit to residents with resource impact. Topics which the Working Group considered were detailed within the report with the proposals detailed in paragraph 2; including flooding – the effects and prevention; continuity of public health services delivered by the Council during local government reorganisation; and planning infrastructure. An agreed proposal was to extend an invitation to the Environment Agency (EA) to attend committee in order to provide Members with further insight into the EAs role within flood prevention, as well as key priorities and projects which

had been identified as areas of focus within the County, specifically the Newark & Sherwood district. Richard Cooper of the Environment Agency was in attendance at the meeting.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee note:

- a) that the Leader of the Council had written to the Mayor of the East Midlands Combined County Authority on the issue of Flooding; and
- b) that an invitation had been extended to representatives of the Environment Agency to discuss and understand the priorities and areas of focus for this agency within flood prevention in Newark & Sherwood;

AGREED (unanimously) that the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee endorse:

- c) the continuity of public health services provided by the Council during the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and through the transition process leading up to vesting day, recommending that the Health Active Lifestyles manager be appointed to Newark & Sherwood District Council's LGR implementation group, once established; and
- d) that an invitation be extended to Planning Infrastructure colleagues to a future meeting of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee, to provide an overview of the service areas, including cases where operations extend beyond 'typical' district council responsibilities.

169 PRESENTATION BY THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Chair welcomed Richard Cooper, the Partnership & Strategic Overview Team Leader – Notts. & Tidal Trent, from the Environment Agency (EA) who had been invited to attend to speak to Members about flooding within the district.

The presentation covered a number of topics including: flood risk remit; challenges; maintenance works; for the future; and responses to submitted questions.

Mr. Cooper provided Members with the background to the establishment of the EA and their remit: flood risk (main rivers only); and environmental (all watercourses). He noted that the East Midlands was the only defined area without a coastline and that Newark & Sherwood District Council were 1 of approximately 30 local authorities within the area. The advised of areas of responsibility noting the organisations involved: EA, Nottinghamshire County Council, Severn Trent Water Authority, Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board. He provided Members with information as to the challenges faced which included climate change and consequences of storms. Details of maintenance works undertaken were provided together with projects planned for the future.

Members were asked to submit questions ahead of the meeting and details of these and the responses given can be found at Appendix A to these minutes.

In considering the presentation, Members raised a number of queries in relation to the wards they represented.

In referring to Lowdham, a Member suggested that communication between Flood Groups and the EA could be improved. Mr. Cooper advised that the EA dealt with the main river running through the area, but they had no remit to deal with issues in relation to surface water. However, it would be beneficial if the EA were aware of the areas which suffered with surface water flooding. This would enable the organisations involved to provide a co-ordinated response. He further advised that the Flood Resilience Teams were going to become a national team.

A Member queried whether the response from the EA during the development stage of housing was sufficient. Mr. Cooper advised that there should be a greater emphasis on the pre-application stage by developers. He commented that it was not the EA's responsibility to advise on what the development should be, but to comment on the proposal submitted. He added that developers were often reticent to seek pre-application advice as it resulted in additional costs. The EA made every effort to work closely with the Council's planners and that advice given was legislatively correct but noted that issues such as climate change had an impact on that legislative advice. In referring to the Middlebeck development, Mr. Cooper stated that national planning guidance prevented the EA from requesting any measures other than the minimum required and that it was difficult to say with any certainty as to the reason for its flooding. He noted that contributing factors could be from the close proximity of the river and the amount of water held in the ground. He added that effective communication would be vital when the dualling of the A46 commenced.

A Member raised the issue of the accuracy of maps used when determining developments in the district. Mr. Cooper acknowledged that the maps may be outdated, adding that it was difficult to include anecdotal evidence. He commented that the Newark & Sherwood district area had the highest number of applications in the functional flood plains.

In noting the success of the Lowdham Reservoir Project, a Member stated that surface water was a significant contributor to flooding. He queried as to the effectiveness of the relationship between the EA and Severn Trent Water (STW) and whether they were maintaining their infrastructure responsibilities. Mr. Cooper stated that it was rainwater which caused flooding and not the condition of the becks in the area. He advised that the EA could not hold STW to account but that both organisations worked in partnership. He added that he would forward any out of remit questions to the appropriate organisation.

A Member raised the issue of responsibility for the maintenance of ditches. Mr. Cooper advised that these were considered to be ordinary watercourses so their maintenance was mainly the responsibility of Nottinghamshire County Council, except where privately owned. He added that residents were also able to carry out repairs but that was not widely known. He further added that it had been agreed nationally that development could be undertaken in areas designated as being within Flood Zone 1.

In closing the debate, the Chair thanked Mr. Cooper for his attendance and for his presentation.

AGREED (unanimously) that the presentation by Richard Cooper, the Partnership & Strategic Overview Team Leader – Notts. & Tidal Trent, from the Environment Agency be welcomed and noted.

170 REVIEW OF HRA BUSINESS PLAN ASSUMPTIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Financial Services which sought to provide Members with an overview of the key assumptions to be made within the production of the 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

The report set out the background to the development and maintenance of the HRA Business Plan, setting out some of the key assumptions which would affect the Plan from an external perspective. The external factors would then be considered when looking at internal factors e.g. setting of rent, capital improvements or revenue services. The agreed assumptions would then be fed into the overall HRA Business Plan which in turn would form the basis of the HRA Budget and Rent Setting report.

AGREED that the assumptions presented, to be utilised in the update of the 30-year HRA Business Plan, be endorsed.

171 PROJECTED GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2026 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Financial Services, which provided Members with the forecast position for the 2025/26 financial year for the Council's General Fund and Housing Revenue Account revenue and capital budgets. The report also provided Members with information as to the performance against the approved estimates of revenue expenditure and income and on major variances from planned budget performance, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

Details were provided as to the current position (as at 30 September 2025) variances. Table 1 showed a projected unfavourable variance against the revised budget of £0.359m on service budgets, with an overall favourable variance of £0.062m that would require transferring to the General Fund reserves. Table 2 provided an overview of projected Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn for 2025/26 with an unfavourable variance on the net cost of HRA Services against the revised budget of £0.172m and a reduced transfer to the Major Repairs Reserve of £0.201m. Details of the overview of the Projected Capital Outturn 2025/26 were also provided.

In considering the report, a Member noted the slippage on schemes from 2024/25 and queried as to the reason for this. The Business Manager – Financial Services advised he would provide a written response to Members.

AGREED that the following be noted:

- a) the General Fund projected favourable outturn variance of £0.062m;
- b) the Housing Revenue Account project unfavourable outturn variance of £0.201m to the Major Repairs Reserve; and
- c) the Capital Programme revised budget and financing of £46.823m.

172 COMMUNITY PLAN PERFORMANCE FOR Q2

The Committee considered the report of the Senior Transformation & Service Improvement Officer which presented to Members the Quarter 2 Community Plan Performance Report (July to September 2025). Members were asked to review the Community Plan Performance Report attached as Appendix 1 together with the Compliance Report attached as Appendix 2.

In considering the report, Members referred to the ongoing works to deliver the enhanced in-house CCTV control room. The Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development advised that it was currently being modified and fitted out ready to receive the necessary equipment to become operational.

In relation to the rent arrears as a percentage of the annual rent debit, a Member noted that these had increased and queried as to whether the reason for this was known. A Member queried as to whether it could be attributed to the way in which benefits were now being paid to the Department for Work & Pensions and not directly to the tenant. The Senior Transformation & Service Improvement Officer advised that she would provide a written response to Members of the Committee.

AGREED that the Community Plan Performance Report Q2 be noted.

173 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FOR TERMINALLY ILL RESIDENTS

The Committee considered the report of the Transactional Finance Manager and the Business Manager – Revenues & Benefits which sought to provide Members with information and options for supporting terminally ill residents by providing council tax support through discretionary measures.

The report set out that Full Council had unanimously supported a Motion to develop an appropriate policy for Council Tax Exemption for those with a terminal illness, or a partner or family member within the same household, as part of the local tax reduction scheme. Following this decision, Officers had developed four options for Members to consider, which were detailed within the report, with their recommendation being that Option 3 was the most appropriate scheme for the Council to adopt. In presenting the report, the Transactional Finance Manager advised that a letter had been forwarded to the Rt Hon Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government, urging him to consider the implementation of a national policy to provide council tax exemption to all residents diagnosed with a terminal illness or those council tax paying residents who reside with a person so diagnosed.

In considering the report, a Member commented that his preference would be to develop Option 1 but acknowledged that in order to do so it would require an agreement being reached with Nottinghamshire County Council, the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner and the Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire Authority to reduce the precept they received from council tax demands. In response, Members were advised that an approach could be made but it would delay the commencement of the scheme recommended in Option 3.

Members agreed that the priority was to commence the scheme as soon as possible with a view to expanding it in the future. The Transactional Finance Manager advised that, subject to Cabinet's approval on 20 January 2026, the proposed scheme could be commenced on 1 April 2026 and then subsequent conversations with the other organisations could be held.

A referring to the current Council Tax Relief (CTR) Scheme, a Member noted that a terminal diagnosis may result in a person becoming eligible for that scheme and queried as to the speed with which their application would be processed. The Transactional Finance Manager referred to the SR1 form which was a medical report used for fast-tracking benefits claims for people who were terminally ill and expected to live for less than 12 months. He advised that the intention was to have the NHS submit the form to both the DWP and the Council. The Council would put in place measures to expedite such claims.

AGREED that the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee endorse and recommend to Cabinet:

- a) that approval be given to the preferred Option 3 as detailed in the report;
- b) that Officers be instructed to develop a Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme to support households facing the hardship of living with a terminally ill family member; and
- c) that, subject to approval by Cabinet of Recommendations a) and b), Officers be authorised to approach Nottinghamshire County Council, the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner and the Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire Authority in relation to expanding Option 3 - the Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme.

174 CABINET FORWARD PLAN (NOVEMBER 2025 TO FEBRUARY 2026)

NOTED the Forward Plan of the Cabinet for the period November 2025 to February 2026.

175 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2025

NOTED the Cabinet Minutes from the meeting held on 14 October 2025.

176 PROVISIONAL ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

- Half 1 Customer Feedback Report
- Presentation by Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development
- Life Chances for Girls Working Group Final Report
- Annual Review of Grant Funding Outturn
- Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

Meeting closed at 8.12 pm.

Chair

Pre-submitted questions 1

- After storms Babet and Hank, which caused widespread damage to EA assets two years ago, could the Environment Agency confirm if they have all been repaired now and are in good working order within the Newark and Sherwood District?
 - T98 post event asset inspections – all promptly completed
 - Assets are graded in terms of their condition – if no issues, no fix is needed
 - Current system – fix when broken
 - We do have discretion to intervene where necessary
 - For all maintenance, we have to bid every year for what we want to maintain
 - Our ask always far outweighs what we actually receive – hence we can't maintain everywhere every year
- New flood funding policy has placed a heavy emphasis on asset & ensuring they are fit for purpose before we build anything new.
- Moving from condition to health
- This will enable us to fix assets sooner than we currently can. – a real positive

Pre-submitted questions 2

- As we have now moved into the storm season and some areas are already experiencing flood warnings and localised flooding, are the Environment Agency as prepared as they can be to deal with any flooding issues in our District?
 - We exercise throughout the year
 - New systems are in place
 - New national telemetry system
 - Facilitation of mutual aid
- We are always rostered up for any incident
- Storm Claudia was the first 3x 8hr shift pattern
- Worth noting that the out of hours incident roles are voluntary
- Except out field ops teams

Pre-submitted questions 3

- Are there any plans in the pipeline to carry out a flood alleviation feasibility study on the Trent in Newark and Sherwood? Our area is disproportionately affected by flooding and flooding is often dealt with on individual area basis rather than being looked at as a whole and how one area impacts on another, if a feasibility study is already in progress could the EA let us know when this might be ready?
- Already heard what there is planned for the future
- Economics drives what we can & can't do & we can't protect everywhere

Worth noting

- River Trent is the 3rd longest
- River Trent is the 2nd largest by volume of discharge after the Severn
- Average discharge is ~7000MI/day or 89m³/sec (1MI = 1000m³ = 1,000,000litres)

Pre-submitted questions 4

- Can the EA outline how flood mapping is done, how it is checked for accuracy, and how often it is updated to account for new flood area events?
- NAFRA2 has just gone through a major launch and correctional updates this financial year
 - This is updated every couple of years
 - Except where info is brought to light & this is then incorporated
- Flood map for planning – Quarterly updates
 - This includes models from developers verified by the EA

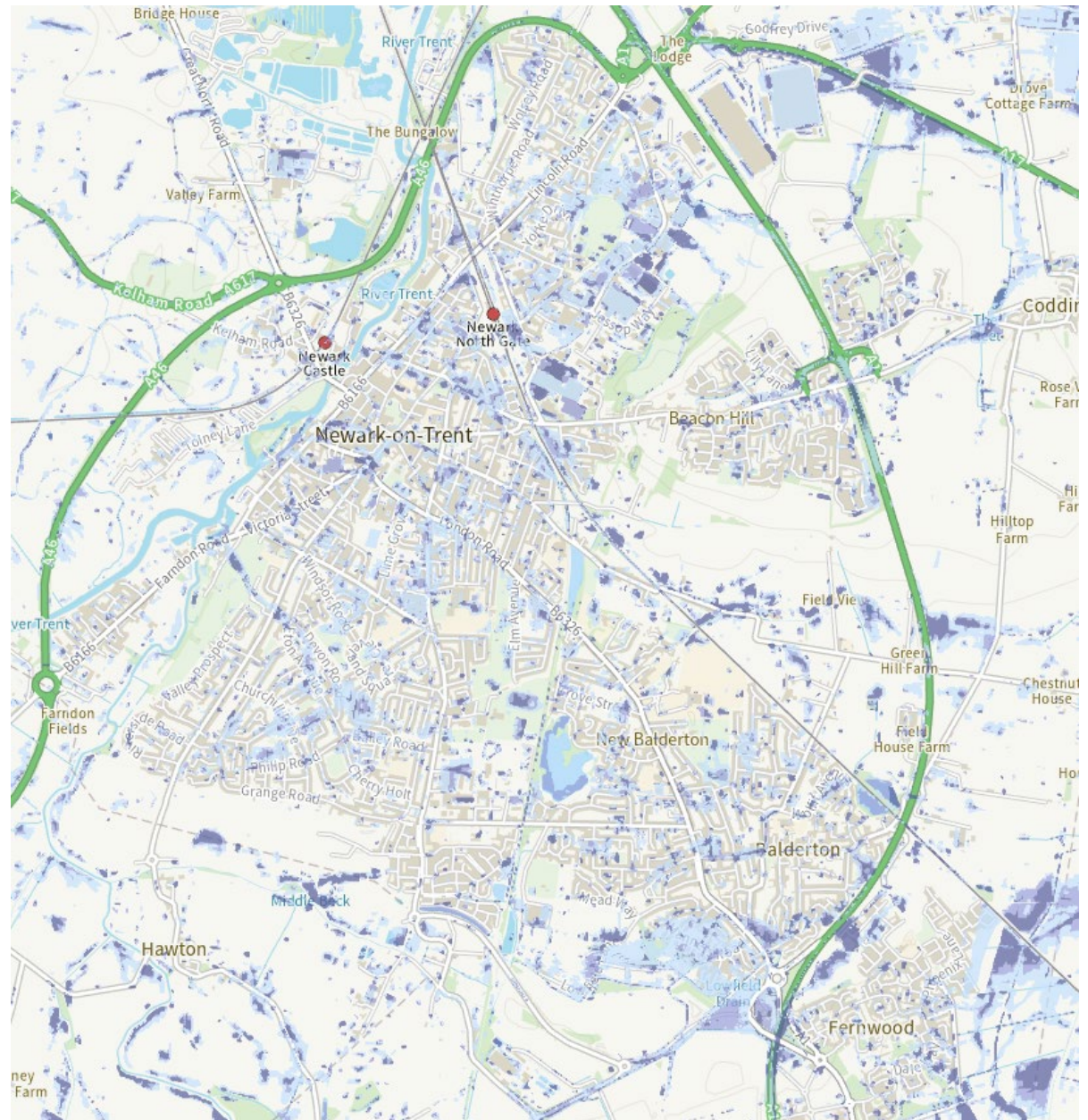
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Models used are strategic level as they are nationally produced

- A hydraulic model is a set of mathematical equations that represent how water flows.
- It can simulate flow, water levels, and velocity in systems like rivers, floodplains, sewer networks, or coastal areas

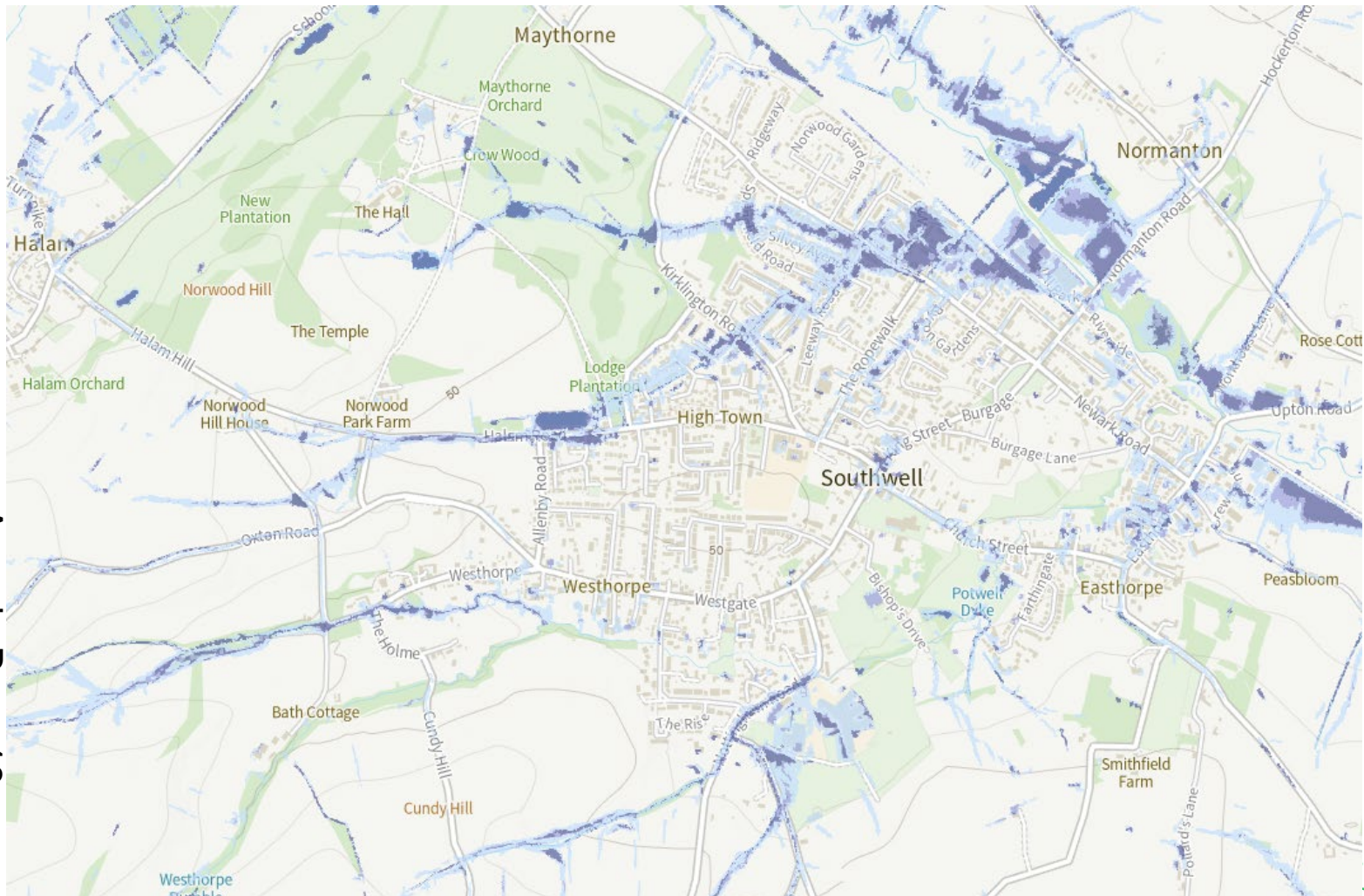
SW flooding

- Newark



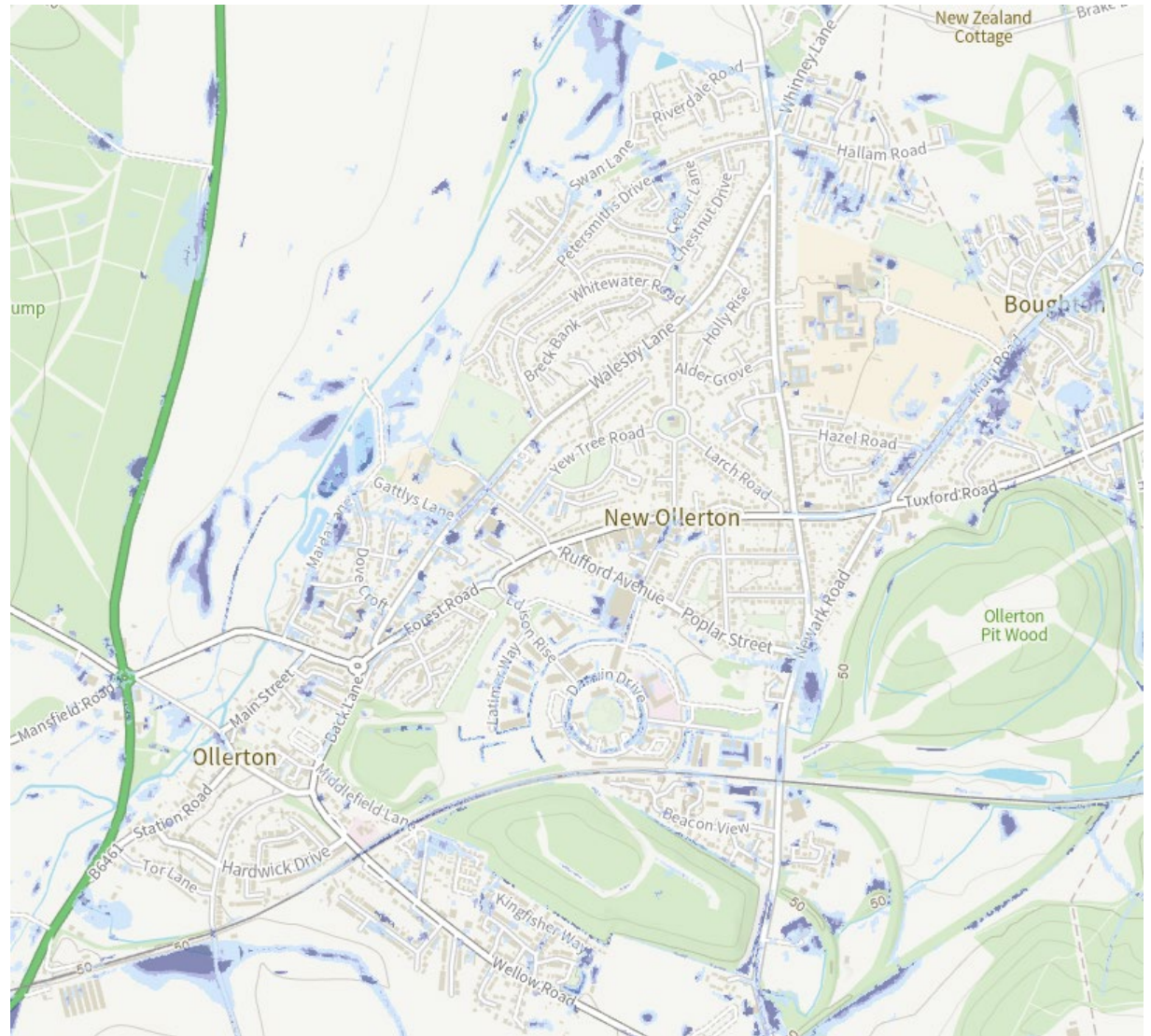
SW flooding

- Southwell

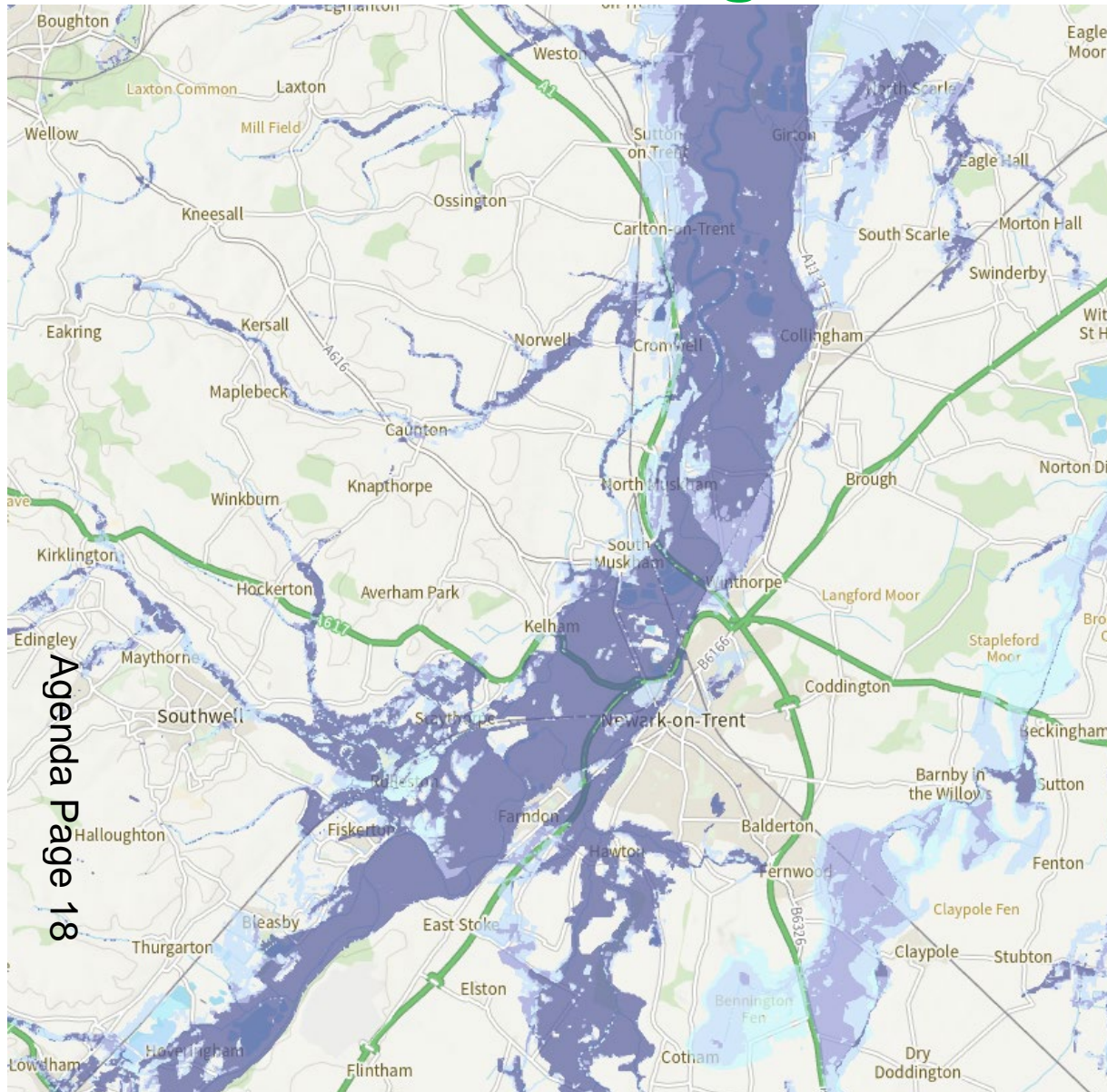


SW flooding

- Ollerton & Boughton



Main River flooding



Newark & surrounding area

Pre-submitted questions 5

- How does the agency assure itself that waste is adequately sorted and categorised so that recycling takes place appropriately?
 - Permitting & licensing
 - Inspections & audits
 - Enforcement powers
 - Monitoring performance

- Local Authorities

- LA's collect waste & submit recycling statistics to DEFRA for national monitoring

DEFRA

- Sets national recycling policy & oversees the 'simpler recycling' goal
 - Extended producer responsibility (packaging designed to be recyclable)

Pre-submitted questions 6

- How does the agency assure itself that waste is not shipped to other locations nationally and internationally for dumping?
- Export permits
- Inspections at ports
- Intel led investigations
- Collaboration with Police, HMRC, & international bodies – Europol
- Enforce strict rules - Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regs 2007 & EU Waste Shipment Regulation
 - Ensures waste is only exported for legitimate recycling or recovery, not dumping



Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee – 12 January 2026

Director Lead: Deborah Johnson, Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development

Lead Officer: Carl Burns, Business Manager – Transformation & Service Improvement

Report Summary	
Report Title	Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Review and Revised Strategy
Purpose of Report	To update the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee on the progress made through the review of our Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EEDI) processes and to introduce the revised EEDI Strategy for endorsement prior to it being presented to Cabinet for approval in January 2026
Recommendations	That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee: a) note the changes made to the Council’s EEDI approach; and b) endorse the revised strategy and recommend to Cabinet for approval.
Reason for Recommendation	A District Council must maintain a current Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EEDI) strategy to comply with legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, demonstrate its commitment to fairness and inclusion, and reduce risks of reputational and operational harm. It ensures policies and services are equitable, fostering trust and engagement across the community

1.0	<u>Background</u>
1.1	The Council has long delivered services in alignment with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring fair and inclusive access for all residents. However, a recent audit highlighted that while our service delivery meets statutory requirements, there were gaps in the supporting policies and procedures. In response, a new EEDI lead was appointed to undertake a comprehensive review of EEDI practices across the organisation. This review resulted in an action plan comprising 11 targeted actions, most of which have now been delivered. An overview and update on progress are provided in the report below and its appendices. Notably, one of the key actions was to review and develop the Council’s EEDI strategy. This work has been completed, and the revised strategy is presented at Appendix A for endorsement.

2.0	<u>The Revision of the EEDI Strategy</u>																																
2.1	<p>The Council adopted its most recent Equality & Diversity Strategy in 2021, which covered the period of 2021-2023. During this period, the landscape surrounding equality and diversity has evolved and there have been notable changes within our workforce. It is now appropriate to review our current approach and outline plans for Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EEDI) in Newark & Sherwood. Additionally, the Council has extended its support to specific groups, such as care leavers and armed forces personnel, aligning them with those who hold protected characteristics. The revised version on this strategy can be found at Appendix A.</p>																																
3.0	<u>The Development of the Action Plan</u>																																
3.1	<p>Following the audit report there were several actions that required delivery before we could consider ourselves fully compliant. The immediate priority was to establish an EEDI lead and a steering group to guide this area. This was quickly delivered and the steering group met for the first time in July 2025. The audit outcome was clear in its recommendations, and these were supplemented by a review undertaken by the EEDI lead, therefore an action plan was delivered for endorsement at this first meeting. The actions contained within this plan are now complete and an overview can be found at Appendix B.</p>																																
4.0	<u>Proposal/Options Considered</u>																																
4.1	<p>The Policy & Performance Improvement Committee are asked to:</p> <p>a. note the changes made to the Council’s EEDI approach; and</p> <p>b. endorse the revised strategy and recommend to Cabinet for approval.</p>																																
5.0	<p><u>Implications</u></p> <p>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.</p>																																
	<table><tr><th colspan="4">Implications Considered</th></tr><tr><th colspan="4">Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable</th></tr><tr><td>Financial</td><td>NA</td><td>Equality & Diversity</td><td>Yes</td></tr><tr><td>Human Resources</td><td>Yes</td><td>Human Rights</td><td>Yes</td></tr><tr><td>Legal</td><td>NA</td><td>Data Protection</td><td>NA</td></tr><tr><td>Digital & Cyber Security</td><td>Yes</td><td>Safeguarding</td><td>NA</td></tr><tr><td>Sustainability</td><td>NA</td><td>Crime & Disorder</td><td>NA</td></tr><tr><td>LGR</td><td>NA</td><td>Tenant Consultation</td><td>NA</td></tr></table>	Implications Considered				Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable				Financial	NA	Equality & Diversity	Yes	Human Resources	Yes	Human Rights	Yes	Legal	NA	Data Protection	NA	Digital & Cyber Security	Yes	Safeguarding	NA	Sustainability	NA	Crime & Disorder	NA	LGR	NA	Tenant Consultation	NA
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	<u>Human Resources and Training</u>																																
5.1	<p>NSDC has long demonstrated a strong commitment to delivering equality, diversity, and inclusion through its services and day-to-day operations. The introduction of the revised EEDI Strategy serves as an overarching document, designed to bring together and reinforce the robust equalities-focused approach that is already</p>																																

	<p>embedded within the organisation. Rather than introducing a new direction, the strategy consolidates existing good practice, ensuring that Human Resources continue to review and refine policies, staff training, and organisational culture in line with the Council's established values. This approach will support the ongoing delivery of targeted training programmes and enhanced monitoring and reporting.</p>
5.2	<p>HR will remain central in supporting managers and staff to further embed these principles into everyday working practices, thereby maintaining and strengthening NSDC's inclusive and equitable workplace environment.</p>
	<p><u>Digital and Cyber Security</u></p>
5.3	<p>NSDC is dedicated to ensuring accessibility across all its digital platforms, recognising that effective digital and cyber security measures must be inclusive and user-friendly for everyone. Through its digital strategy, the Council actively seeks to ensure that no customer is left behind by removing barriers and promoting equal access to online services, resources, and information. The revised EEDI Strategy further strengthens this commitment by aligning organisational policies and practices with the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion. By consolidating existing good practice and maintaining a strong focus on accessible digital solutions, NSDC ensures that its digital initiatives are developed and maintained with the needs of all users in mind, particularly those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. The ongoing revision our website will go further in ensuring accessibility for our residents and will be delivered in 2026. This approach not only supports compliance with legal requirements but also reinforces NSDC's values of fairness and inclusivity throughout its digital transformation journey.</p>
	<p><u>Equality, Diversity & Human Rights</u></p>
5.4	<p>The revised EEDI Strategy at NSDC positively impacts the human rights of Newark & Sherwood residents by embedding the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion into every aspect of the Council's operations. By consolidating and strengthening existing good practice, the strategy aims to ensure that policies, services, and digital platforms are accessible and fair for all, regardless of background. This inclusive approach promotes equal treatment, safeguards dignity and supports the removal of barriers that might otherwise prevent individuals from fully participating in community life. As a result, the rights of residents to access information, receive services and enjoy a supportive environment are protected and enhanced, reflecting NSDC's ongoing commitment to upholding human rights and fostering a culture of respect and fairness throughout the district.</p>
<p>Background Papers and Published Documents</p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit report - A&G Committee on Wednesday, 2nd July, 2025 - item 5 appendix b • Equality-Diversity-Strategy-2021-23.pdf 	

Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025–2029

Newark and Sherwood District Council
Strategy Document
December 2025

Approved by: Cabinet	Date: 20 January 2026
Maintained by: EEDI Lead	
Next review date: January 2028	

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1. Foreword

We are proud to present our Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) Strategy for 2026–2029. At Newark and Sherwood District Council, our aim is simple: we want everyone who lives in, works in, or visits our district to feel welcomed, respected, and supported. The Equality Act 2010 guides us to regularly review our policies and practices so that every employee, resident, customer and elected member is treated fairly and without bias and this strategy document illustrates how we will achieve this aim.

Fairness matters to us. That is why we work hard to make sure everyone has equal access to our services and employment opportunities. By bringing all equality issues into one clear strategy, we can better build them into everything we do—from shaping policies to delivering services that work for everyone. Our approach is guided by the Equalities Framework for Local Government (September 2021), which has helped us focus on what really counts:

- Getting to know our communities and their unique needs
- Showing leadership, building strong partnerships, and demonstrating Council-wide commitment
- Actively engaging with our communities
- Delivering responsive services and excellent customer care
- Supporting and developing a skilled and dedicated workforce

We understand that people’s experiences are shaped by many factors—including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. By listening, learning, and growing together, we seek to make sure these differences are understood and valued across our community, both individually and collectively.

We are committed to raising awareness and championing equality and diversity, not only within the Council but throughout the district as a whole in the services we deliver.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Peacock'.

Councillor Paul Peacock
Leader of the Council



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Robinson'.

John Robinson
Chief Executive

2. Executive Summary

This strategy outlines Newark and Sherwood District Council's commitment to promoting equality, advancing equity, and fostering diversity and inclusion across all services, policies, and employment practices. Spanning 2026–2029, it builds upon our current strategy, aligns with national legislation and frameworks, and responds to the latest local demographic data. The Strategy has been updated to align with the Supreme Court's 2024 ruling.

3. Introduction and Legal Context

The strategy is aimed at those who live, work in and visit the district, as well as employees and elected councilors of the Council and is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act') came into force in October 2010 and legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in the wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthen protection in some situations.

The Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of 'protected characteristics'. Circumstances in which age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation are the grounds upon which discrimination is based is unlawful. Further detail on these characteristics can be found in appendix A.

As part of the Act, public authorities must comply with the public sector equality duty (the Equality Duty). Equality duty requires public authorities to consider the potential impact of their policies and decisions on individuals protected under the Act. This duty aims to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations across all protected characteristics.

In 2024, the Supreme Court issued a significant ruling on sex and gender identity, this strategy has been developed in accordance with that ruling.

As an employer and service provider, Newark and Sherwood District Council is dedicated to having due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations through all its duties. This strategy outlines our continued commitment to equality.

4. Community Profile

The latest census data tells us that as of mid-2022, Newark and Sherwood District has an estimated population of approximately 125,089, with a growth rate of 1.4% from mid-2021 to mid-2022. The demographic composition is predominantly White, accounting for 96% of the residents, while the remaining 4% are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The district's average life expectancy stands at 81 years, and the median age reflects an ageing population at 45.2 years whilst individuals of working age (16-64) constitute 60.2% of the population. The gender ratio is 97.2 males per 100 females.

Christianity is the most practiced religion and is represented by 51% of the population. The primary language spoken is English, with 95.9% of the residents using it as their main language.

Information about our community profile helps the Council to understand the diversity and different needs within the district and helps the Council to inform the [Community Plan](#).

Key demographic characteristics include:

Age: Median age of 45.2 years with those 85+ making up 2.8% of the population.

Sex: Females make up 50.7% of the population whilst Males make up 49.3%.

Legal Partnership status: 47.7% of the population are married or in a registered civil partnership, 32.6% have never married, 10.4% have been divorced, whilst 7.1% have been widowed.

Ethnic group: 96.3% of the population are classified as 'white' whereas the remaining 3.3% are made up of Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (1.5%), Asian (1.1%), Black (0.7%), Other ethnic groups (0.7%).

Religion: 51% identified as a 'Christian' and are the most represented, 'No religion' makes up 41.2%, whilst the largest of the other religious groups identified as 'Muslim' (0.6%).

Proficiency in English: 95.9% informed that their main language was English whilst the remainder spoke English as a second language, can speak 'very well': 1.6%, well: 1.7%, 'cannot speak well': 0.7% with 0.1% suggesting that they 'cannot speak English.'

Disability: 19.9% of the population identified as 'Disabled under the equality act' whilst the remaining 80.1% identified as 'not disabled under the equality act.'

This demographic data highlights a community that is generally older, less ethnically diverse than national averages, with increasing numbers of people reporting disabilities or health-related limitations. These trends have significant implications for accessibility, service design, and inclusion efforts across the district.

[*Office for National Statistics - Census 2021](#)

5. Equality in the delivery of our services

Equality impact assessments

The Public Sector Equality Duty 2023 mandates conducting Equality Impact Assessments and we are obligated by law to demonstrate that we have given due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations. Practically, this necessitates that equality considerations are evidenced in our decision-making processes and policies.

Potential impacts on equality must be evaluated prior to making any significant decisions and should be integrated into routine policymaking, business planning, and other decision-making frameworks. This is especially pertinent when making challenging financial decisions. If there is a proposal to cease, reduce, or modify a service, it is imperative to substantiate this with relevant evidence.

The Equality Assessment Guidance is accessible to officers via the intranet, and the EEDI Team is available to provide direct support to service areas and projects to assist them in gathering and interpreting equalities evidence.

Governance and Monitoring

The Council has a requirement to publish equality information at least once a year to show how we have complied with the equality duty. The Council recognises this also makes good business sense as it can help people assess the Council's performance on equality, the impact our policies and practices have had, tell us who is and isn't using our services; understand why our services may not meet their needs and help us to improve the delivery of our services by identify any data gaps and address any issues. Any monitoring undertaken must be proportionate and relevant and of benefit to our communities and this is considered when developing our Key Performance Indicators in this area. Our workforce achievements are celebrated through our quarterly performance reporting and the completion of mandatory equalities awareness training is monitored by business managers and the Learning Development team to ensure compliance.

Additionally, a Gender Pay Gap (GPG) report is presented annually to the Full Council and this report is also available to the public via our website. GPG legislation, effective since April 2017, requires employers with over 250 staff to annually report differences in average hourly and median pay between male and female employees, as well as gender distribution across pay bands. While GPG reporting highlights disparities in overall earnings between men and women, it is distinct from equal pay law, which mandates equal compensation for equal work. Notably, bonus-related pay gap reporting is not applicable in this context, as NSDC does not issue bonuses.

Procurement and Commissioning

The Council provides a wide range of services to residents and businesses in the district. In some cases, these are provided directly by the Council, in other cases by our partners and contractors. When a supplier provides goods, services or works on our behalf, we will ensure the equality obligations are part of the terms of a contract so that we know they will monitor the impact on service users and those they employ. The duty to ensure the Council complies with the requirements of the Equality Act remains with the Council for any services delivered on our behalf.

Specifically, we will:

- Inform all potential contractors and service providers about this strategy.
- Ensure contractors and service providers have non-discriminatory policies and deliver accessible goods and services appropriately.
- Ensure equal opportunities for all parties to bid on and be awarded Council contracts.
- Oversee contracts and service arrangements to ensure compliance with equality commitments.

Housing

Delivering on the Council's housing objectives requires a joined-up, evidence-based approach that puts inclusion at the heart of policy and practice. The Council aims to deliver these by embedding equality considerations into every stage, from needs assessment to service delivery and monitoring, ensuring that our housing offer supports the wellbeing and potential of all residents, especially those most at risk of disadvantage.

Specifically, we will:

- Regularly update local housing needs assessments using the latest demographic and socio-economic data. Pay particular attention to groups with protected characteristics, including age, disability, ethnicity, and carers, as well as those experiencing health inequalities or rural isolation

- Engage with underrepresented and vulnerable groups to understand barriers to accessing decent, affordable housing. Use targeted surveys, focus groups, and consultation exercises to capture lived experiences
- Embed Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) into all new housing policies, programmes, and procurement decisions. Ensure EIAs are completed before any significant changes to housing services or allocation criteria
- Review and adapt housing allocation policies to ensure they do not inadvertently disadvantage any protected group.

6. Equality in employment

The Council remains committed to fostering a diverse workforce and providing equal opportunities in employment, recruitment, selection, training, and development. Our goal is to maintain a workplace free from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment of any kind, where all employees are treated with respect.

Employment policies

The Council has implemented a comprehensive set of policies for our staff and prospective employees. These policies are designed to support our staff and provide clear guidance regarding expectations and entitlements as employees. We will continue to review and proactively promote and support equality within the workforce. This includes efforts to eliminate bullying and harassment, address discrimination, ensure pay equity, and create a flexible work-life balance.

To further support the implementation of this strategy, additional guidance documents focusing on specific aspects of equality are available and may be updated as needed throughout the life of this strategy.

Equality training

Equality training is provided for staff to inform them of their rights and responsibilities. All managers will receive regular training on equalities matters related to employment and there is an expectation that all councilors will attend Equality training delivered by our Democratic services and Human Resources officers. Equality issues are a fundamental part of our training and development programmes, regardless of whether internal or external trainers are used. Additionally, tailored equality training to meet the needs of specific services will be encouraged, especially for services engaging with external customers or where there is significant engagement with protected groups.

The Council is committed to providing equal access to training and development for all staff and where required bespoke sessions are delivered.

Internal communications

Effective internal communication is essential to embedding equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EEDI) across Newark and Sherwood District Council. To ensure all employees are informed, engaged, and empowered to contribute to the EEDI agenda, the Council will implement the following measures:

- **Provide a dedicated EEDI hub on the staff intranet**
A centralised area will be created on the staff intranet to host EEDI resources, updates, and guidance. This will include access to policies, Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) templates, training opportunities, and progress reports. The hub will serve as a go-to space for staff to stay informed and involved in the Council's EEDI journey.

- **Introduce EEDI Champions**

EEDI Champions will be appointed across departments to act as local advocates for inclusion. They will support colleagues in understanding EEDI principles, promote inclusive practices, and help cascade key messages from the EEDI Lead and Operations Group. Champions will also play a role in gathering feedback and identifying barriers to inclusion.

- **Improve access to and understanding of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

Employees will be supported in using EIAs through clearer guidance and simplified templates. These resources will be made easily accessible via the intranet, with practical examples and step-by-step instructions to help staff understand how to apply EEDI considerations in their work.

- **Signpost EEDI training via Ambition Academy**

The Council will ensure that all employees are aware of relevant EEDI training courses available through Ambition Academy. These will include mandatory modules for managers and councillors, as well as tailored sessions for teams working directly with the public or protected groups. Training will be promoted regularly through internal communications channels.

By embedding these internal communications mechanisms, the Council aims to foster a culture of transparency, shared responsibility, and continuous learning in support of its EEDI commitments.

7. Consultation and engagement

The Council aims to ensure that individuals accessing Council services, whether as residents, visitors, customers, or employees, are well informed about local issues. They should have the ability to participate and influence local decision-making and provide feedback on the Council's policies, procedures, service delivery, and collaboration with partner organisations.

To ensure consistency, the Council has a separate Community Engagement Strategy 2022 – 2027. The following principles set out how we are going to make certain that our engagement activity is flexible, focused, and appropriate for the diverse needs of the communities.

- We will co-ordinate our engagement programme so residents, or other key stakeholder groups, don't feel over-consulted.
- We will use the most appropriate methods to suit the audience, allowing engagement with a range of groups and using resources effectively.
- We will use plain English and language that is accessible to all.
- We will share how you can find out the results of any consultation before it starts.
- We will adhere to GDPR legislation, only use feedback/data within the Council and not give access to anyone else (unless clearly rationalised and communicated).
- We will find appropriate community locations across the district that are accessible when completing face to face activities.
- We will work with individuals to overcome any barriers to participation so they can be involved in areas of interest.
- We will work with underrepresented groups to ensure their voices are heard. We will treat responses with respect and welcome feedback that can help us improve.

- Where feedback includes a service request for us, we will forward this on to the relevant team for action. If the request needs directing to another agency, we will aim to ask permission to share this service request on your behalf.
- We will constantly review, revise and update consultation exercises to ensure we learn from what we do while keeping up to date with best practice and new consultation techniques and software.

8. Strategic Objectives and Action Plan

Newark and Sherwood District Council is dedicated to promoting equality, equity, diversity, and inclusion within the community. The Council's [Community Plan](#) 2023-2027 outlines key actions to support these objectives, including breaking down barriers to opportunity, increasing the supply of affordable and decent housing, and improving health and wellbeing, particularly in communities with lower life expectancy. The Council will also focus on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, celebrating and promoting the diversity of Newark and Sherwood's heritage, culture, and community spirit, and protecting and enhancing green spaces. Additionally, this EEDI Strategy reaffirms the Council's commitment to meeting the duties placed upon it by equality legislation, ensuring that all new policies and procedures undergo an equalities impact assessment before implementation. By fostering partnerships and engaging with the community, the Council aims to create an inclusive environment where all individuals can thrive.

The way in which the Council embeds an ethos of equality, equity, diversity and inclusion is reflected across a wide range of strategic priorities and ambitions, and is consistently woven into the fabric of the Council's work through the following commitments:

- **Breaking down barriers to opportunity:** Implementing initiatives to enable residents and businesses to prosper and fulfil their potential.
- **Increasing the supply of housing:** Focusing on providing decent homes that residents can afford to buy and rent, as well as improving housing standards.
- **Improving health and wellbeing:** Emphasising support for communities with lower levels of life expectancy.
- **Promoting diversity:** Celebrating and promoting the diversity of Newark and Sherwood's heritage, culture, and community spirit.
- **Protecting green spaces:** Reducing the impact of climate change and protecting and enhancing green spaces.

To measure the success of these initiatives, the Council has a number of measurable objectives. These Key Performance Indicators are embedded into the Council's performance framework and are reported quarterly to the Senior Leadership Team, Policy and Performance Improvement Committee and Cabinet.

9. Service Delivery

Collecting information on the community profile of the district helps the Council to ensure that service delivery can be tailored to meet the needs of groups and individuals. The Council recognises the importance of equity within service delivery to meet individual needs. Engaging with people in the district enables the Council to work flexibly and responsively to minimise inequality and disadvantage, particularly in relation to the protected characteristics of people accessing the Council's services. Through this Strategy, the Council aims to embed the principles of EEDI into all service delivery.

10. Additional commitments

Newark and Sherwood District Council is committed to supporting veterans of the armed forces, carers and carers leavers, recognising their unique contributions and needs within the community. Through its endorsement of the Armed Forces Covenant, NSDC pledges to ensure that veterans and their families are treated with fairness and respect, facilitating access to housing, employment, and tailored support services. Additionally, the Council's Carers Policy outlines targeted measures to identify, value, and support carers, helping them access resources and opportunities that acknowledge their vital role. These additional commitments reinforce NSDC's broader EEDI strategy by striving to remove barriers, reduce disadvantage, and foster an inclusive environment for all residents.

11. Risk

The principal risks associated with Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) for Newark and Sherwood District Council include the following:

- Legal exposure from non-compliance with relevant legislation,
- Potential reputational damage due to perceived or actual shortcomings, and
- Operational challenges resulting from a lack of workforce diversity.

Additionally, financial consequences may arise from litigation, compensation, and increased recruitment costs. Social risks involve the possibility of exclusion and reduced cohesion within the community, while compliance failures could lead to regulatory scrutiny and sanctions. Collectively, these risks highlight the importance of robust EEDI practices to safeguard the Council's legal standing, reputation, workforce effectiveness, and social responsibilities. The EEDI Steering group mitigates these risks through regular monitoring and scrutiny, reviewing EIAs, monitoring performance and listening to customer feedback. The group meets quarterly and completes a risk workshop with the Safety and Risk Manager contributing to the overall strategic risk management of the Council.

12. Legislative Framework

This strategy sets out the measures we are taking to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation, including:

- **Human Rights Act 1998**

The Human Rights Act 1998 is a significant piece of legislation in the United Kingdom that incorporates the rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic British law. It enables individuals to defend their rights in UK courts and compels public organizations, including the government, police, and local councils, to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity, and respect. This Act ensures that the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals, such as the right to life, freedom from torture, and freedom of expression, are protected and upheld within the UK legal framework.

- **Data Protection Act 1998 and Data Protection Act 2018**

The Data Protection Act 1998 was a landmark legislation in the UK that governed the processing of personal data. It established key principles for handling personal information, ensuring that data is processed fairly, lawfully, and transparently. The Act gave individuals the right to access their data and required organisations to protect personal information from misuse and unauthorised access. The updated Data Protection Act 2018 modernized data protection laws in the UK, aligning them with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It strengthened the rights of

individuals over their personal data, introducing stricter regulations on consent, data breaches, and the right to be forgotten. This Act ensures that personal data is handled with greater accountability and transparency, providing robust protection for individuals' privacy in the digital age.

- **Employment Act 2008**

The Employment Act 2008 was introduced to simplify and improve the system of workplace dispute resolution, ensuring fair treatment for all employees. The Act reformed dispute resolution procedures, including the repeal of statutory dispute resolution procedures and the introduction of a new, less formal approach to managing disputes. The Act also strengthened the penalties for non-compliance with employment law, providing greater protection for workers against unfair treatment and promoting a more harmonious work environment. This legislation supports the principles of equality and fairness in the workplace, aligning with our broader strategy to uphold the rights of all individuals under the Equality Act 2010.

- **The Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018**

The Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 require public sector websites and mobile applications to be accessible to all users, especially those with disabilities, by meeting WCAG 2.1 AA standards, publishing an accessibility statement, and regularly reviewing accessibility. These regulations align with the EU Web Accessibility Directive and support equality and non-discrimination by ensuring inclusive access to digital services.

- **The Public Sector Equality Duty 2023**

The Public Sector Equality Duty 2023 (PSED) requires UK public sector organisations to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. By incorporating equality considerations into daily operations and decision-making, they ensure fair treatment and inclusiveness. The Duty mandates conducting Equality Impact Assessments, monitoring, and reporting on outcomes to demonstrate compliance. Ultimately, the PSED 2023 reinforces the commitment to creating a fair and equal society where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

- **The Gender Recognition Act 2004**

The Gender Recognition Act 2004 allows transgender individuals in the UK to change their legal gender, providing a framework for obtaining a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC). It is a significant piece of legislation in that enables individuals to legally change their gender. It came into effect on 4 April 2005 and was introduced in response to rulings from the European Court of Human Rights, which highlighted the need for legal recognition of gender identity.

13. Appendices

A: Protected characteristics

B: EIA template

C: Glossary

Appendix A: Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect individuals from unfair treatment and promote a fair and equal society. It identifies several protected characteristics, ensuring that individuals are not discriminated against based on these attributes. The key protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 include:

Protected Characteristic	Description
Age	<p>(1) In relation to the protected characteristic of age:</p> <p>(a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular age group.</p> <p>(b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same age group.</p> <p>(2) a reference to an age group is a reference to a group of persons defined by reference to age, whether by reference to a particular age or to a range of ages.</p>
Disability	<p>(1) A person (P) has a disability if:</p> <p>(a) P has a physical or mental impairment, and</p> <p>(b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on P's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</p> <p>(2) A reference to a disabled person is a reference to a person who has a disability.</p> <p>(3) In relation to the protected characteristic of disability:</p> <p>(a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person who has a particular disability.</p> <p>(b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who have the same disability.</p>
Gender Reassignment	<p>(1) A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.</p>

	<p>(2)A reference to a transsexual person is a reference to a person who has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.</p> <p>(3) In relation to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment:</p> <p>(a)a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a transsexual person.</p> <p>(b)a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to transsexual persons.</p>
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>(1)A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.</p> <p>(2) In relation to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership:</p> <p>(a)a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person who is married or is a civil partner.</p> <p>(b)a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are married or are civil partners.</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>(1)A person has the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership if the person is married or is a civil partner.</p> <p>(2) In relation to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership:</p> <p>(a)a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person who is married or is a civil partner.</p> <p>(b)a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are married or are civil partners.</p>
Race	<p>(1) Race includes:</p> <p>(a)colour.</p> <p>(b)nationality.</p> <p>(c)ethnic or national origins.</p> <p>(2) In relation to the protected characteristic of race:</p> <p>(a)a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular racial group.</p>

	<p>(b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same racial group.</p> <p>(3) A racial group is a group of persons defined by reference to race; and a reference to a person's racial group is a reference to a racial group into which the person falls.</p> <p>(4) The fact that a racial group comprises two or more distinct racial groups does not prevent it from constituting a particular racial group.</p>
Religion or Belief	<p>(1) Religion means any religion and a reference to religion includes a reference to a lack of religion.</p> <p>(2) Belief means any religious or philosophical belief and a reference to belief includes a reference to a lack of belief.</p> <p>(3) In relation to the protected characteristic of religion or belief:</p> <p>(a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person of a particular religion or belief.</p> <p>(b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are of the same religion or belief.</p>
Sex	<p>In relation to the protected characteristic of sex:</p> <p>(a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a man or to a woman.</p> <p>(b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons of the same sex.</p>
Sexual Orientation	<p>(1) Sexual orientation means a person's sexual orientation towards:</p> <p>(a) persons of the same sex, (b) persons of the opposite sex, or (c) persons of either sex.</p> <p>(2) In relation to the protected characteristic of sexual orientation:</p> <p>(a) a reference to a person who has a particular protected characteristic is a reference to a person who is of a particular sexual orientation.</p> <p>(b) a reference to persons who share a protected characteristic is a reference to persons who are of the same sexual orientation.</p>

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 policies, procedures, functions or services 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
- whether any adverse impacts are identified
- what 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 policy / procedure / function / service	
Lead Officer and others undertaking this assessment?	
Date EIA started	
Date EIA completed	

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

What are the aims and objectives of the policies, procedures, functions, and services

Who is affected by these policies, procedures, functions, or services and what is the intended change or outcome for them?

(i.e. staff / service users or other stakeholders)

Which groups have been consulted with as part of the creation or review of this policy, procedure, function, or service

(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)

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

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

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 EIAs, demographic information, anecdotal or other evidence

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.e. adjustment to the policy, procedure etc – the action log below should be completed to provide further information)
Age			
Disability			
Gender Reassignment			
Marriage / Civil Partnership			
Pregnancy / Maternity			
Race			
Religion / Belief			
Sex			
Sexual Orientation			
Other groups which may be impacted? (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, socio-economic, health inequalities, rural isolation, veterans, care leavers)			

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 Impact	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date

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

6. EVALUATION DECISION

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

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed new service / policy / plan or strategy or the proposed change could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		
Final Decision	Tick	Include any explanation/justification required
No barriers identified; therefore, activity will proceed		

Stop the policy or practice because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
Adapt or change the policy in a way that will eliminate the bias		
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, procedure etc (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this policy, procedure etc knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision		

Did you consult with an Equalities Ally prior to completing this assessment? Yes/No

7. SIGN OFF

Name and job title of person completing this EIA	
Officer Responsible for implementing the change to policy, procedure, function, and service etc.	
Business Manager	
Date Agreed <i>(by Business Manager)</i>	
Date of Review <i>(if required)</i>	

Appendix C: Glossary

- **Discrimination:** Unfair or unequal treatment of an individual or group based on certain characteristics, such as race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or age.
- **Diversity:** The presence and inclusion of different types of people, recognising and valuing differences in backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.
- **Equality:** Ensuring all individuals have equal opportunities and are not treated less favourably because of protected characteristics.
- **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA):** A process to identify and address the potential impacts of policies, procedures, or decisions on different groups, particularly those with protected characteristics.
- **Harassment:** Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
- **Protected Characteristic:** A specific attribute protected by the Equality Act 2010, including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- **Reasonable Adjustment:** Changes or modifications made to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by disabled people in the workplace or in accessing services.
- **Sexual Orientation:** A person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of a different sex, or persons of either sex.
- **Victimisation:** Treating someone unfairly because they have made or supported a complaint about discrimination or harassment.

2025 EEDI Action Plan

APPENDIX B

Key recommendations following a review in June 2025	NSDC Actions												
<p>Recommendation 1: Establish a steering group</p> <p>tiaa's audit noted the absence of an established steering group as a '<i>priority 1 – fundamental control issue on which action should be taken immediately.</i>'</p> <p>The steering group were established with the following members: Carl Burns (EEDI lead) Suzanne Shead (Housing/Dir) Lisa Ingram (Legal/MO) Deborah Johnson (Cus Serv, Org Dev/Dir) Sarah Lawrie (HR) Sarah Lacey (Comms) Ash Kitchen (Env Serv/Brunel Dr) Richard Bates (Risk)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering group established involving representatives from across the Council. The groups terms of reference were approved in the first meeting which was held in July 2025 and it was established as a reoccurring quarterly meeting The steering group ensures EEDI policies align with broader goals by overseeing their implementation and monitoring. It provides a platform for staff input, raises awareness of EEDI issues, and identifies improvement areas. <p>Lead Officer(s): EEDI Lead (Business Manager Transformation & Service Improvement)</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>												
<p>Recommendation 2: Establish operations group</p> <p>On receipt of the notes from the tiaa audit a desk top review was carried out by the EEDI lead and an initial action plan was developed. In order to further develop and deliver on the action plan an operations group was established. This group was born from nominations made by the steering group at their first meeting and consists of the officers listed below:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Carl Burns (Project/EEDI lead)</td><td>Emma Wrigley – (Comms)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Mark Randle (Transformation/Org)</td><td>Richard Bates – (H&S)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Keeley Asher (HR)</td><td>Lisa Ingram – (Legal)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Helen Ellison (Health & Wellbeing)</td><td>Stuart Anstey (Env Serv)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Alexander Gamage – (ICT)</td><td>Helen Bayne – (Dems Serv)</td></tr> <tr> <td>Tracey Streeter (Cus Serv)</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Carl Burns (Project/EEDI lead)	Emma Wrigley – (Comms)	Mark Randle (Transformation/Org)	Richard Bates – (H&S)	Keeley Asher (HR)	Lisa Ingram – (Legal)	Helen Ellison (Health & Wellbeing)	Stuart Anstey (Env Serv)	Alexander Gamage – (ICT)	Helen Bayne – (Dems Serv)	Tracey Streeter (Cus Serv)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The operations group was established involving representatives from across the Council. An action plan was developed by the group in their first meeting which was in August 2025 Actions were assigned to officers in relevant areas across the council and were monitored via a shared area and collaborative channel on Microsoft Teams 3 meetings were held with a mix of face to face and hybrid. <p>Lead Officer(s): EEDI Lead</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
Carl Burns (Project/EEDI lead)	Emma Wrigley – (Comms)												
Mark Randle (Transformation/Org)	Richard Bates – (H&S)												
Keeley Asher (HR)	Lisa Ingram – (Legal)												
Helen Ellison (Health & Wellbeing)	Stuart Anstey (Env Serv)												
Alexander Gamage – (ICT)	Helen Bayne – (Dems Serv)												
Tracey Streeter (Cus Serv)													

<p>Recommendation 3: Review the existing EEDI strategy</p> <p>tiaa's audit found that The EEDI Strategy was related to the period 2021-2023. (2012-16 and 2016-20 were available from the internet) and it was confirmed during the audit that the Strategy has not been reviewed/updated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full review of the Strategy has been completed and is presented for endorsement • Key changes include bringing the data displayed up to date using the latest census data, inclusion of additional commitments such as Armed Forces and Carers, revised sections on our services and continued commitments to equality in our workforce <p>Lead Officer(s): EEDI Lead</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: Risk</p> <p>Throughout the review period it was noted by the risk manager that the current status of this agenda could represent a risk to the Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk workshop conducted. • OR created which will be added onto the live risk register and reviewed by the steering group quarterly <p>Lead Officer(s): Safety & Risk Manager EEDI Lead BM HR & Training</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: Review the Council's buildings and assess their accessibility against good practice</p> <p>The group worked closely with colleagues from Corporate Property in the review of our buildings across the district. Each building was assessed against the following criteria: Toilet facilities, level access, doorway width, adequate access for wheeled visitors, lifts and fire exit plans for those requiring assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All buildings reviewed physically or by liaising with site managers • Key information captured and reviewed by the operations group and estates team • Any gaps have been captured in the OR for further mitigation as required <p>Lead Officer(s): TSIO Org Development Estate manager</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>

<p>Recommendation 6: Review toilet facilities across the estate following the Supreme court ruling</p> <p>Due to a recent ruling by the Supreme Court, it became necessary to review the toilet facilities across the Council's estate. This was conducted by members of the operations group working closely with corporate property colleagues who delivered the changes required to the signage on our facilities. Colleagues were also informed of the changes by our comms team both electronically and via posters in satellite locations where laptop access is limited.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A full review of the effected facilities was conducted by the corporate property team • Alternative signage was identified and sourced • All signage was updated in October 2025 <p>Lead Officer(s): EEDI TSIO Org Dev Estate Manager Senior Comms Officer (digital & External)</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: Conduct a full review of the Council's website</p> <p>The website was reviewed and deemed out of date and unsuitable. The main issues centred on out of date and inaccurate information. Additionally, there was also concerns about the accessibility of the webpage and this has been picked up in a wider project which aims to deliver a new platform in 2026.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EEDI webpage has been updated within the accessibility constraints applied by the current system • All information displayed is now current and up to date <p>Lead Officer(s): EEDI Lead Senior Comms Officer (digital & External)</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: Conduct a full review of the Council's EEDI intranet page to ensure it is accurate and useful for all staff</p> <p>The existing intranet page was bland and included only a list of associated policies. Work is ongoing to develop this area so that it is a useful area for all staff which holds information on equalities guidance such as templates for EIAs, support and areas to celebrate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site has now been created and is being developed • The aim of this site is for it to be a source of information for all colleagues and it will hold the latest information on the strategy as well as EIAs and guidance on how to complete them. • It will be monitored and updated regularly by the EEDI lead and our comms team to maximise the benefits to staff. <p>Lead Officer(s): Data & Digital Innovation team leader</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>

<p>Recommendation 9: Review EEDI related performance Indicators and update accordingly</p> <p>The audit team noted that the Council’s KPIs should be developed. A review of these has been completed and it has been confirmed that a suite of KPIs is available and are already reported on. Additional PIs have been added to the suite such as training completion and these will be managed as Mis by the BM HR & Trg</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated PIs have been collated and discussed • KPIs such as those used in the gender pay gap review are reported annually to Full Council • Additional Mis on staff training completion will be monitored via directorate meetings <p>Lead Officer(s): EEDI Lead BM HR & Training</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: Explore an option to monitor resident complaints for equality related impacts.</p> <p>The group have discussed an option to mark any complaints that clearly indicate a concern associated with equalities. This option will see Customer Services colleagues marking the complaint via a simple tick box before assigning to the respondent. If successful this would then be entirely internal facing only and be monitored by the BM Customer Services and the EEDI Lead.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option is at discussion stage only • The EEDI lead has gained endorsement from the Data Protection team • Further technical explorations are being carried out by the Cus Serv team leader • Aim is solely for internal use and will assist in performance development should any trends emerge <p>Lead Officer(s): EEDI Lead Customer Services team leader BM Customer Services</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: Review the EEDI training offer for both staff and elected members</p> <p>A review of the e-learning training has been conducted and it is agreed that the current offer is suitable. Currently, there are two main courses available which aim to raise EEDI awareness, these are separate courses for staff and managers. These courses have now been made mandatory for all staff and completion will be monitored through that process. Additionally, there are several linked courses that are offered to all staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All associated e-learning training as been reviewed • The councillor development group has been encouraged to include Equalities training in their training program for 2026 <p>Lead Officer(s): EEDI Lead Democratic services officer</p> <p>Status: Complete</p>

<p>Recommendation 11: Review the current Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) document and improve guidance on completion and training</p> <p>A review of the existing form EIA document was carried out and it was refreshed inline with good practice across the sector. Additionally, I have reached out to a trainer who will provide training on EIAs for both those completing the assessment and those reviewing their content. This is pending</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIA form refreshed and updated • Guidance notes created • Training support requested which will be financed through the L&D budget <p>Lead Officer(s): Senior HR Officer</p> <p>Status: Ongoing</p>
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Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee – 12 January 2026

Director Lead: Deborah Johnson, Director - Customer Services & Organisational Development

Lead Officer: Jill Baker, Business Manager - Customer Services
Carl Burns, Business Manager - Transformation & Service Improvement
Rowan Bosworth-Brown, Senior Transformation & Service Improvement Officer
Tracey Allen, Research & Development Officer.

Contact: Performance@Newark-Sherwooddc.gov.uk

Report Summary	
Report Title	Customer Feedback – Half Year 1 - 2025/2026
Purpose of Report	The customer feedback report is an opportunity for the Committee to see what complaints are being submitted across the organisation. It gives an opportunity to understand how the customer is receiving the services we deliver and is a form of performance management to inform how well we are doing and where we can improve.
Recommendations	That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee note the Customer Feedback Half 1 report.
Reason for Recommendation	To enable the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee to review the customer feedback received between April and September 2025.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council values resident feedback on services received and has a robust customer feedback policy to capture, investigate, respond and learn from the insights it gives. This policy involves a two-stage complaint process, with the opportunity for complainants to escalate to the relevant Ombudsman if unsatisfied after Stage 2.
- 1.2 Feedback, both positive and negative, is crucial for identifying areas needing improvement and preventing larger issues. Significant work has been done in the past year on complaints policy, procedure and staff training. Key developments include comprehensive training for complaint handlers, a complaints toolkit, complaint response templates and adjustments to accommodate new Housing Ombudsman response times.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee review the Customer Feedback Half 1 2025/26 report.

2.2 This report is shared with SLT and then Business Managers before being presented to the Committees below. This enables Directors and Business Managers to consider if there are any themes and actions, they need to undertake to improve the services they provide.

- Member Champion for Complaints
- Policy & Performance Improvement Committee
- Housing 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	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.

None

1st Half Year Report

April - September

2025/26

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NEWARK &
SHERWOOD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK



Customer Feedback

Our Customer Feedback Policy has been formally adopted and agreed and is designed to cover the requirement of both the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman. We are bound by the requirements both Ombudsmen set out which are clear about the expectations on us in how we deal with complaints.

One of the key things that both Ombudsmen expect that we report on and use all the feedback from customers, especially complaints, to improve our services.

This report is shared with:

- Senior Leadership Team and Business Managers
- Member Champion for complaints
- Housing Assurance Board / Tenant Engagement Board
- Policy and Performance Improvement Committee

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Overview of Feedback](#)
3. [Complaints – Stage 1](#)
 - 3.1 [No of Stage 1 complaints received](#)
 - 3.2 [Complaints by Business Unit](#)
 - 3.3 [Complaints by category](#)
 - 3.4 [Processing times](#)
 - 3.5 [Outcome of complaints](#)
4. [Complaints – Stage 2](#)
5. [Ombudsman complaints](#)
6. [Suggestions](#)
7. [Compliments \(Praise\)](#)
8. [Putting it Right](#)
9. [Customer Satisfaction](#)

1. Introduction

The Council is committed to listening to the views of its residents and values all feedback received about the services we provide.

Our [Customer Complaints and Feedback Policy](#) enables us to capture, investigate, respond to, and learn from customer feedback, helping us to continuously improve and shape services to better meet the needs of our community.



We recognise the importance of both positive and negative feedback. It provides valuable insight into customer experiences, highlighting what we are doing well and identifying areas for improvement. Feedback can serve as an early warning system, helping us to detect issues before they escalate and require significant time and resources to resolve. It also allows us to identify the root causes of problems and address weaknesses in systems, processes, or service delivery.

Compliments are equally important, as they help us understand what our customers value and showcase examples of good practice. This includes recognition of individual staff members and service teams who deliver high-quality service.



To support effective complaint handling, staff receive comprehensive training covering investigation techniques, response standards, and the role of the Ombudsman. We have also enhanced our feedback management system to ensure consistency and quality in our responses. In addition, from April 2025, we introduced detailed sub-categories within our complaints procedure to provide greater clarity and enable more targeted analysis of service issues.

Our policy aligns with the statutory Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, and the guidance set out by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

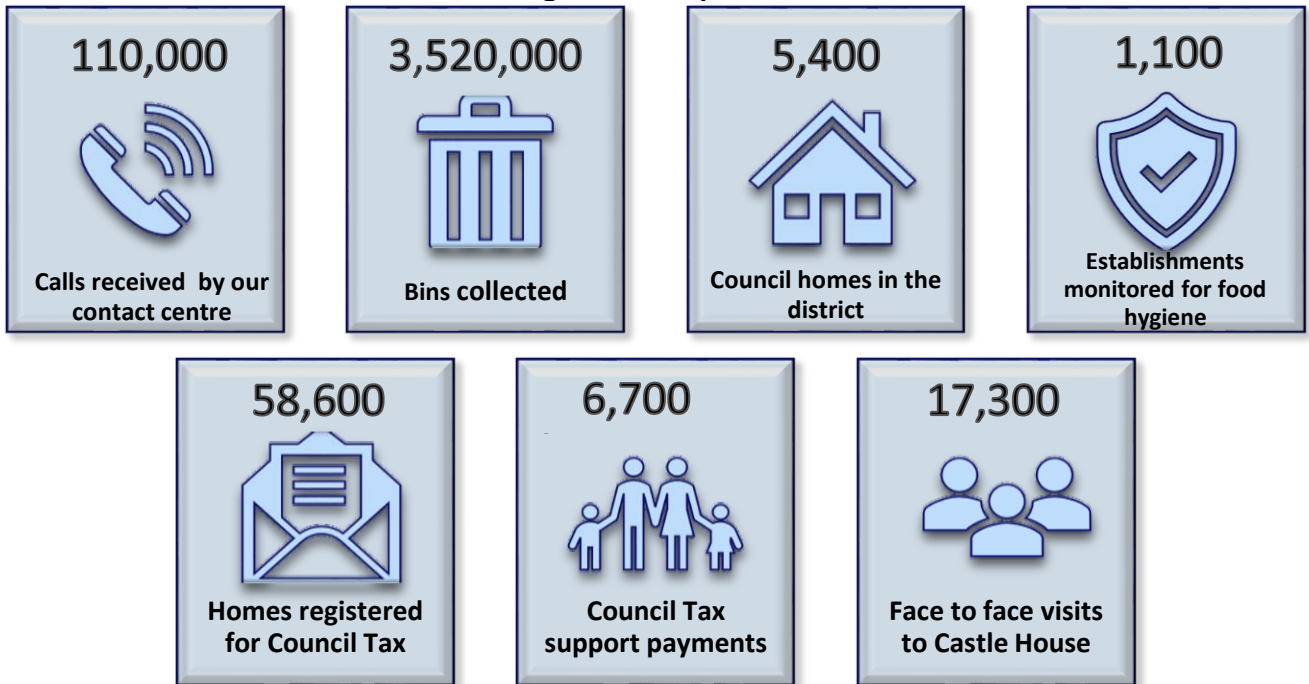
The Local Government Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) provides guidance to organisations to help identify whether feedback should be handled as either a service request, a complaint or both. The definition of a service request is as follows: *'a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.'* This provides organisations with the opportunity to resolve matters to an individual's satisfaction before they become a complaint. A complaint may be defined as: *'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals'*

The Ombudsman continues that service requests should be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. In addition, organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made. A complaint may be raised when the individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. An organisation should not stop its efforts to address the service request if the individual complains.

Our Responsibilities

From waste management and housing to food hygiene and financial support, these services play a critical role in enhancing the quality of life for our residents. Our commitment to maintaining and improving these services is evident in the scale of our operations and the positive impact on the community. Feedback is received for all these services. Some data to provide context can be found in fig 2 below, which was correct as of 2024/25:

Fig 1: Our Responsibilities



(All Figures are rounded)

2. Overview of feedback

The table below provides a summary of all customer feedback received during the first half of 2025/26.

Overview of feedback

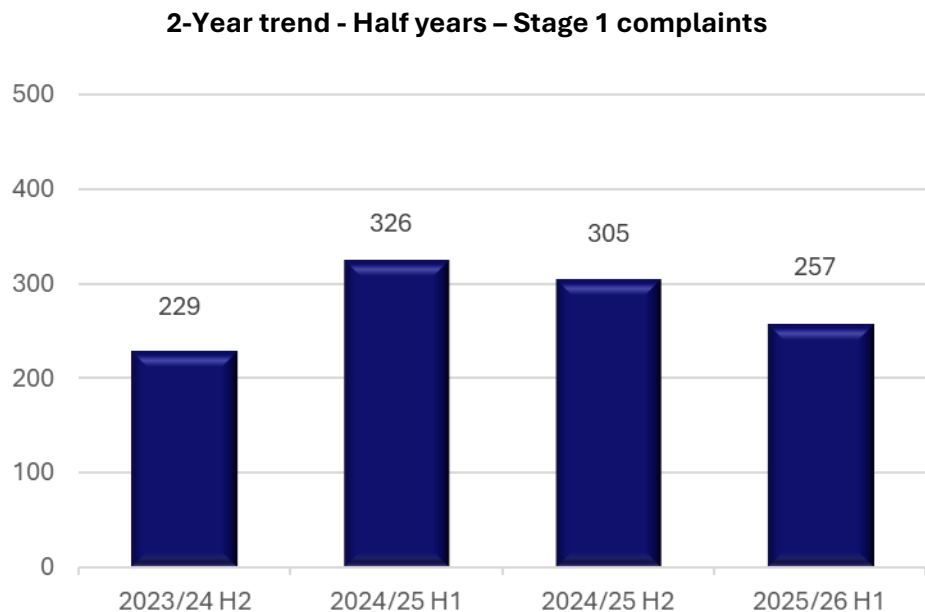
Stage 1 Complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Suggestions	Compliments (Praise)
257	62	19	89

3. Complaints – Stage 1

It is important for us to use many different methods to engage and consult with our customers, to receive as broad and as representative view of our services as possible. Complaints are a valuable source of information that help us pinpoint areas for improvement and offer insight into where we are delivering a good service.

3.1. Number of Stage 1 Complaints Received

Stage 1 complaint numbers have shown a significant upward trend over the last two years. Starting at 229 in 2023/24 H2, volumes increased by 42% to 326 in 2024/25 H1, followed by a slight decline of 6% to 305 in 2024/25 H2. The reduction in number of complaints received continued into 2025/26 H1, with an 18.7% reduction to 257 complaints being noted within this period.

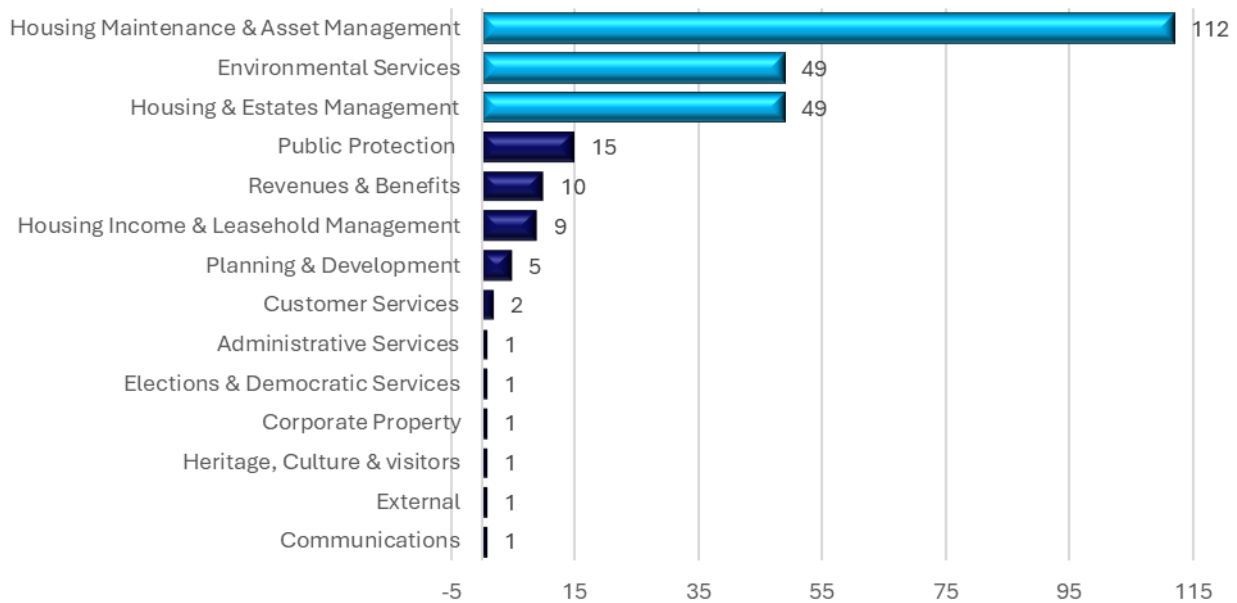


3.2. Complaints by Business Unit

During the first half of 2025/26, a total of 257 Stage 1 complaints were received. As expected, front-facing services accounted for most complaints, Housing Maintenance & Asset Management received the highest number with 112 complaints, followed by Environmental Services and Housing & Estates Management, each with 49 complaints, respectively. Most other service areas, including Public Protection, Revenues & Benefits, and Planning & Development, received 15 or fewer complaints. One complaint was recorded for an external service, relating to Active4Today.

From 1 April 2025, complaints have been categorised in greater detail, providing improved insight into specific service issues and enabling more targeted analysis.

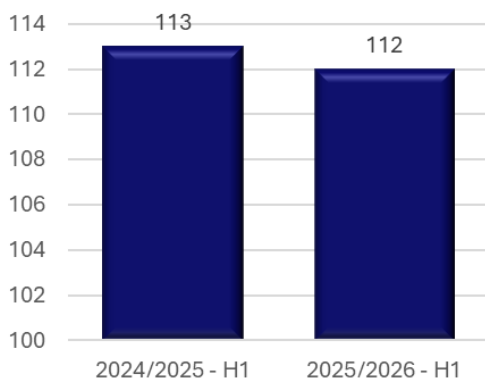
Stage 1 Complaints Received by Business Unit



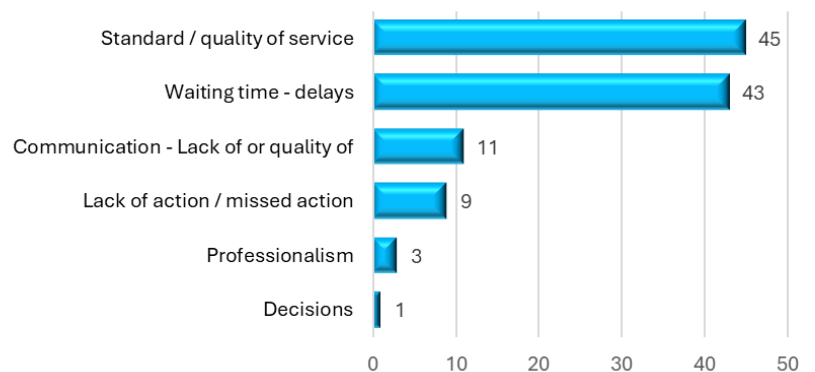
Housing Maintenance & Asset Management – 112 Stage 1 complaints received.

Housing Maintenance & Asset Management received 112 Stage 1 complaints, a nominal decrease from 113 complaints during half 1 of 2024/25. The most commonly occurring categories included '*standard or quality of service*' accounting for 45 complaints, including quality of repairs, damp and mould, and property condition. '*Waiting times- delays*' accounted for 43 complaints, mostly due to the time taken to complete repairs. Other issues included '*communication – lack or quality of*', '*lack of or missed actions*', '*professionalism*', and a single complaint about a council decision.

Number of Stage 1 Complaints



Stage 1 Complaints by Category

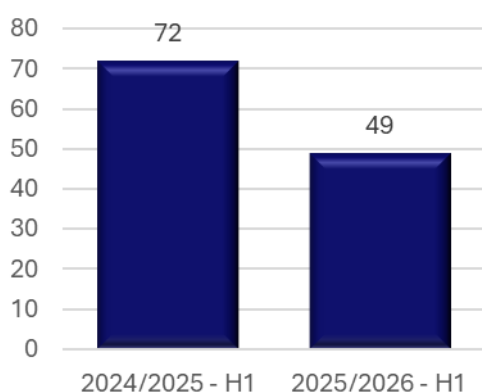


Environmental Services – 49 Stage 1 complaints received.

The largest category of complaint received by Environmental Services was ‘*standard or quality of service*’ with 21 complaints, mainly due to quality of service, incomplete jobs, and equipment condition concerns. ‘*Lack of action or missed action*’ accounted for 14 complaints, mostly due to repeated missed services.

‘*Professionalism*’ was raised in 8 cases, mainly linked to staff conduct, with one complaint regarding driving standards. ‘*Decisions*’ prompted 4 complaints, including disagreement with council policy and inconsistent discretion. Two further isolated issues were reported under ‘*communication*’ and ‘*waiting times*’.

2-year Outturn Stage 1 Complaints



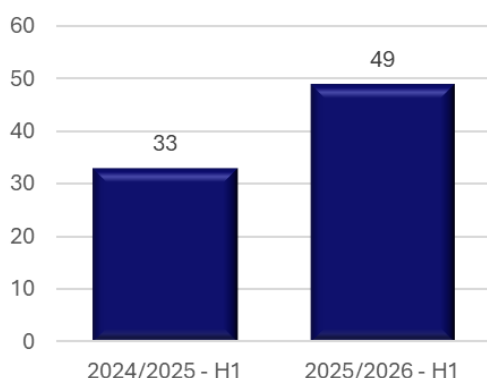
Stage 1 Complaints by Category



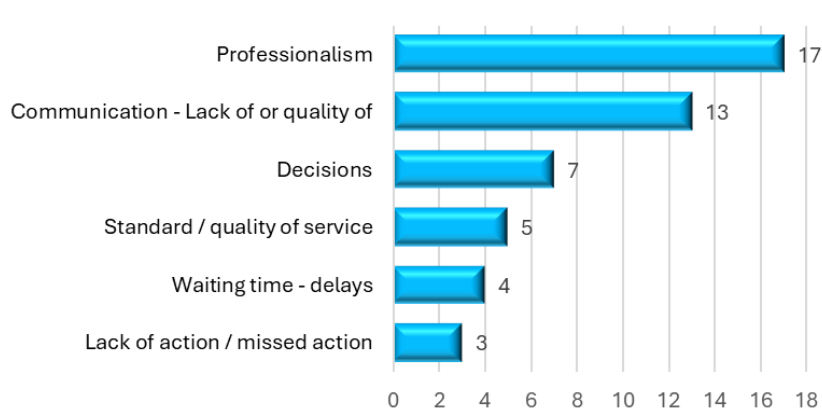
Housing & Estates Management – 49 Stage 1 complaints received.

Housing & Estates Management received 49 Stage 1 complaints, an increase from 33 in the same period the previous year. 17 complaints related to ‘*professionalism*’, followed by 13 relating to ‘*communication*’, and 7 concerning ‘*decisions*’. Smaller volumes were recorded for ‘*standard or quality of service*’, ‘*waiting times – delays*’, and ‘*lack of action or missed action*’.

2-year Outturn Stage 1 Complaints



Stage 1 Complaints by Category



3.3 Complaints by Category (All Complaints)

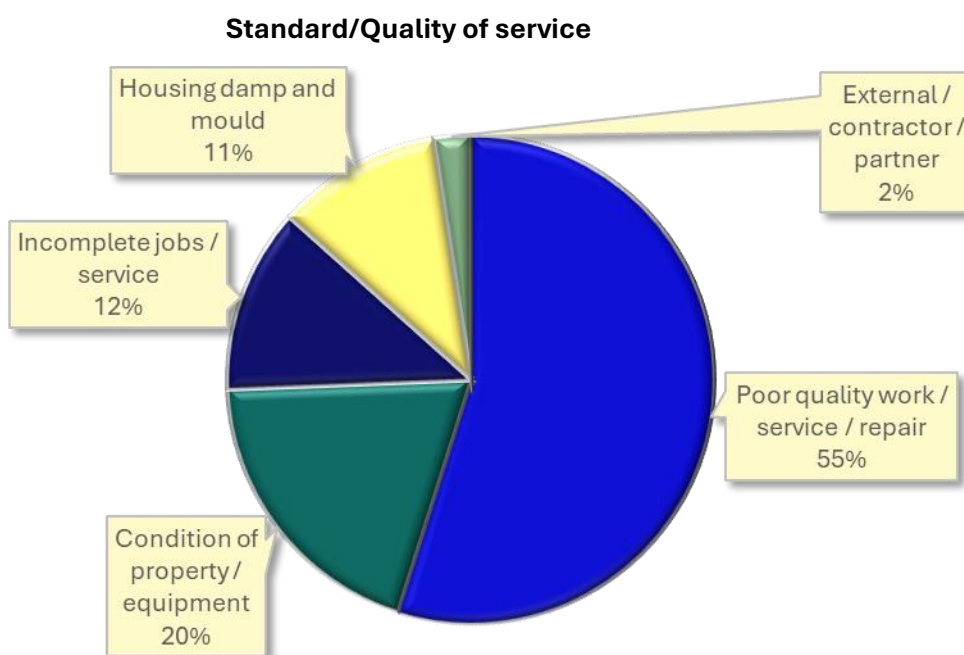
Of the total 257 complaints received, service quality is the most common issue, accounting for 32% of all complaints, followed by waiting times and delays at 19%. Communication problems, such as lack of updates or incorrect information make up 16%, while professionalism and lack of action each represent 12%. Complaints about decisions are less frequent at 9% but still highlight concerns around policy interpretation and consistency.

Stage 1 Complaints by Category

Category	Received	% of total received
Standard / quality of service	82	32%
Waiting time - delays	50	19%
Communication - Lack of or quality of	41	16%
Professionalism	30	12%
Lack of action / missed action	30	12%
Decisions	24	9%
Total	257	100%

Most frequent Category: Standard / Quality of service

Within this category, the most common concern was poor quality work, service, or repairs, representing 55% of these cases. Other notable issues included condition of property or equipment (20%), incomplete jobs or services (12%), and housing damp and mould (11%). Complaints involving external contractors or partners were minimal at just 2%.



3.4 Processing Times

It is important to meet the timescales as guided by our internal policy and the Housing Ombudsman. When a customer has complained to us it is right that they expect a response within a reasonable timescale. There will be occasions where the timescales need to be extended, such as in cases where obtaining the relevant information may take longer as it's from a third party or because an officer who had dealt with the customer is unavailable. Wherever this delay is necessary, the complainant will be kept updated.

To ensure compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code, it is necessary for our policy to include specific timescales for responding to complaints. We have therefore revised our response timescales to align with those stipulated by the Ombudsmen.

- Stage 1 - acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the request being received and provide a full response within 10 working days.
- Stage 2 - acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days of the escalation request being received and provide a full response within 20 working days.

The table below summarises the number of complaints that met or missed statutory deadlines.

Stage 1 Complaint Summary)

Period	Responded within time	Overdue	Total
2025/2026 - H1	252	5	257

During the reporting period, 257 complaints were received. Of these, 98% were responded to on time, with just 2% (5 complaints) not responded to within the required deadline. This is a significant improvement compared to the first half of 2024/25, when 66% of complaints were responded to on time.

3.5 Outcome of Complaints

Once the officer responsible for responding to a complaint has undertaken the appropriate investigation they will determine if the complaint was fully upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld. In writing the response they clearly state the outcome and record this within our complaints handling system.

It is important to note that sometimes customers are unhappy with a decision or process but upon investigation it is found that the council has acted appropriately, these complaints are not upheld. Section 9 of this report provides more detail on customer satisfaction with complaints.

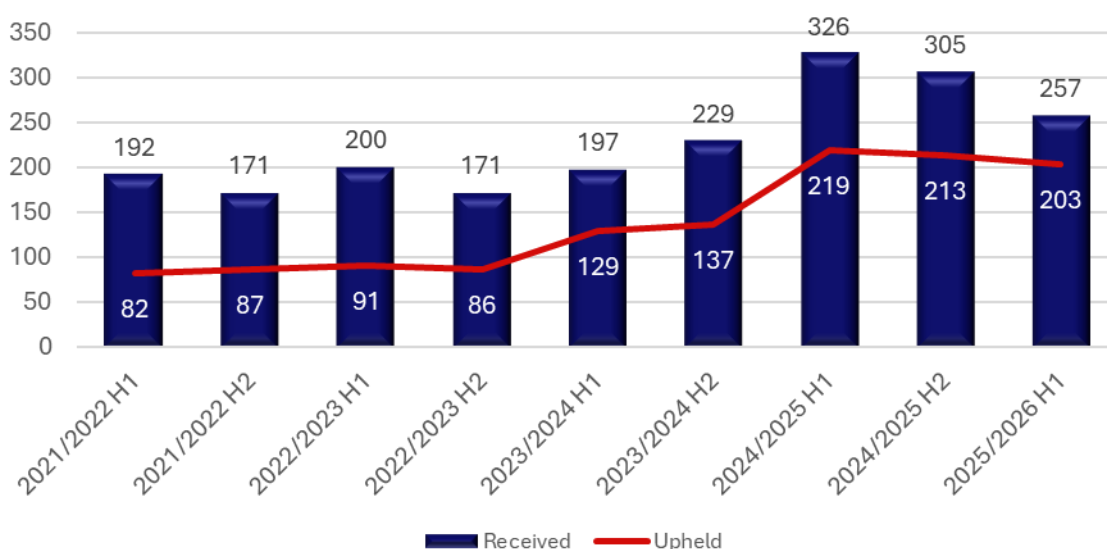
Often complaints contain more than one issue, complaints partially upheld are where some of the issues raised are upheld but others are not.

Decision Status of Stage 1 Complaints

Complaints Upheld	Complaints Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld	Complaints not decided
134	69	54	0

Complaints received fell to 257 in H1 2025/26, with 203 (79%) upheld. Of these, 52% were fully upheld, 27% partially upheld, and 21% not upheld. A breakdown of upheld complaints over the last 4 years is shown in the chart below.

Stage 1 Complaints Upheld



Complaints received peaked in 2024/2025 H1 (326 cases) before falling to 257 in 2025/2026 H1. However, the proportion of complaints upheld has risen sharply over time—from 43% in 2021/2022 H1 to 79% in 2025/2026 H1. This trend indicates potential areas for improvement in service delivery and internal processes.

We are actively working with delivery teams to address repeated issues and implement corrective actions aimed at reducing upheld complaints and improving overall customer experience.

4. Complaints - Stage 2

Stage 2 complaints are those where a customer remains dissatisfied with the response received at stage 1. Reviewing these in detail allows us to identify opportunities for service improvement and assess the effectiveness of our initial responses. Stage 2 complaints provide valuable insight into more complex or unresolved issues.

Stage 2 complaints have been included based on the date the stage 2 process was initiated. As a result, some complaints originally raised at stage 1 in previous reporting periods may appear here, reflecting when the escalation process formally began.

In the first half of 2025/26, 62 stage 2 complaints were received, an increase compared to 43 in the previous period. This rise continues a two-year upward trend, which may indicate growing complexity in cases or challenges in resolving issues effectively at stage 1. While the overall proportion remains small relative to service volumes, the escalation pattern highlights the need for strengthened early resolution and clear communication at initial stages.

Of the 62 complaints, 44% were upheld, 15% were partially upheld, 32% were not upheld, and 10% are still in progress or undecided at the time of producing this report.

Stage 2 Complaints

Complaints Upheld	Complaints Partially Upheld	Complaints Not Upheld	Complaints not decided/in progress
27	9	20	6

Across all business units, 73% of stage 2 complaints were responded to on time, 23% were overdue and missed the target processing time, and 5% had not yet received a response at the time of writing this report. Housing Maintenance & Asset Management, Housing Services and Healthy Places were the 3 business units with the highest volume of complains, additionally Housing Maintenance & Asset Management had the most overdue stage 2 complaints. Complaints which relate to our Housing business units can be more time consuming and complex to resolve and as a result we have recruited a complaint coordinator to improve both our response times and to free up operational officers to focus on quality service delivery.

Stage 2 Processing Deadlines

Period	In progress	Met Deadline	Missed Deadline	Total	% on Target
April - September 2025	3	45	14	62	72.6%

Stage 2 Complaints Categories

When reviewing the number of stage 2 complaints received according to the category, the highest proportion of complaints were attributed to the standard and quality of service with 18% of all complaints. This was followed by the time taken to complete housing repairs contributing 15%, the next most common category was split between communication, professionalism and waiting times with 13% each respectively.

Category of Complaint	No.	%
Standard / quality of service	11	18%
Housing - Time Taken to Complete Repair	9	15%
Communication	8	13%
Professionalism	8	13%
Waiting time - delays	8	13%
Decisions	7	11%
Housing - Quality of Repair Work or Upgrade	4	6%
Lack of action / missed action	4	6%
Council Policy	1	2%
Placement of refuse bin	1	2%
Refund Issue	1	2%

5. Ombudsman Complaints

Each Ombudsman produces Annual Review Letters detailing how many complaints they have received for individual councils and how many decisions they have made. These are reported to the General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation (GGPLGR) Committee.

For the financial year 2024/25, the LGSCO has published nine decisions. Eight were closed after initial enquires and one was upheld.

The LGSCO have published two good practice guides aimed at helping authorities to get things right before cases are escalated:

- Appendix 1. [LGSCO Complaints Code](#)
- Appendix 2. [Guidance for practitioners: Deprivation of Capital \(lgo.org.uk\)](#)

Housing Ombudsman complaints decisions

For the financial year 2024/25, the Housing Ombudsman has published 2 decisions, both of which were upheld.

New Ombudsman Complaints

Between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025, we received eight new enquiries from the Housing Ombudsman and none from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Ombudsman. The table below, summarise the details of these complaints. Five are waiting for the Housing Ombudsman to progress and three have been closed.

Date received	Nature of Complaint	Stage
7 April 2025	Handling of ASB	Under Investigation.
8 April 2025	Handling of tenant's concerns regarding stolen property	Awaiting allocation to Housing Ombudsman Casework and Assessment team.
17 July 2025	Poor service and condition of property	Awaiting allocation to Housing Ombudsman Casework and Assessment team.
14 August 2025	ASB, staff conduct, communication	Awaiting allocation to Housing Ombudsman and Assessment team
10 September 2025	ASB	Awaiting allocation to Housing Ombudsman and Assessment team.
25 April 2025	Outstanding repairs and mould	Closed - Confirmed the complaint had gone through the Council complaints process. No further action to be taken.
30 April 2025	Condition of property	Closed - Final decision received, no Council fault.
2 May 2025	Damp and mould	Closed – The Housing Ombudsman decided not to investigate as the complaint was out of time.

We are waiting for the Housing Ombudsman determination of two further complaints, one which we received in October 2024 and the second in December 2024. The Housing Ombudsman acknowledges there is a delay investigating some complaints. This is due to the increase in the number of complaints it is receiving and resource to deal with them.

Decisions

Between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025, we received decisions on five complaints which were received by the Ombudsman prior to 1 April 2025, three Housing Ombudsman and two Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Date outcome received	Nature of Complaint	Determination Actions and Recommendations
30 April 2025	Staff conduct. Housing choice service Condition of property and property not being ready to move into	It was determined that there was no maladministration. No further actions or recommendations.
14 May 2025	Draining issues	Complaint closed and to be logged as complaint. The customer has now logged a further complaint with the Housing Ombudsman.
29 August 2025	Not installing a driveway	It was determined that there was no maladministration. A recommendation was made to review Spotlight Report on Knowledge and Information to ensure record keeping is in line with Ombudsman requirements.

Date outcome received	Nature of Complaint	Determination	Officer Comment on Upheld Complaints
30 April 2025	Handling of a complaint regarding a parish council	Closed after initial enquiries - no further action	
20 June 2025	Noise nuisance	Upheld - Fault and Injustice <u>24 013 431 - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</u>	The complaint mentioned noise from the vehicle being an issue when parked on the driveway. Although the complaint also referenced the noise while driving on the road and the way it was driven, our officers should have also initiated a statutory noise nuisance case at this point. Alongside the advice and support provided in seeking assistance from the Police, who have the authority to require the exhaust to be tested and changed if it was found to breach the Road Traffic Act, undertaking the noise investigation process at the beginning should have taken place. A noise investigation was undertaken subsequently and found not to be a statutory noise nuisance. As a result, we have reminded our officers that a noise complaint should be initiated promptly at the start, even if there are other avenues to resolving the issue, which were also undertaken in this case.

6. Suggestions

During the first half of 2025/26, 19 suggestions were initially received. Upon examination, one suggestion was identified as a service request. Additionally, 9 suggestions were subsequently withdrawn. Table 13 provides a sample of the suggestions received.

Suggestion	Response
Environmental Services	
I noticed recent litter collections weren't well publicised. I'd like to suggest a "Safe and Clean Newark" campaign with goals such as litter-free streets across Newark, visible support from shops, restaurants and pubs through a sticker initiative, and active community involvement with feedback on ideas. We could also explore financial backing from national businesses. A similar approach could be taken to improve street safety, aiming for residents to feel safe at all hours. I'd be happy to join any focus group to support this.	Thank you for your thoughtful suggestions. Some of these ideas are already being considered within our existing resources. We'll look at further promotion to support litter-free streets and explore engaging local businesses, possibly using posters instead of stickers. While seeking national business support is an option, we must weigh this against available officer time. We're passionate about community feedback. Your safety concerns are noted and will be shared with our partners at Nottinghamshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
Parking Services	
I live near the Royal Mail sorting office, and I am concerned about the daily parking of Royal Mail vans along both sides of the street. They often park on double yellow lines and pavements for extended periods while loading, creating congestion and posing risks to both drivers and pedestrians. This seems to happen regularly and without enforcement. Has this issue been looked into? It feels unsafe and potentially dangerous.	Thank you for bringing this to our attention. The District Council is not responsible for on street parking enforcement; this responsibility falls to Nottinghamshire County Council. I have contacted them on your behalf, and they have asked that you please contact them directly.
Healthy Places	
A mediation participant shared concerns about the lack of Autism and ADHD awareness during their session. Despite informing the mediator of their neurodivergent needs and requesting accommodations, these were not met—such as the inability to switch to split mediation due to room availability. The participant felt the experience reflected a broader lack of understanding of neurodivergence, which negatively impacted their wellbeing. The feedback was submitted in hopes that future training might better support neurodivergent individuals.	Thank you for getting in touch with us to provide your feedback, we appreciate all feedback, both positive and negative. Thank you also for taking the time to fully detail your concerns and observations. I apologise for your experience. Training within the Council on such matters is a relatively recent thing and I will pass on your comments to the relevant manager so that learning from this can be fed into any future training programmes and sessions.
Council Tax	
I found the online council tax form quite tricky to use as a landlord. It seems more geared towards people moving into residential properties, rather than those managing tenancies. It would be great to have a simple portal where landlords can log in, select a property, and update tenant details, like who's moving in or out, forwarding addresses, and whether the property is empty. Something like that would make the process much easier and quicker.	Thank you for your feedback. We acknowledge that the current form is more resident-focused and can be challenging for landlords. While the form is part of a shared system used by multiple councils, making changes difficult, we are actively exploring improvements. The idea of a landlord portal aligns with ongoing discussions with our system supplier. Although immediate changes aren't possible, this feedback is helping inform future enhancements to make the process more efficient and user-friendly for landlords.

7. Praise

During the period, we received 89 compliments from customers across a wide range of services. These messages of appreciation demonstrate the value of maintaining high standards in public service. This section summarises the key themes and business units receiving praise.

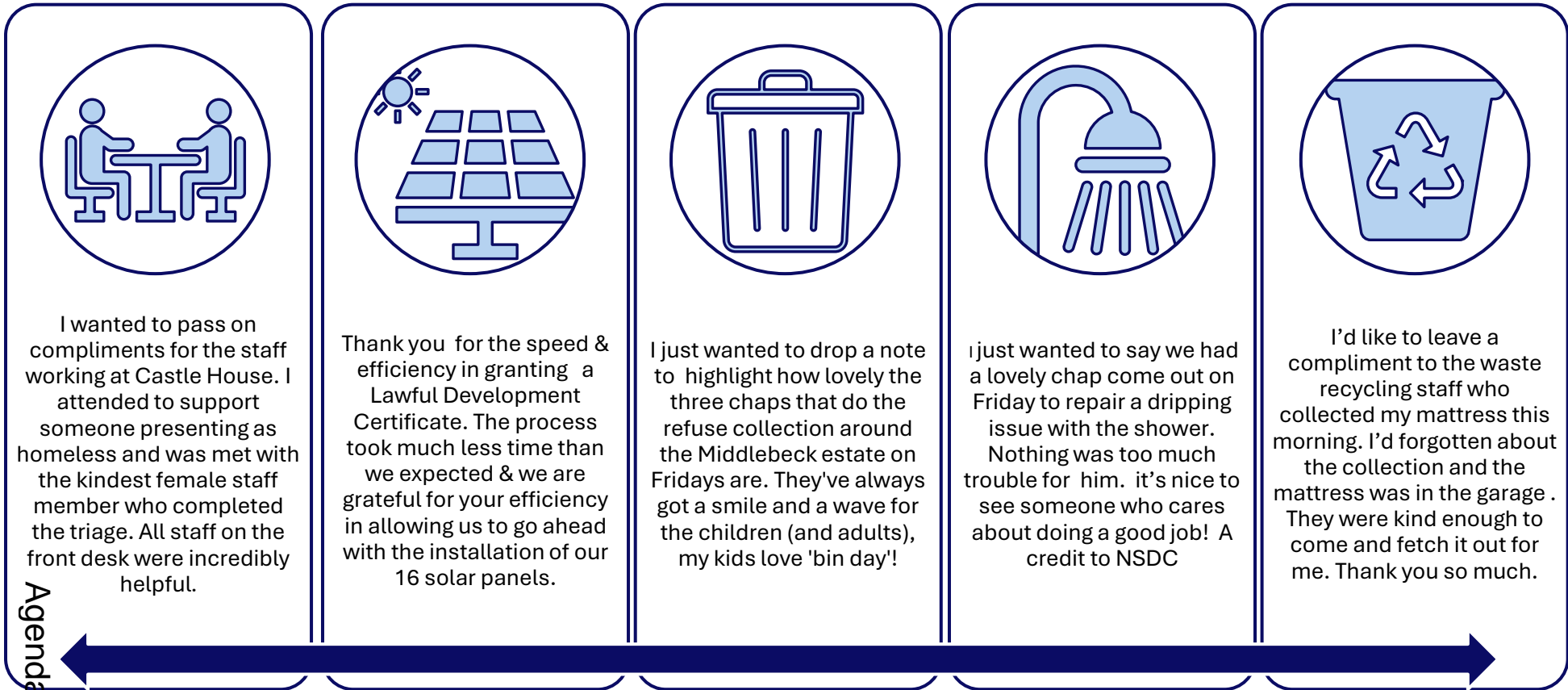
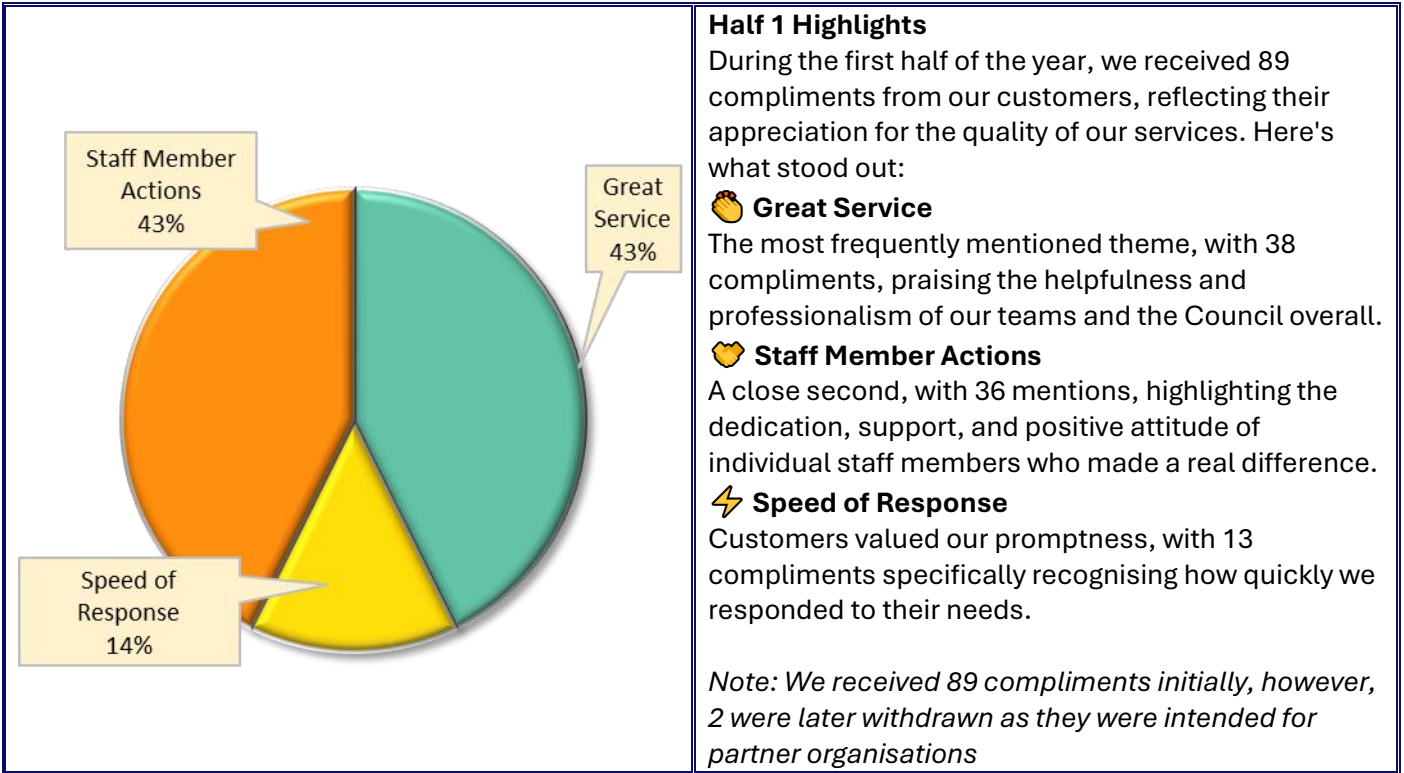
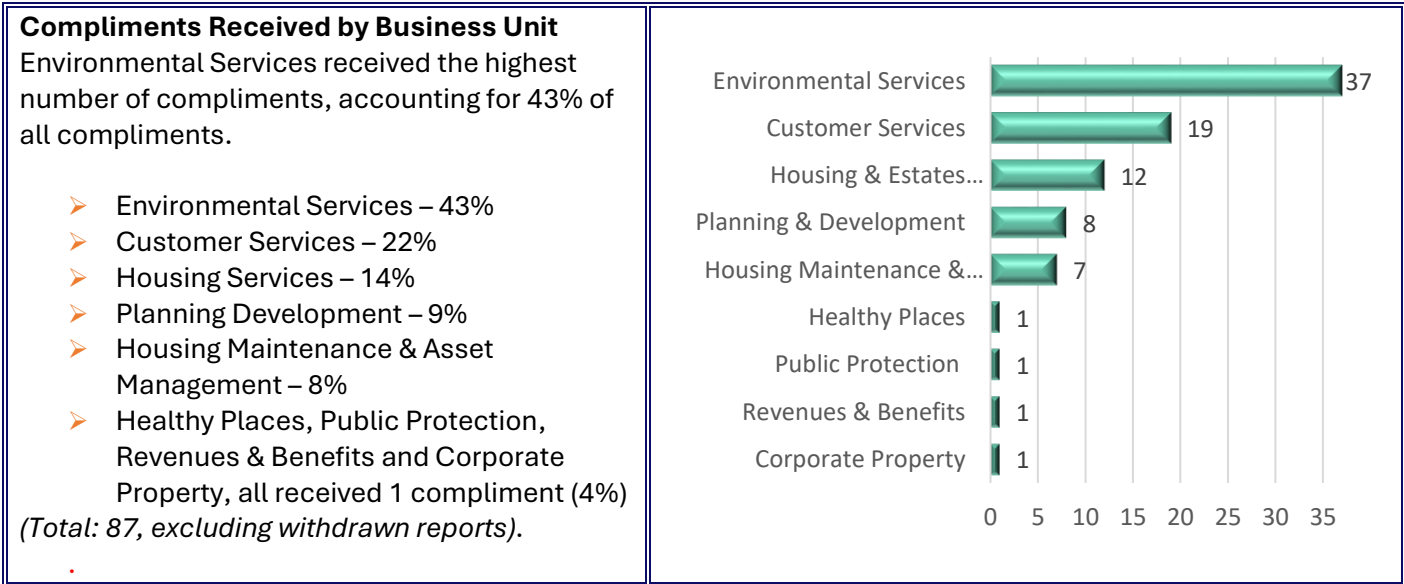


Fig 2: Customer Praise Highlights – April to September 2025

Praise by Category



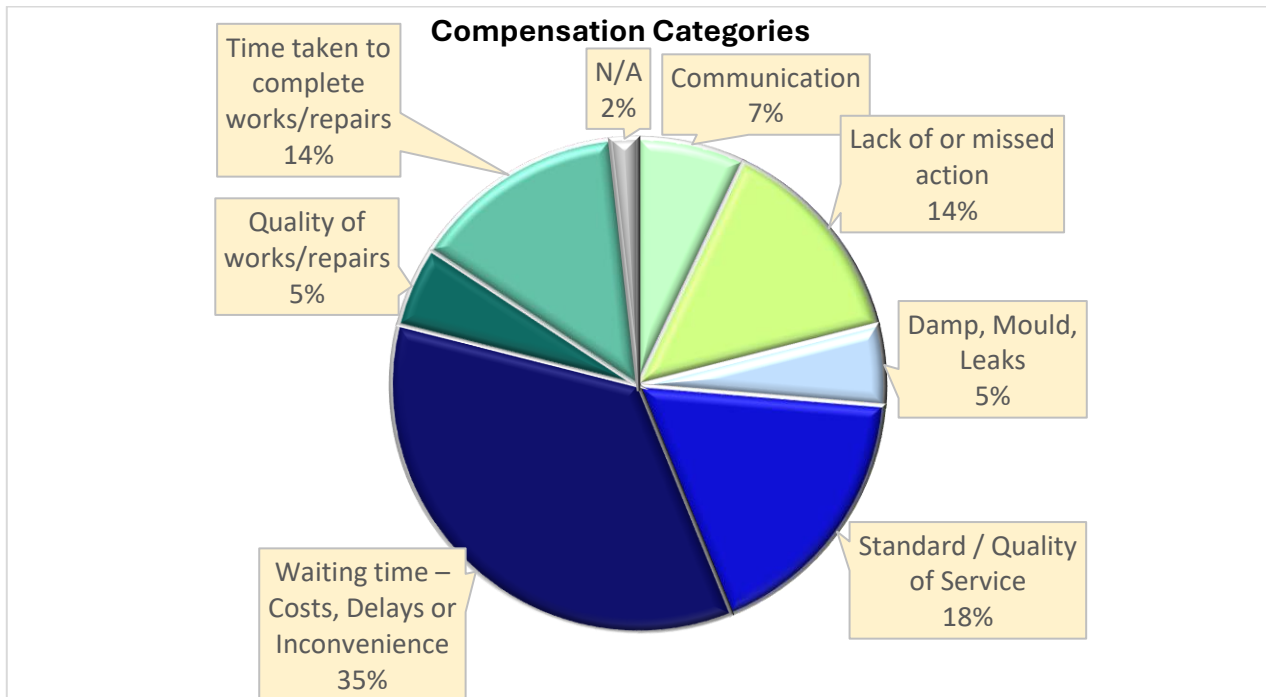
Praise by Business Unit



8. Putting it Right

Compensation serves as a remedy for any inconvenience or distress caused by service failures within the Council's social housing. Each claim will be evaluated individually. The compensation amount will reflect the level of inconvenience, disturbance, and distress experienced due to delays in resolving the issue, and the extent of the Council's responsibility. Additionally, the Council will consider whether the time taken to resolve the problem was excessive.

57 claims were awarded compensation in the period 01 April 2025 – 30 September 2025 (Half 1 2025/26) amounting to a total of £25,533.50; representing a 117.04% increase from the £11,764 paid out during the same period in 2024/25. The chart below shows the percentage of the total awards in each category and the table below displays the costs awarded in each category.



The highest single category is Standard/Quality of Service, accounting for £7,382.13 worth of all compensation paid out across stage 1 and stage 2 complaints this half.

Compensation by Category

Category	Stage 1	Stage 2	Total
Standard / Quality of Service	£6,570	£811	£7,382
Waiting time – Costs, Delays or Inconvenience	£6,446	£25	£6,471
Time taken to complete works/repairs	-	£5,621	£5,621
Lack of or missed action	£709	£2,243	£2,952
Quality of works/repairs	-	£2,935	£2,935
Communication	£383	£250	£633
Damp, Mould, Leaks	£100	-	£100
N/A	-	-£562	-£562

9. Customer Satisfaction

In addition to utilising complaints to enhance our services, it is essential to understand how complainants perceive the complaint process itself. Understanding customer satisfaction with our complaint process helps us assess if the Customer Complaints and Feedback policy has been properly followed and if issues are handled fairly. We also seek feedback on the complaint outcome, which informs service improvements; however, satisfaction often depends on whether the complaint was upheld and where complaints have not been upheld, the customer may understandably feel dissatisfied with the outcome.

All completed complaints are evaluated to determine if direct contact with the complainant is appropriate. Exemptions may be made due to factors such as pending legal proceedings, concerns regarding the complainant's wellbeing, or the specific nature of the complaint. Complaints related to Housing are excluded from this procedure, as they are managed independently by the external provider, ViewPoint.

Of the 77 non-Housing Stage 1 complaints received, 32 were deemed unsuitable for review (e.g., due to sensitivity) and were exempted from contact. This resulted in 45 customers being selected for follow-up. Out of these 45, 28 customers participated in a review of their complaint, while 14 did not respond to voicemails or emails, which may suggest limited ongoing concern regarding their complaint. At the time of writing this report, 2 complaints were still yet to be reviewed, and 1 customer disconnected the call.

56% of the complaints due to be reviewed were for Environmental Services, followed by 11% for Street Scene and 7% for Public Protection.

Satisfaction with complaint outcome and process

18 (62%) of the customers spoken with, were satisfied with the outcome, although 5 (17%) remained dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the Outcome		Satisfaction with the Process	
Satisfied	18	OK	10
Partly satisfied	4	Not OK	7
Dissatisfied	5	No comment/can't recall	10
Unknown	2	Not meant to be a complaint	1
Total	29	Total	28

The satisfaction of 2 complaint outcomes was unknown, as one customer didn't respond to a follow-up call and the other complaint concerned tree works due to be completed after the review call and therefore, we couldn't report the complainant's satisfaction with the outcome at this time.

The 5 complaints where individuals expressed dissatisfaction with the outcome related to a range of themes. These included property maintenance concerns, issues around communication and support, costs related to regulatory processes, matters involving housing and waste services, and the condition of privately owned infrastructure.

All customers who were dissatisfied with the outcome also reported dissatisfaction with the complaints process itself. Key themes identified included disappointment in the escalation procedures, a lack of confidence that issues would be resolved satisfactorily, and concerns regarding the logging and acknowledgment of associated complaints. Additionally, some customers felt the responses received lacked a conciliatory tone. Where further discussion was offered, not all customers were able to participate in follow-up meetings. These themes reflect the main areas where customers felt the process could be improved.

Two complainants were satisfied with the outcome but dissatisfied with the process, the reasons for this are as follows:

- One complainant expressed concern that the officer who made the decision being complained about, was also the officer reviewing their own decision. It should be noted that only two senior officers could review the complaint, and both had been involved in the case.
- The second complainant didn't think the online form had gone through because they didn't get an acknowledgment or reference number, and so they also phoned to make the complaint.

Most customers, however, did not raise any issues with the complaints process: ten were satisfied, although customers did question why a complaint had to be made to resolve the issue, and ten customers made no comment.

The Customer Satisfaction Officer (CSO), completed follow-up actions for 14 of the customers, predominantly passing on new information about the complaint to officers, and progressing further work for them, as well as calling them back with requested information about the complaint.

Positive feedback was consistently received regarding the review call, even if the customer was unhappy with the complaint outcome and or process. They felt it was courteous and welcoming.

Lessons Learned

The complaint review process highlights the need to ensure follow-up commitments made in the complaint response are carried through and recorded.

Although there are templates for complaint responses, there are varied styles of letter writing. We are investigating training options for delivering greater consistency of complaint responses.

The complaint reviews have provided valuable feedback about online services including availability of information on the website and ease of accessing it. These are being addressed.

Customers mentioned a preference for speaking with 'a human'. In several instances, customers were relieved to have had contact with a named officer and were then complimentary about the officer's handling of the complaint.

All data in this report is drawn from a live system and may be updated periodically; as such, figures are subject to change. All suggestions, compliments and stage 1 complaints data is correct as of 21/10/25. All stage 2 complaints data is correct as of 28/10/25.

Use of Microsoft Co-Pilot: Microsoft Co-Pilot was utilised in the preparation of this report to enhance its accessibility for a wide range of audiences.



Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee: 12 January 2026

Director Lead: Deborah Johnson, Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development

Lead Officer: Mark Randle, Transformation & Service Improvement Officer

Report Summary	
Report Title	Presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development
Purpose of Report	Update on Role of the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development
Recommendations	That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee note the contents of the report.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 At the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) meeting held on 29 January 2024, Members agreed a process for Portfolio Holders to be invited to meetings of the Committee. This enabled the Portfolio Holder to brief the Committee on their remit and current and future plans and projects. It would also offer the Committee opportunity to ask focussed questions of the Portfolio Holder. This process ran from March 2024 to March 2025.
- 1.2 At the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee meeting held on 14 April 2025, Members agreed to a change in the process for Portfolio Holders attending Committee.
- 1.3 The new change in process requested that Portfolio Holders report back on 'specific areas' of their Portfolio, which will be requested by the Committee. Portfolio Holders are asked to produce a short report in answer to these specific areas. They will present back to the Committee and then take questions.

2.0 Proposal /Options Considered

- 2.1 This report relates to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development, Councillor Claire Penny.
- 2.2 The Committee has requested information on:

1. The East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority recently published a Growth Plan; how are we ensuring that our area is prioritised for investment and resources to deliver economic growth?
2. Our Town Centres have had a challenging time over the last few years, what are we doing to support them?
3. We have many things to do and see in our district; how are we promoting the area to attract visitors?
4. There are many people in the district who have health issues, how are we supporting them into employment or training?
5. Planning reforms are demanding faster, digitally focused plan-making. How do we meet the government agenda for 1.5 million new homes, growth and investment whilst encouraging positive planning outcomes for local communities?
6. New planning reform has the potential to see less applications referred to the Planning Committee. How do we ensure that the voice of our local residents continues to be heard?

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	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.

- **Full Council Report - 8 March 2022** – Proposals for the new governance arrangements.
- **PPIC Report - 29 January 2024** - Attendance by Portfolio Holders to Future Meetings of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee
- **PPIC Report - 14 April 2025**- Attendance by Portfolio Holders to Future Meetings of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee

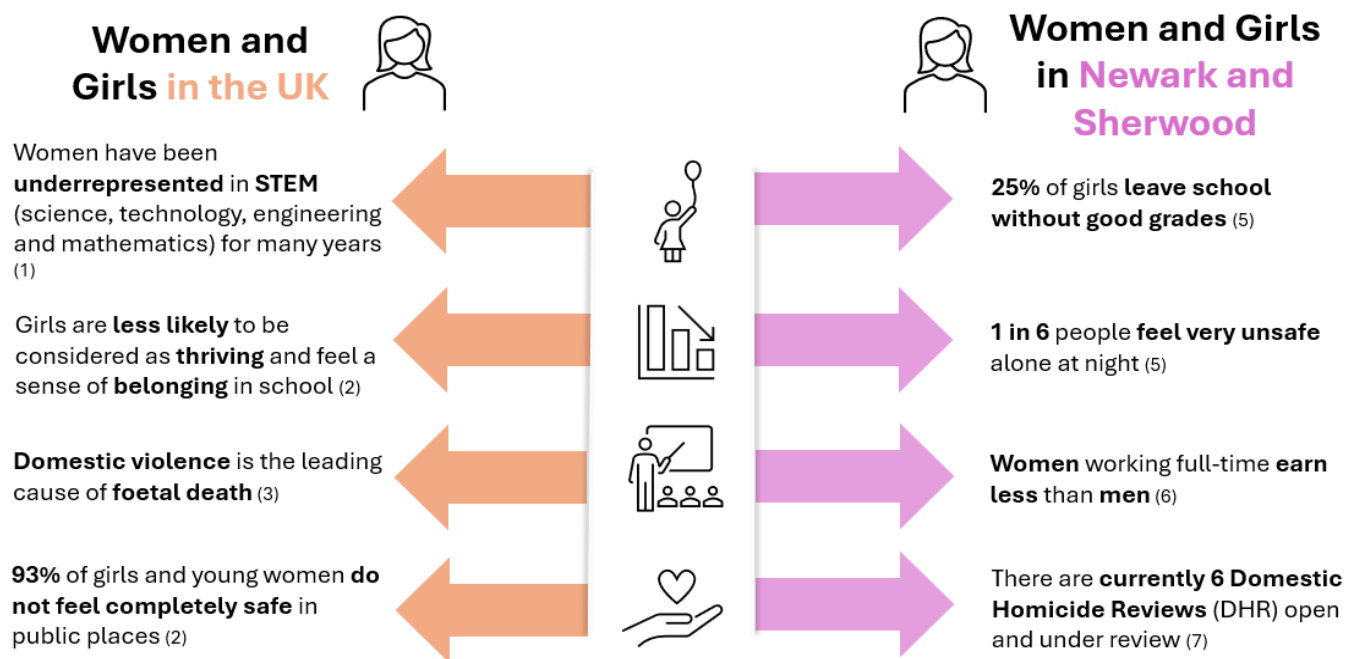


Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee – 12 January 2026

Director Lead: Deborah Johnson, Director of Customer Services & Organisational Development

Lead Officers: Carina Tona, Transformation and Service Improvement Officer
Philene Evason-Bacon, Transformation and Service Improvement Graduate Trainee

Report Summary	
Report Title	Life Chances for Girls
Purpose of Report	To provide an update and the findings from the work of the Life Chances for Girls working group.
Recommendations	That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) note the findings and recommendations of the Working Group; and b) endorse the recommendations as outlined in Appendix 3
Reason for Recommendation	To ensure that the findings of the Life Chances for Girls Working Group are formally acknowledged and acted upon. By noting the outcomes and endorsing the recommendations, the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee can support targeted actions that improve opportunities and outcomes for girls. This will be whilst working with our partners who can contribute to improving the life chances for girls. This approach demonstrates a commitment to addressing identified challenges and supports a number of ambitions in the Council's Community Plan.



Every 3 days, a women in the UK is killed by a man (4)

1.0 Background

In January 2025 a topic request form was proposed by Cllr Rowan Cozens (**Appendix 1**) and submitted to the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee. The proposed topic was supported and subsequently a cross-party working group was formed.

The Working Group

The working group met on five occasions between April 2025 and September 2025, with input from the following working group elected councillors: -

- Cllr Karen Roberts – Chair
- Cllr Alice Brazier
- Cllr Celia Brooks
- Cllr Andy Freeman
- Cllr Jean Hall
- Cllr David Moore
- Cllr Emma Oldham
- Cllr Irene Brown
- Cllr Linda Tift

Councillor Karen Roberts, Life Chances for Girls working group chair says:

“It has been a real privilege to chair the Working Group on Life Chances for Girls over the past several months. Working alongside fellow Councillors and hearing from a wide range of speakers, from colleagues at the District Council to partners across our wider network, has been insightful, humbling and inspiring. We left politics at the door, coming together with a shared commitment to prioritise the subject of life chances for girls. It has been a valuable opportunity to learn more about the excellent work and activities already being delivered by the District Council and our partners. As a result of our work, we can now add to that and take some more positive steps forward as a recommendation to the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee.”

Councillor Paul Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Community Relations says:

“As the Public Protection and Community Relations Portfolio Holder, I want to say how impressed I’ve been with the work of the life chances for girls working group. They have truly illuminated the challenges that girls and young women face today. It is particularly alarming to learn that domestic violence is a leading cause of foetal death. This stark reality underscores the urgent need for continued support and funding for programmes we already have in place, such as healthy relationships training in schools and the "Prison Me No Way" programmes. These programmes are crucial in helping young people feel more confident, informed, and supported, and they play a vital role in tackling behaviours that lead to violence against women and girls.”

Councillor Rowan Cozens, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture & the Arts says:

"I'm really pleased that the working group has taken the time to explore the important issue of life chances for girls. The recommendations coming forward are thoughtful and promising, and I look forward to seeing them put into action. It's encouraging to see such a focused effort on improving life chances for girls. I'm delighted with the recommendations and the positive direction they set for future work."

1.1 The working group identified three key aims based on the topic request form, which formed the basis of the review initiation document. The three stages of the working group were as follows:

1. Firstly, we reviewed the data set published by Plan International and considered its merits. We developed a fuller picture of the life chance for girls in Newark and Sherwood, by identifying and supplementing with more up to date and relevant data, that the Council holds and from partners or wider, national sources too.
2. We collated a summary of the activities, area of work and key achievements that the Council delivers or facilitates with partners to support this agenda around girls and young women.
3. Once the working group had reviewed all the relevant information and gained a better understanding of the landscape for girls and young women, the review began to explore whether changes could be made, or if work in this area could be approached differently. The aim was to identify ways in which the Council and its partners could intervene, improve, and advocate for better life chances for girls and young women across the district, and present this them to PPIC for consideration.

1.2 Plan International Report

The report and data tool, detailed further in Section 2, drew the interest of Cllr Freeman's daughter, Emily. With several councillors also taking notice, the initiative laid the foundation for a new working group. Emily was invited to the introductory session to share her reflections on the report and offer her perspective as a young woman.

The working group was supported by officers who gathered information and data from other sources to build a bigger picture for Newark and Sherwood and data to inform the sessions.

Key officers also contributed, helping to inform the working group, on specialist topics such as Public Safety, Domestic Abuse, Health and Wellbeing Homelessness and Communications and Marketing.

- Jenny Walker, Business Manager - Public Protection
- Christie Conroy, DAHA Accreditation Coordinator (Nottinghamshire Women's Aid)
- Hellen Ellison, Senior Health & Wellbeing Officer
- Cheska Asman, Homeless Strategy & Safeguarding Officer
- Sarah Lacey, Communications & Marketing Manager

External colleagues from partner organisations were also invited to attend to share their experiences and views on the topic.

- Inspector Charlotte Ellam, District commander for Newark & Sherwood,
- Penny Taylor, Head of Newark College and the Air & Space Institute
- Holly Youd, Youth Engagement Programme Manager (YMCA)
- Kelly Evans, Head of Partnerships & Community (Active4Today)
- Alexis Knock, Director of Business and Finance (Active4Today)

Each session proved to be valuable, with speakers and data collected offering the opportunity to valuable insights and some practical takeaways. A comprehensive summary of each session, including key discussion points is provided in **Appendix 2** for further reference.

2.0 **Proposal/Options Considered**

State of the Girls Rights Report

Plan International UK, a global children's charity committed to creating an equal world, published "The State of Girls' Rights in the UK" report in 2024. The report highlights significant challenges faced by girls, including safety concerns, educational inadequacies, and societal pressures, while calling for urgent action to achieve gender equality.

Between May and June 2023, they surveyed 2,963 UK girls and young women aged 12-21, which was the highest number in the report's eight-year history, to identify their most pressing concerns. The report acknowledges that, while efforts were made to ensure a representative sample, the views of 2,963 girls and young women cannot fully reflect the experiences of millions across the UK, some demographic groups and perspectives may not have been captured.

2.1 Data tool

Further to the report, Plan International developed an online tool. This tool is powered by a Local Authority index that Plan International have collated, based on indicators available nationally. Users can search by their postcode or council and learn about the reality of growing up as a girl in specific areas, and the injustices girls.

According to the data tool, girls and young women living in the Newark & Sherwood district, are living in the bottom 20% of places in the UK, whilst the rest of the county is rated as follows:

- Rushcliffe, Bassetlaw, Mansfield – falling short
- Gedling – bottom 50%
- Nottingham, Broxtowe – bottom 20%
- Ashfield - bottom 10%

2.2 Building a Bigger Picture for Newark & Sherwood

The group has used the Plan International Report and data tool as a springboard to gather local data and insights. The group have undertaken in depth exploration of key areas to better understand the scale of the issue affecting girls and women in Newark & Sherwood, as well as the work already underway by us and partners.

- 2.3 Identifying what can be done differently to intervene, improve and advocate the life chances for girls and young women in the district by the Council and by our partners
The working group recognises that girls and young women experience layered disadvantages stemming from concerns around public and online safety, health inequalities, educational barriers, and other systemic challenges. Such issues can be further compounded by entrenched societal norms and structural discrimination.

Where you live also plays a critical role in shaping life chances. It is therefore essential that local support, services, and initiatives are not only well-communicated but also purposefully designed and effective.

- 2.4 From understanding the initiatives and activities already being delivered, there is much to celebrate. The following are examples of the positive and partnership work that has been and continues to be undertaken by the Council and our Partners:

Feelings of Safety

- **Police Culture:** Inspector Charlotte Ellam - District Commander for Newark & Sherwood says:
"Policing culture has transformed significantly over the course of my career. In the early days, opportunities for women were often limited and lacked meaningful support. Today we see stronger mentorship frameworks that genuinely empower young women. From my initial role specialising in sexual offences to leading as Neighbourhood Inspector in Newark, I've always prioritised being a supportive leader and a positive role model. Mentoring others, especially women entering the service, remains one of the most fulfilling aspects of my journey."
- **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation (DAHA):** The Council is actively working towards achieving accreditation from the DAHA, a nationally recognised benchmark for housing providers committed to supporting survivors of domestic abuse. A key component of the accreditation is the delivery of comprehensive workforce training. All staff who come into contact with customers are required to complete an eLearning module, with additional in-person sessions for operational teams, which covers critical topics such as recognising different forms of abuse, responding appropriately to disclosures, avoiding victim-blaming, and referring survivors to specialist services. The accreditation process involves a rigorous audit of the Council's policies, procedures, and practices. The accreditation process is expected to drive meaningful change and to ensure that survivors receive the right response first time, every time. Crucially, staff will be empowered to signpost survivors to specialist support services, reinforcing the Council's ambition to be domestic abuse aware.
- **Violence Against Women and Girls:** VAWG remains a critical issue both nationally and locally. According to the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), VAWG accounts for nearly 20% of all recorded crime in England and Wales. In response to this, in October 2024 the Council unanimously passed a motion committing to do all within its power to highlight the issue and improve the safety of women and girls across the district.

- **Walk in My Shoes:** a campaign by Nottinghamshire Police, attempting to encourage people to report instances of feeling unsafe to get a better understanding of feelings of safety in the city and county.
- **Community Safety Partnership (CSP):** a statutory body which the Council chairs, which is aimed at protecting the public and make you feel safe while living in and visiting our districts. The CSP are required to undertake Domestic Homicides Reviews (DHRs). In May 2025, there were 6 DHR running across our local CSP, which is the most we have ever had together at the same time. Alongside this there is wider case related, campaigns and strategic level working, district and countywide meetings related to Community Safety, Crime and Anti-social Behaviour.
- **Independent Domestic Violence Advocates:** organised by Nottinghamshire Women's Aid, provides support to pregnant women, such as to help to train midwives in issues such as:
 - why would being pregnant not be a protective factor to mum?
 - why do victims stay even when there might be harm to their baby?
 - encouraged to disclose in a safe and open environment, to ensure that victims and their children are safer, sooner.

The Council's Housing Options Team have an independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA) for three days a week, some of that time with the officers at Alexander Lodge and Castle House.

It was reported to the group that domestic violence has overtaken gestational diabetes and pre-eclampsia as the leading cause of foetal death.

Around 30% of domestic abuse begins during pregnancy, while 40–60% of women experiencing domestic abuse are abused during pregnancy. 12% of the 378 women whose deaths were reported to the Confidential Enquiry on Maternal Deaths (2001) had voluntarily reported domestic violence to a healthcare professional during their pregnancy. None had routinely been asked about domestic violence, so this is almost certainly an under-estimate. (3)

- **CCTV Project:** As outlined in the Council's Community Plan, to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, improving community feelings of safety, significant progress is being made to bring the management of CCTV operations in-house. This strategic move is designed to improve responsiveness, accountability, and operational efficiency. One of the key outcomes of this transition is the ability to focus proactive surveillance and intervention efforts more effectively across Newark & Sherwood. By centralising control, the Council can better target areas of concern, respond swiftly to incidents, and support wider community safety initiatives. This approach also opens up opportunities for closer collaboration with local enforcement teams and community partners, ensuring that CCTV is used not only as a deterrent but as a tool for early intervention and evidence gathering.

- **Safer Gyms:** A survey conducted by the Office of the Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Commissioner found that women are often made to feel uncomfortable in a gym or fitness setting, with experiences of being stared at while exercising, receiving unsolicited advice or overly flirtatious comments, being followed and even being photographed or recorded without consent. The scheme aims to increase feelings of safety for women and girls within fitness centres and gymnasiums.
- **Prison Me No Way:** Interactive and education programme to think carefully about the decisions they make throughout their lives, stay safe, positively manage the temptations of modern society, and increasing risks posed through social media, develop into law-abiding citizens, and achieve their full potential. Collectively helping young people and their communities to reduce crime, reoffending and anti-social behaviour and contribute towards creating safer communities for all.

Health and Wellbeing

- **Delivering food clubs:** A diversionary activity which provides opportunities for young people to learn how to cook nutritious, healthy meals. These sessions consistently attract high levels of interest and are frequently oversubscribed, highlighting their popularity and impact. In addition to their core purpose, these sessions present a valuable opportunity to apply the principles of 'Make Every Contact Count', enabling staff to engage with young people on broader wellbeing topics, signpost to additional support services, and reinforce positive lifestyle choices in a relaxed and informal setting.
- **National Women's Census Pilot:** is a pioneering initiative led by Solace Women's Aid and the Single Homeless Project, designed to uncover the hidden reality of women's homelessness in the UK. Traditional rough sleeper counts often miss women due to their tendency to avoid visible street homelessness, instead experiencing "hidden homelessness" such as sofa surfing or staying in unsafe accommodation. Nottinghamshire, including Newark & Sherwood, actively participated in the 2023 and 2024 pilots. The next pilot is taking place September 2025.
- **Women's Severe Multiple Disadvantage (SMD) Group:** Nottinghamshire took part in a pilot women's homelessness census in 2023 and 2024 which has led to the creation of a women's SMD group. This group is focused on building a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by women experiencing multiple disadvantages. The collaboration involves gathering insights to create a whole-system picture. The Councils involved are actively working on women's focussed activities, with shared learning emerging across the partnership to inform future practice and support.
- **Leisure centres deliver activities:** Active4Today is making a meaningful impact on the lives of girls and young women by offering free school holiday activities, female-only swimming and self-defence sessions, and ensuring female instructors are available across all programmes. Through initiatives like VISPA (Volunteering in Sport and Physical Activity) and targeted bursaries for mental health, special educational needs, and unemployment, they are creating inclusive, supportive opportunities that empower girls to thrive physically, socially, and emotionally. Data from September 2025 comparing the number of

live memberships between males and females, across the four leisure centres, shows an 82% increase in women from April 2024 to August 2025. The data also highlights a higher and increasing number of women participating in group workouts in comparison to individual activities.

Empowerment and Future Prospects

- **College enrolment:** Enrolment data for Newark College and the Air & Space Institute (ASI) for the academic year 2024/2025 indicates that 393 women are currently enrolled, representing 42% of the total student population. While both institutions offer a broad range of courses including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), female participation in these subjects remains significantly lower than that of their male peers. This trend reflects ongoing gender-based course selection patterns, with many students continuing to follow traditionally gendered pathways.
- **Holistic support at college:** Beyond education and formal qualifications, colleagues at Newark College and the ASI are deeply committed to supporting students through this transition stage of life and preparing them for their future. These include initiatives aimed at empowering women, fostering self-worth and self-belief, and building confidence, particularly for those who may face barriers to participation or progression. In addition, colleges provide practical support such as employability skills training, pastoral care, access to a food bank, and counselling services. Students can also benefit from sexual health support and tailored careers advice, ensuring their wellbeing and future prospects are nurtured alongside academic achievement.
- **Mentoring and coaching project and local employers to empower the next generation:** The Council has supported the empowerment of female students through a coaching and mentorship programme organised by Newark College to pair experienced female business leaders with female students studying on an industry-based course. The initiative is designed to empower women across various sectors by offering structured mentorship and coaching. It focuses on building confidence, enhancing technical and leadership skills, and supporting career progression. The programme creates pathways into traditionally male-dominated industries, helping women overcome barriers and thrive professionally. A specialised strand of the wider project is the Women in Plumbing trail which encourages and supports women to enter and succeed in the plumbing trade. Through hands-on training, industry exposure, and one-to-one mentoring, participants gain practical experience and build the confidence needed to pursue careers in plumbing. There are several success stories as a result of some of these initiatives, such as:
 - 'Ellie' will begin her training as a fighter jet pilot with the RAF in November, showcasing the programme's impact beyond plumbing and into high-skilled, high-impact roles.
 - 'Grace' has started an engineering apprenticeship with Rolls Royce, demonstrating how mentoring and coaching can lead to prestigious technical career opportunities.
 - 'Cheryl' has successfully secured employment with a local plumbing company, a direct result of her participation in the Women in Plumbing trail and the support she received from mentors.

- **Changemakers:** is service that provides skills workshops, action projects and youth voice sessions at the YMCA. These activities empower young people and provide opportunities for further learning and development and employment. Participants were encouraged to explore causes that they care about. Some of the events that young people have chosen to take up include:
 - Afternoon tea event at Gladstone House to help combat loneliness
 - A litter pick event to help protect their environment
 - Teaming up with local vets, RSPCA rescue and stray dog services to promote helping animals.

Communication and Engagement

- **Communications and Social media strategy:** as part of our evolving communications strategy, we are placing a strong emphasis on engaging younger audiences through targeted and platform-specific social media initiatives. A standout example is the Recycling with NSDC campaign, which has been carefully crafted to reflect Gen Z's digital preferences and values. (Gen Z was born between 1997 and 2012.) Importantly, both the platform choice and the involvement of young people in content creation have been central to its success. This co-creation approach not only ensures the messaging feels genuine but also builds trust and increases the likelihood of engagement and behavioural change. The impact has been clear: the video generated 12,000 views, demonstrating strong resonance with the target audience and validating the strategy's effectiveness.
- Also, the Open Doors Creative Influencers programme, a successful community initiative focused on arts and culture, have been showcased in a 'takeover' video which aims to actively amplifying the voices of young people and improve access and opportunities for young people to engage in arts and culture in Newark. More broadly, our approach to communication should prioritise gender-inclusive language, such as using 'everyone' instead of gendered terms like 'ladies' or 'gents' to ensure that all individuals feel respected, included, and represented, regardless of their gender identity.
- **Internal communication campaigns:** The Council is currently running an internal campaign titled "It's Not Just Banter". Delivered through plain and simple communications, the campaign seeks to raise awareness about the impact of seemingly trivial comments and interactions, emphasising that what may be perceived as 'banter' can in fact contribute to a hostile or uncomfortable environment. This initiative is particularly important in addressing experiences of women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by casual sexism, public harassment, and gender-based microaggressions.
- **Resident Panel:** As of June 2025, the Resident Panel comprises 255 members who are invited to participate in consultations aligned with their interests. However, residents aged 16 to 25 remain the least represented demographic. To address this gap, efforts are underway to promote the panel as a meaningful opportunity for younger residents, including targeted outreach marketing and communications through Newark College and the ASI, with a focus on improved signposting and engagement.

2.5 Recommendations

Whilst there is much to celebrate, there are multiple areas the group have identified and have been cited in the recommendations. Several elements focus on enhancing existing initiatives. Notably, these include improvements in communication strategies aimed at better promotion and signposting. The full set of recommendations developed by the working groups is presented in **Appendix 3**. Some recommendations are already underway or being addressed through other workstreams, as clearly noted in the document where applicable.

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	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

3.1 Financial Implications (FIN25-26/800)

From the list of recommendations detailed in Appendix 3 – Life Chances for Girls, the following are highlighted for awareness:

Recommendation No.	Financial Comment
1, 2 & 3	Any increase of resource or costs for Active 4 Today, could increase the costs to the Council through the management fee, however this along with all other costs are offset by income generated.
16 & 17	A sum of £50,000 has been included in the proposed 2026/27 as a requested change, intended to replace the financial support previously provided by the OPCC for localities, and to facilitate the continuation of related activities throughout the 2026/2027 and future financial years.

All other recommendations listed are expected to be delivered within existing budgets, therefore no additional funding is required to implement these actions, and they fall within the scope of current operational budgets and staffing capacity.

4.0 References:

1. STEM Women, 2023. **Women In STEM Statistics: Progress and Challenges.** [online] Available via: [Women In STEM Statistics: Progress and Challenges - Stem Women](#)
2. Education Policy Institute, 2025. **No room for battle of the sexes: Why boys AND girls matter** [online] Available via: [No room for battle of the sexes: Why boys AND girls matter - Education Policy Institute](#)
3. SafeLives, no date. **Idvas in maternity units.** [online] Available via: [Idvas in maternity units - SafeLives](#)
4. NPCC, 2024. **Violence Against Women and Girls.** [online] Available via: [Violence Against Women and Girls](#)
5. Plan International UK, 2024. **The State of Girls' Rights in the UK 2024.** [online] Available via: <https://act.plan-uk.org/page/150206/data/1?locale=en-GB>
6. Office for National Statistics, 2024. **Labour Market Profile - Newark and Sherwood** [online] Available via: [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#)
7. Newark and Sherwood District Council, 2025. **Domestic homicide reviews (DHR)** [online] Available via: [Domestic homicide reviews \(DHR\) | Newark & Sherwood District Council](#)

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

Appendix 1: Topic Request Form

Available on Mod.Gov or by contacting the Democratic Services lead for PPI. To be considered at the next PPI Committee the form must be submitted 20 working days before the next meeting.

Topic Request Form	
Please complete the first section of this form to request that a topic is considered by the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee. Please send the completed form to Helen Brandham	
Section 1: Member Request	
Proposed Topic	Life Chances for Girls
I would like to understand (Key lines of enquiry)	<p>Based on the findings of a report by Plan International, Newark and Sherwood are in the bottom 20% of places in the UK to be a girl;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 fewer years in good health • 25% leave school without good GCSE results • 1 in 3 live in poverty • Women earn 23% less than men <p>As such the priority is to examine the data set in more depth and consider its merits.</p> <p>Build on this and develop a fuller picture of the life chance for girls in Newark and Sherwood, by identifying and supplementing with more up to date and relevant data, that the Council holds and from partners or wider, national sources too.</p> <p>To collate a summary of the activities, area of work and key achievements that the Council delivers or facilitates with partners to support this agenda around girls and young women. In many cases it is acknowledged that the Council has a place to influence by working with community groups, education, health care providers and business, but cannot directly and independently address all the challenges highlighted.</p> <p>Finally, by reflecting on all of this, to make recommendations of what changes, or work in this area that can be done differently to intervene, improve and advocate the life chances for girls and young women in the district by the Council and by our partners.</p>
I think this topic should be considered because	<p>Girls and young women are telling us that it remains tough to be a girl up and down the country, from their safety in public and online, health inequalities, disparity in education, future job prospects and a culture of misogyny.</p> <p>Where you live fundamentally affects your life chances. The support your community can provide, and the local services you can draw on, can impact your quality of life and help or hinder access to your rights.</p>

Appendix 1: Topic Request Form

	<p>Plan International, a global children's charity striving for a fairer world, prioritising girls and their rights, have recently surveyed 3,000 girls and young women aged 12 to 21.</p> <p>The State of Girls' Rights in the UK 2024 was the biggest ever exercise in listening to girls' voices ever.</p> <p>With the results, Plan International have developed and published an online tool, you can search by postcode or council and learn about the reality of growing up as a girl in a specific region.</p>	
(If applicable) High level evidence supporting the reason for consideration	<p>Source: How tough is it to be a girl where you live?</p> <p>Source: state-of-girls-rights-report.pdf</p>	
Proposed by (Name of member)	Cllr Rowan Cozens	Ward: Beacon Party: Independents for Newark
Seconded by (Name of member)	Cllr Susan Crosby	Ward: Beacon Party: Independents for Newark
Date Form Submitted	03.02.25	
Section 2: Officer Recommendation		
Officer Comments	<p>It is important to note that this working group is not about identifying more work for the Council to deliver, but to identify how we can possibly change some of the current approaches to support this agenda. Plus, engage and have open conversations with our partners to recognise their role and change any of their approaches too.</p> <p>It would be appropriate for the working group to carry out a scoping exercise only. It is not envisioned that any more resource is required by the Council but may indicate value of redeploying it, so we better support the life chances for girls across the district.</p>	
Officer Recommendation	Do undertake scoping work – Working Group Recommended	
Officer Name	Deborah Johnson	Director, Customer Services and Organisational Development
Date Information Added	24.01.25	
Section 3: PPI Chair Recommendation		
PPI Chair Comment	I fully support that this will be a worthwhile piece of scoping work and agree with the officer comments	
PPI Chair Recommendation	Do undertake a review	
Date Information Added	24.01.25	Role: Chair, PPIC
Next step		
Completed form to be taken to PPI on 10.02.25		

Appendix 2: Working Group Headlines

Session 1: 3 April 2025.

This session outlined the significance of the working group and focused on setting the scene and expectations for future meetings. Key to this was the acknowledgement of the emotive nature of the topic.

The Plan International Report was discussed in depth as the basis of the of the working group. Plan International UK, a global children's charity striving for an equal world. One where every child can reach their full potential, and every girl can choose her own future.

Between May and June 2023 2,963 UK girls and young women aged 12-21 were surveyed, the highest number in the report's eight-year history, to identify their most pressing concerns. The key themes included:

- Feeling of safety (in person and online)
- Education and future prospects
- Gender inequalities and gender norms
- Cost of living
- Health and wellbeing
- Representation and role models
- Having little trust in politicians and institutions

Plan International online tool: The tool asks, "How tough is it to be a girl where you live?" This tool is powered by a Local Authority index that Plan International have collated, based on a number of indicators available nationally. You can search by postcode or council and learn about the reality of growing up as a girl in your area, and the injustices girls.

Based on the tool, for girls living in the Newark and Sherwood t, they are living in the bottom 20% of places in the UK.

The rest of the district:

- Rushcliffe, Mansfield and Bassetlaw – falling short
- Gedling – bottom 50%
- Nottingham – bottom 20%
- Broxtowe – bottom 20%
- Ashfield - bottom 10%

The merits of the report and data tool: The group noted that Plan International conducted a horizon scanning exercise prior to the survey. This involved workshops with 24 girls and young women (aged 12–20) across the UK, both online and in person, recruited via local networks in Norwich, Torfaen, Perthshire, and Belfast. The resulting survey exceeded their target of 2,600 responses, reaching 2,963. While they aimed for a representative sample using open and closed questions across all UK nations, they acknowledged that this cannot fully reflect the experiences of millions of girls and young women.

Building a fuller picture of Newark and Sherwood: The session was particularly data heavy. Members were presented with wider sources of data and information, including:

- Serious Violence Profile – Newark & Sherwood, including nature and victim profile for different types of crimes
- Domestic Homicide Reviews being undertaken

- Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment, January 2025 (Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Violence Reduction Partnership (NNVRP), including controlling and coercive behaviour
- Data from Domestic Abuse charities Refuge and Safe Lives – 1 in 4 women in England and Wales will experience domestic abuse in her lifetime. On average, one woman is killed by an abusive partner or ex every five days in England and Wales.
- Healthcare gender gap, including life span vs health span
- Leisure centre enrolment and participation
- Education attainment, NEET (Not in education, employment or training)
- Representation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects
- Department for Work and Pensions data on Employment rate gap and claimant counts for Universal Credit
- Representation in homelessness counts
- Demand and provisions by food banks

A closer look at the Council: The group considered the support in places and initiatives that enable colleagues to a healthy work/life balance while enabling excellent services to residents. The session highlighted various policies and initiatives designed to promote more effective working, such as Flexible working, including compressed hours, job share, hybrid working, generous annual leave, special leave, time off for dependents and maternity and adoption support. Although they are not all exclusively aimed at women, they reflect the Council's broader commitment to supporting all staff.

To conclude, the key themes from the session were acknowledged, and guest speakers were agreed to be invited to future sessions.

Session 2: 12 May 2025

There were 4 guest speakers in attendance at this session.

- Christie Conroy from Nottinghamshire Women's Aid, supporting NSDC gain the DAHA accreditation.
- Jenny Walker, the Business Manager for Public Protection at NSDC
- Cheska Asman, Homeless Strategy and Safeguarding Officer at NSDC
- Helen Ellison, Senior Health Improvement Officer at NSDC

Christie Conroy focused on Domestic Abuse. Nottinghamshire Women's Aid are the commissioned specialist domestic abuse support provider for women, children and teenagers who live in Bassetlaw, Mansfield and Newark and Sherwood. Domestic abuse affects the whole family, and it can have a serious impact on children.

Christie discussed the challenges, namely being volume of work in general but specifically requests for sanctuary. Sanctuary is a scheme that aims to reduce homelessness and improve safety for survivors of domestic abuse. Instead of requiring individuals to flee their homes, the scheme enables them to remain safely in their current residence by installing security measures such as locks, alarms, and other protective interventions.

Other services provided include counselling, refuge, family court, support for women and children. For example:

Medium Risk Intervention Service – referrals from the police when there has been a police incident, that has been assessed as medium risk and consent has been obtained to refer into service.

Maternity independent domestic violence advisors IDVA service is available to pregnant women or women who have been pregnant or had a child in the last 6 months (including birth, miscarriage, termination, adoption, still birth and infant loss).

Christie highlighted the opportunities for additional education and training in schools, specifically Healthy Relationships training, but other demands and budget pressures restrict their ability to facilitate additional learning.

Jenny Walker focused on Community Safety. The data discussed mirrored information provided by Christie. A number of successes and activities were provided:

- Close partnership working
- CCTV initiatives, increasing feelings of safety amongst all residents.
- Supporting the Healthy Relationship training in schools.
- Prison me no way, to raise awareness among young people about the causes, consequences, penalties, and impact of crime
- Safer Streets, a scheme which has supported the implementation of a 'youth pod' in Balderton.

Jenny highlighted the challenges associated with this area of work. Demand for services is always increasing but funding for activities or support is decreasing. When discussing opportunities and areas to improve, Jenny provided that all school age children should receive Healthy Relationships training.

Cheska Asman focused on Homelessness. She highlighted the number of women sleeping rough, is low. However, outlined that women can often be less visible when homeless. Cheska provided a number of successes:

- National Women's Census Pilot
- Nottinghamshire Women's Severe Multiple Disadvantage Group
- Housing Options Team are supported by an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor

Cheska discussed the challenges in this area. As women are less visible when homeless, evidencing their experiences can be difficult. To improve this area, more cross-functional working is required but additional resource would be necessary.

Helen Ellison focused on Health and Wellbeing. Helen discussed a number of successes and activities:

- Best Start groups
- Development of a Young Person Volunteer task and finish group
- BFF Scheme
- Voluntary Sector Support, focusing on food support and hygiene banks
- RSPH Level 2 Young Health Champs, engaging with young girls
- Dove Body Image Sessions, working to deliver sessions in primary schools
- Food club programmes, which are hugely popular

Helen highlighted that capacity and not having a statutory responsibility can cause challenges in this area. She raised that working with health partners to access data to understand inequalities and having more resource to support schools would be beneficial.

Session 3: 11 June 2025

There were three external speakers in attendance at this session:

- Inspector Charlotte Ellam, Divisional Commander for Newark and Sherwood, from Nottinghamshire Police
- Alexis Knock, Director of Business and Finance and Finance and Kelly Evans, Head of Partnerships & Community, from Active 4 Today.

Each speaker focused on their career, the initiatives they have been involved in and how their experiences as women.

Charlotte Ellam first spoke of her personal life, how she began her career and how she learned to separate her work life from her home life. Charlotte worked in many different areas within the policing sector, qualifying as an officer specialising in sexual offences to becoming a Demand Management Inspector and eventually working as the Neighbourhood Inspector for Newark. Throughout her career, Charlotte highlighted the emphasis she placed on being a good leader and role model, mentoring many young women. She outlined a number of successes and initiatives:

- Culture has changed significantly throughout Charlotte's career; there is less tokenism and good systems of mentorship available for young women.
- More awareness and understanding of mental health, societal expectations and boundaries among the new generation
- Higher reporting levels
- Ask for Angela, a scheme aimed at supporting the safety of people.
- Violence Against Women and Girls initiatives
- Safer Gyms accreditation

Charlotte emphasised that increased police presence would be greatly beneficial but unrealistic due to capacity, resources and a demand for officers in certain areas.

Alexis Knock and Kelly Evans focused on Active 4 Today, leisure centres in Newark, Southwell, Blidworth and Dukeries in Boughton. They discussed the aims of the organisation, to be financially viable, provide healthy and active opportunities and to ensure access to all where possible.

Data received at the time of the working group meeting (August 2025), of the 2,706 total memberships, 42% were held by women and 58% by men, a 16% higher proportion for male members. Women tend to dominate group workout areas, while men are more prevalent in the fitness space.

Alexis and Kelly discussed the number of initiatives they have been involved in:

- Free activities for children during the school holidays
- VISPA (Volunteering in Sport and Physical Activity) a volunteer scheme dedicated to sports volunteering in Newark and Sherwood
- Offering bursaries for mental health, SEN and those who are unemployed
- Providing female instructors across all areas
- Providing female only swimming sessions
- Offering self-defence sessions

Alexis and Kelly provided the challenges with this sector. It is widely acknowledged that drop out of sports is at age 14 and encouraging participation can be difficult with many barriers, such as confidence and lack of representation.

Active4Today works closely with schools and share messaging from trusted sources such as Sport England, including [This Girl Can](#) and [Studio You](#). This Girl Can is a national campaign by Sport England that celebrates active women of all shapes, sizes, and abilities. It aims to break down barriers like fear of judgement that prevent women and girls from getting involved in sport and physical activity. Studio You is an extension of the This Girl Can campaign, specifically designed for schools, which offers PE lessons tailored to teenage girls, making it more inclusive, fun, and accessible, especially for those who feel disengaged or intimidated by traditional PE formats.

Alexis and Kelly outlined that they had recently worked with Nottingham Trent University with students studying communications and marketing, which is part of the university's broader programme that partners students with local businesses over several months to help identify strengths and areas for improvement in their communications and marketing strategies.

One of the key findings from the student-led report was the need to improve branding and the use of imagery. It was noted that customers and prospective members respond more positively to marketing materials that feature real, recognisable members rather than generic stock images. This approach fosters authenticity and relatability. The working group agreed and felt that it is important the images reflected a range of people, to promote inclusivity.

Session 4: 5 August 2025.

There were two external speakers:

- Penny Taylor the Head of Newark Campuses
- Holly Youd Youth Engagement Programme Manager at the YMCA

Penny Taylor shared some of career journey and highlights across health, criminal justice, youth offending and education.

She discussed data from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities highlighting that Newark and Sherwood were in the top 10% most deprived areas in England for education, skills, training and employment. Penny provided a number of initiatives they have employed in the Newark campuses:

- Mentoring and coaching projects by women in industry.
- Women gaining experience with local employers whilst attending college.
- Peer learning
- Working with the GRT community to engage those who do not align themselves with traditional learning methods

Penny evidenced the success of these initiatives through case studies and emphasised the importance of colleges providing technical and vocational learning. Colleges provide an opportunity beyond education to empower women, develop self-worth and belief, gain employability skills and receive advice in a range of areas from careers support and sexual health. Alongside this, Penny noted the importance of girls being part of local community groups from a young age such as Brownies in order to foster self-confidence.

Holly Youd shared insights from her recent experience as a science teacher, having only left the profession in late 2024. She reflected on her time teaching STEM subjects and spoke about her perspective as a woman working in the field.

Holly discussed the support young people received through ChangeMakers. Changemaker's is a service that provides skills workshops, action projects and youth voice sessions at the YMCA. These activities empower young people and provide opportunities for further learning and development and employment. Participants were encouraged to explore causes they care about. Some of the events that young people have chosen to take up include:

- Afternoon tea event at Gladstone House to help combat loneliness
- A litter pick event to help protect their environment
- Teaming up with local vets, RSPCA rescue and stray dog services to promote helping animals.

Holly discussed the Developmental Assets Project, an attitude and behaviours survey completed, developed from the Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework, which identifies 40 research-based, positive experiences and qualities that influence young people's development, helping them become caring, responsible, and productive adults.

YMCA ran the Developmental Assets project in 2023 to survey pupils at 3 secondary schools: Magnus, Newark Academy & Suthers. A single year cohort (Year 8) – circa .300 students took part and the survey is due to be conducted again shortly for comparative purposes. This is with a view to better understand what it's like to grow up in Newark and Sherwood, and highlight any strengths or gaps, to appropriately tailor support for young people.

Session 5: 3 September 2025

In the final session, the working group reflected on data sets and insights shared by both internal and external speakers throughout the previous sessions.

Also, the group invited Sarah Lacey, the Council's Comms and Marketing Manager.

Sarah first shared her background in local government, experiences as a working mum and how she approaches leading her team.

Sarah provided insights into the Council's communications strategy, such as:

- Data insights to engage with a specific target audience
- Gender inclusive language such as "everyone" over "ladies and or "gents"
- Internal campaigns "it is not just banter "through plain and simple communications

Sarah outlined a range of activities and how targeted messaging could support future work in this area. Two videos were shared as part of the presentation:

- A social media video showcasing how the council currently engages younger audiences, specifically through the *Recycling with NSDC* campaign, written by and styled to appeal to Gen Z (Gen Z was born between 1997 and 2012)

It should be noted that Sarah shared with the group that the government introduced a ban of the TikTok app on all UK government phones in 2023. As such the Council have to date taken a stance of not using the social media app.

- An example from the Open Doors Creative Influencers programme, a successful community initiative focused on arts and culture, which places young people's voices at the heart of its messaging

Finally, members were invited to reflect on the recommendations collated so far and highlight any questions or gaps.

All members of the working group will have the opportunity to reflect individually and share additional feedback ahead of the final report being presented to PPIC.

Appendix 3: Life Chances for Girls – Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Further information	Lead Officer to deliver
1	<p>Active4Today branding material with a focus on representative images</p> <p>As part of a planned updated to their branding and promotional materials, Active4Today to focus on using images from the local community.</p> <p>These images should include a diverse range of individuals to reflect the district's population and promote inclusivity, particularly in how girls and young women are represented.</p>	<p>Following the recent work carried out by communications and marketing students from Nottingham Trent University as part of a long-term university programme, the report highlighted the need to enhance branding and imagery. It was recommended that marketing materials feature real, recognisable members to foster authenticity and relatability.</p> <p>The Life Chances for Girls Working Group agreed, emphasising the importance of using inclusive imagery that reflects a diverse range of people.</p> <p>Active4Today is initially seeking specialist advice from Communications and Marketing Business Manager on this and a wider scheme of comms and marketing works.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Active4Today will look to increase resource with a focus on strategic marketing.</p>	Active 4 Today
Agenda Page 95	<p>Celebrate the success of existing Active4Today programmes</p> <p>Active4Today to regularly share good news stories and programme successes to highlight the positive impact on members and the wider community. Emphasis should be placed on showcasing outcomes for girls and women, helping to inspire participation and demonstrate inclusive engagement.</p>	<p>The team at Active4Today are actively working on their approach this and share these updates consistently across communications platforms.</p> <p>Active4Today is initially seeking specialist advice from Communications and Marketing Business Manager on this and a wider scheme of comms and marketing works.</p>	Active 4 Today

		It is anticipated that Active4Today will look to increase resource with a focus on strategic marketing.	
3	<p>Report on performance and programmes with specific focus on outcomes for girls and women</p> <p>To work collaboratively Active 4 Today to agree the best way to provide clearer insights into how girls and women are engaging with the leisure facilities and targeted group programmes.</p> <p>To include gender specific user numbers to ensure we understand how women and young girls are using our services</p>	<p>Active4Today will submit their draft Business Plan in November as part of the annual cycle. This presents a timely opportunity to introduce the proposed context and direction, with any agreed changes to be implemented from the 2026/2027 period.</p> <p>Any changes to the existing reporting arrangements must be communicated in advance, with appropriate context provided. This should include reference to the Life Chances for Girls Working Group to ensure alignment and transparency to the Board and Shareholders.</p>	Active 4 Today and Performance Team
4	<p>Promote Healthy Relationships through targeted awareness programmes</p> <p>To make it a requirement as part of supporting and funding community settings (e.g. sports pitches) that our partners deliver a targeted awareness programme.</p> <p>These sessions should aim to include topics such as mutual respect, and breaking down gender stereotypes, and support healthy relationships between boys and girls.</p>		Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager
	<p>Promote online safety education</p> <p>To work with our partners to identify ways to promote online safety education for young people and parents/carers highlighting specific risks and pressures associated with consuming digital media.</p>	To be delivered as part of existing Communications Strategy, with a focus on trusted partners messaging that the Council can signpost and share.	Communications and Marketing Business Manager

Agenda Page 97	6	Support actions based on public safety survey results To review and work collaboratively with Nottinghamshire Police on the findings on the 'Walk in my shoes' survey, focusing specifically on the identified hotspots within our district.	The survey closed 26 May. https://nottssvss.org.uk/walk-in-my-shoes/ The police have gathered the data and discussed with the Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO). A report, including recommendations for improvements has been referred to the Council for supporting actions.	Community Safety Manager
	7	Domestic Abuse training To ensure that council communications and public-facing materials clearly convey that staff are trained in domestic abuse awareness and that the council offers a safe, supportive environment for residents seeking help or information. The working group identified that there is a benefit for members training session too, which will be built into the wider programme of works.	This is being delivered as part of the wider DAHA accreditation work and communications plan, such as DA messaging and visible indicators to be include on the website, signage, service points and social media,	DAHA operational group
	8	Domestic Abuse resources and information online To continue work on reviewing and strengthening the Council's website content on Domestic Abuse, to ensure that we clearly communicate the support pathways to anyone affected. This includes signposting survivors to Nottinghamshire's Women Aid Co-Production Service 'Better Together', which invites survivors of domestic abuse, including men, women, and young people to share their experiences and shape future support services through small group or 1:1 sessions. These sessions are facilitated by Nottingham Trent University.		DAHA operational group
		Spaces suitable for girls		Director of Communities and Environment

	To work with suppliers and architects to ensure that when the Council is designing future parks or outdoors spaces, the criteria should reflect the needs and voices of girls and young women.		
10	<p>Expand the food clubs through community volunteers</p> <p>To continue to deliver and consider possible expansion of the delivery of food clubs and cookery skills programmes, which have proven to be popular, inclusive, and oversubscribed. This would be achieved through recruiting a cohort of volunteers, that the council upskills and supports to deliver in their own communities, and need some initial resources such as Level 3 Food Hygiene Certificate, plus materials e.g. gas stoves, chopping boards, pans.</p> <p>These programmes offer safe spaces for diverse groups, including girls, GRT communities, SEN young people, and boys and provide valuable opportunities to engage on wider issues by “making every contact count.”</p>	<p>Between June 2024 and July 2025, over 140 teens participated on the sessions run by the Council (up to 15 per class).</p> <p>With this demand, it has been a longer-term aspiration to widen the delivery model as such will be built into the Council’s Business Planning cycle to implement from 2026/2027.</p>	Healthy Active Lifestyle Manager
11	<p>Council’s Gender Pay Gap report to PPIC</p> <p>To present the Council’s Gender Pay Gap report to PPIC on an annual basis for scrutiny.</p> <p>The report is currently shared with SLT and JCC. Presenting the report to a scrutiny committee annually would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable oversight of how well the council is progressing toward gender equity in pay and leadership. • Align with broader equality goals, such as Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion 	<p>The most recent report was published for 2024:</p> <p>https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/media/nsdc-redesign/documents-and-images/your-council/access-to-our-information/publication-scheme/transparency/Gender-Pay-Gap-Reporting-for-March-2024.pdf</p>	HR and Training Business Manager
12	<p>Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) prioritised</p> <p>To embed Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) into all council projects, policies, and decisions to ensure that activities do not inadvertently disadvantage girls and young women.</p> <p>This may include:</p>		Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Operational Group

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make EIA completion a clear step in project initiation and policy development. • Include a specific prompt in the EIA template to assess gender-based impacts, with a focus on girls and young women. • Review completed EIAs annually to identify patterns and areas for improvement. 		
13	<p>Member understanding of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)</p> <p>To equip elected Members with the knowledge and confidence to interpret and embed Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to carry out any of their decision-making responsibility.</p> <p>This will ensure that there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater scrutiny of gendered impacts in council reports and strategies. • Stronger alignment between council actions and its commitment to equality and inclusion. 		Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Operational Group
14	<p>Member training to empower and ensure all voices are heard</p> <p>To add to the member training programme a supportive session aimed at creating a safe and inclusive space where all councillors can build confidence, develop practical tools, and feel empowered to express their views more actively in council settings.</p> <p>While the session will be open to everyone, it will be especially supportive of those who tend to be quieter in these environments, who are, though not exclusively, often women.</p>	Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee holds responsibility for member training, they have been invited to consider this recommendation and incorporate it into the forward plan for member development. The nature of the timeline means that by agreement this has been included on the G&GP&LGR committee agenda.	Elections and Democratic Services Business Manager
	<p>Members to receive training to support and target grant funding bids and opportunities</p> <p>To empower elected Members with the knowledge, tools, and confidence to effectively communicate grant funding opportunities and criteria to</p>		Healthy Places Business Manager

	<p>residents and community groups, thereby improving the quality and targeting of applications.</p> <p>This could cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility criteria, including examples of successful applications. • Key deadlines and decision-making timelines. • Contact details for the Community Team for direct support. • The grant application process and assessment criteria. • Common pitfalls and how to avoid them. • How Members can proactively identify and support eligible groups in their wards. 		
<p>16</p> <p>Agenda Page 100</p>	<p>Continue support and funding of ‘Prison me no way’</p> <p>To actively support the Council’s continued funding of the awareness programmes 'Prison Me No Way,' to see that each cohort receives the same benefits year on year.</p> <p>'Prison Me No Way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raises awareness among young people about the causes, consequences, penalties, and impact of crime. • promotes positive decision-making and personal responsibility <p>The sessions are interactive that simulate real-life scenarios, helping participants understand the realities of criminal behaviour and the justice system.</p> <p>Young people involved have engaged positively and provided feedback that they have been valuable.</p>	<p>https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/latest-news/2025/february/programme-aimed-at-educating-young-people/</p> <p>The sessions cost around £2.5k per day per school. For all secondary schools and some of the alternative provisions within the district, approximately £20k.</p> <p>NSDC funded this previously out of the Safer Greener Cleaner pot.</p> <p>It is well known that feelings of safety and reducing ASB are really important area to residents.</p> <p>NSDC is allocating budget to support these and other activities in 2026/27 and beyond.</p> <p>This funding forms part of a broader budget for diversionary initiatives, totalling approximately £50,000, and will replace</p>	<p>Director of Communities and Environment, Community Protection Business Manager, Portfolio Holder of Public Protection and Community</p>

		previous financial support provided through the Police and Crime Commissioner's Locality Fund.	
17	<p>Commissioning the delivery of behaviour change programmes such as 'Healthy Relationships' within schools and a wider diversionary programme of activities</p> <p>The Healthy Relationship programme was rolled out in some secondary schools in previous years, delivered by delivered by charity Equation.</p> <p>This is comprehensive training tailored for all secondary students, with a strong emphasis on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education around Violence Against Women and Girls • Challenging current trends in misogyny and incel propaganda • Promoting understanding of consent and respect • Providing guidance on phone and image safety <p>This programme is seen as a proactive measure to educate all young people about healthy relationships and reduce harmful behaviours.</p>	<p>NSDC is allocating budget to support these and other activities in 2026/27 and beyond.</p> <p>This funding forms part of a broader budget for diversionary initiatives (extreme wheels roadshows, amateur boxing, mending lines community fishing project and others) totalling approximately £50,000 and will replace previous financial support provided through the Police and Crime Commissioner's Locality Fund.</p>	Director of Communities and Environment, Business Manager for Community Protection and Portfolio Holder of Public Protection and Community
18	<p>Attend annual expo event with a focus on life chances for girls</p> <p>To reach and engage with a large and diverse cohort of young people at the annual expo event, sharing clear and accessible information, interactive resources and tools, and offering support and signposting which focuses on the life chances and outcomes of girls.</p> <p>The annual event is attended by approximately 1,500 children and is already well established. It presents a unique and high-impact opportunity to engage directly with young people from across the district. Establishing a dedicated stall at this event aligns with the working group's emphasis on improving communication and signposting strategies, particularly those aimed at younger audiences.</p>	<p>Arrangements are underway for officers to attend the next expo event on 13 November 2025 to share key messages about safety, wellbeing, and opportunity in a format that is accessible and engaging. This initiative can be delivered with minimal additional resource by leveraging existing materials and staff presence.</p> <p>https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/latest-news/2025/june/future-first-expo-2025/</p>	Transformation, HR Communications and Health and Wellbeing Teams

19	<p>Developmental assets data sharing</p> <p>To explore data intelligence gathered by YMCA for the Developmental Assets work, including comparative data between 2023 and 2025.</p> <p>Comparative data from 2025 would allow the council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track progress or regression in youth wellbeing. • Identify which interventions have worked and where gaps remain. • Prioritise resources for the most at-risk groups. 	<p>The YMCA data reflects the unique strengths and challenges of Newark’s youth, rather than relying on national averages. This localised intelligence is essential for tailoring services and avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches.</p>	<p>YMCA</p>
20	<p>Promoting female role models through school volunteering</p> <p>To explore the feasibility and interest of launching a targeted volunteering initiative that encourages female professionals to speak in secondary schools and colleges, particularly at GCSE and A-Level stages. This initiative should be marketed to both school staff and council teams, with a clear message: “You can’t be what you can’t see.”</p> <p>Showcasing diverse female role models, especially from underrepresented backgrounds, is important to help young women visualise broader career paths, challenge stereotypes, and build confidence in their future potential.</p>	<p>All council staff have access to a volunteering day, which can be used to participate in this initiative. The council already maintains a strong network of school and college contacts. It is proposed that the Working Group Chair and Management Sponsor issue a joint communication to these contacts to generate interest and identify opportunities for staff to get involved.</p> <p>Where possible, this programme should prioritise a specific female cohort in schools, where these networks in school already exist.</p>	<p>Life Chances for Girls Working Group Chair and Director of Customer Services and Organisational Development</p>



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

This EIA relates to:

Life Chances for Girls Working Group

Details are set out:

Life Chances for Girls Report

Officers undertaking the assessment:

Carina Tona, Transformation and Service Improvement Officer,
Philene Evason-Bacon, Transformation and Service Improvement
Graduate Trainee

The Public Sector Equality Duty which is set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The purpose of carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment is to assess the impact of a change to services or policy on people with protected characteristics and to demonstrate that the Council has considered the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Part A: Impact, consultation and proposed mitigation

1 What are the potential impacts of the proposal? *Has any initial consultation informed the identification of impacts?*

The aim of the Life Chances for Girls working group was to identify how opportunities for women and girls in Newark and Sherwood are impacted by their location. The working group recognised that girls and young women experience layered disadvantages stemming from concerns around public and online safety, health inequalities, educational barriers, and other systemic challenges. Such issues can be further compounded by entrenched societal norms and structural discrimination.

It is essential that local support, services, and initiatives are not only well-communicated but also purposefully designed and effective. Following this, the working group focused on understanding the initiatives and activities already being delivered and how they can be further supported. (Appendix 3)

2 Protected Characteristics: Is there a potential positive or negative impact based on:

Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Pregnancy & maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Race Including ethnic origin, colour or nationality	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Sex (gender)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Positive	<input type="checkbox"/> Negative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Neutral Impact

3 Where there are potential negative impacts for protected characteristics these should be detailed including consideration of the equality duty, proposals for how they could be mitigated (where possible) and meaningfully consulted on:

How do the potential impacts affect people with protected characteristics <i>What is the scale of the impact?</i>	How might negative impact be mitigated or explain why it is not possible	How will we consult
<p>This working group focuses on opportunities for women and girls. The initiatives and activities outlined within the report and supporting recommendations (appendix 3) aim to improve the educational, health, safety and systemic barriers that women and girls face.</p> <p>This working group positively supports the development of our communities through recommending programmes which aim to challenge harmful behaviour and encourage mutual respect, and breaking down gender stereotypes, and support healthy relationships</p>		<p>These issues have been identified from data gathered by Plan International which has been outlined in the Life Chances for Women and Girls Report.</p>

4 Are there other impacts e.g., socio-economic or environmental?

Appendix 4

What are the potential impacts and who is affected? <i>What is the scale of the impact?</i>	How might negative impact be mitigated or explain why it is not possible	How will we consult
<p>Within the report, the financial implications of the recommendations have been documented.</p> <p>There is a potential neutral impact regarding accessibility to the online learning recommended in appendix 3. This could include access to electronics and considerations surrounding language barriers in all communications.</p> <p>A potential negative impact through the Domestic Abuse training, due to recognised disabilities such as dyslexia, ADHD, and autism. In addition to consideration for general learning styles.</p> <p>A potential negative impact on members of staff without access to online resources.</p>	<p>This will be mitigated through ongoing work in the Digital Strategy which aims to ensure digital inclusivity.</p> <p>This will be mitigated through considering these potential impacts when developing training packages. Training will be provided in various forms / methods to ensure inclusivity wherever possible.</p> <p>All line managers have online access and are encouraged actively to share information and resources with members of staff who do not have access. Additionally, key messages are always circulated in multiple forms. I.e., through posters and drop-in sessions where suitable.</p>	<p>A consultation on our Digital Strategy was conducted in May and June 2025.</p> <p>Communication on learning and development is regular and includes pre training and post training feedback opportunities. There is also a live staff feedback section on the intranet where staff can submit feedback / suggestions on any topic.</p> <p>All staff are invited to complete an annual staff survey which includes questions around their understanding of their role and expectations; this includes their access to their learning and development opportunities.</p>

Part B: Feedback and further mitigation

4 Summary of consultation feedback and further amendments to proposal / mitigation

N/A – we will not be consulting as part of this working group.
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Appendix 4

It should be noted that the working group is to embed EIAs into all projects and policies, train members to interpret EIAs, and empower all voices in council settings. These are directly about strengthening the EIA process itself and ensuring gendered impacts are scrutinised.

Please retain completed EIAs in your business area.

Appendix 5: Life Chances for Girls – Future First Careers Expo 2025



Newark and Sherwood colleagues attending the Future First Careers Expo 2025

Background

Newark and Sherwood District Council, in partnership with the Lincoln College Group host the annual Future First Careers Expo 2025. Now in its eighth year, the Expo continues to be a cornerstone event for students in Years 11 to 13 across the district and Lincolnshire, offering them a unique opportunity to explore a wide range of career and educational pathways.

The idea behind the Careers Expo is to enable businesses to meet and engage with their future work force. To talk about apprenticeship pathways that they may offer as well as raise the aspiration and inspiration of the young people who attend therefore opening up the world of work from many different sectors.

On Thursday 13 November 2025, officers from Newark and Sherwood District Council hosted a stall at the annual Future First Expo 2025, held at the Lady Eastwood Centre, Newark Showground. The Expo is well established and is attended by approximately 1500 students in years 11 to 13 from schools across Newark, Sherwood, and Lincolnshire, providing them with access to a diverse range of career and educational opportunities through various organisations. A team of officers from Newark and Sherwood District Council already attend this event annually to promote apprenticeships, healthy lifestyles and other key messages.

Alignment to the working group

The Life Chances for Girls working group recognised this event as a valuable opportunity to connect with a broad and diverse group of young people from across the district, providing them with resources, guidance, and support specifically aimed at enhancing the life chances and outcomes of girls. As such, one of the recommendations of the working group was to attend and

share key messages about safety, wellbeing and career opportunities in an accessible and engaging manner.

Approach

While preparing for the expo, the team prioritised challenging gender stereotypes by showcasing roles typically linked to a specific gender. To support this, a female staff member from the Housing Maintenance & Asset Management Business Unit, working in a sector traditionally seen as male-dominated, attended the event serving as a real-life example and role model by sharing professional experiences with attendees.

In addition to this, we shared resources and handouts that young people could take away from the event including NSDC branded water bottles, stress balls, notebooks, and highlighters. We also offered customised wristbands, with a QR code linking to the council's apprenticeship webpage.

Reflections

The Future First Careers Expo was established with the aim of empowering students with a clear understanding of the wide range of opportunities available to them after school, and to help them map out a path to future success.

Focusing on life chances for girls, the event showcased real-world career pathways and opened conversations about opportunities, making them feel tangible and achievable.

A key theme was the abundance of opportunities within the district and at the Council itself. Many girls visited the stand, showing interest in fields such as mechanics, construction, and joinery. Having a female staff member in a similar role, demonstrating that women can and do succeed in these sectors, proved both inspiring and empowering for attendees.

Looking ahead

Building on the success of this year's stall, our aspiration is to strengthen efforts that improve life chances for girls, including more interactive opportunities at future events to showcase diverse career pathways and increased representation of female role models from non-traditional sectors to inspire confidence and ambition.

By taking these steps, this is another way we ensure that every girl sees a future full of possibilities.

Forward Plan

For the Period December 2025 - March 2026



What is the Plan?

This Forward Plan sets out all of the Key Decisions that are expected to be taken during the period referred to above. The Council has a statutory duty to prepare this document, in accordance, with the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended). The Plan is published monthly and will be available on the [Council's Website](#).

What is a Key Decision?

The decisions listed in this plan are 'Key Decisions'. A Key Decision is one that is likely to:

- (a) Result in the Council spending or making savings of over £150,000 revenue or £300,000 in capital, or;
- (b) Where the impact of the decision would be significant in terms of its impact on communities living or working in two or more Wards.

Under the Council's Constitution, Key Decisions are made by the Cabinet, Portfolio Holders, or officers acting under delegated powers.

Exempt Information

The plan also lists those 'Exempt' Key Decisions which are going to be taken over the next four months. Exempt Key Decisions are those decisions which have to be taken in private. This is because they involve confidential or exempt information which cannot be shared with the public.

Agenda papers for Cabinet meetings are published on the Council's website 5 working days before the meeting [here](#). Any items marked confidential or exempt will not be available for public inspection.

Any background paper listed can be obtained by contacting the Responsible Officer. Responsible officers can be contacted on 01636 650000 or customerservices@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

Decision to be taken / Report title and Summary	Decision maker	Date Decision to be taken	Responsible Portfolio Holder	Responsible Officer	Exempt y/n and Grounds for exemption	Date decision can be implemented
Neighbourhood Planning Funding	Cabinet	9 Dec 2025	Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Economic Development	Matthew Norton, Business Manager - Planning Policy and Infrastructure matthew.norton@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
Infrastructure Funding Statement	Cabinet	9 Dec 2025	Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Economic Development	Matthew Norton, Business Manager - Planning Policy and Infrastructure matthew.norton@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
Arkwood Developments Facility Agreement	Cabinet	20 Jan 2026	Leader - Portfolio Holder Strategy, Performance & Finance	Nick Wilson, Business Manager- Financial Services Nick.Wilson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Part exempt	
Active4Today Agency Model	Cabinet	20 Jan 2026	Leader - Portfolio Holder Strategy, Performance & Finance, Portfolio Holder - Health,	Jenna Norton, Accountant Jenna.Norton@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	

Decision to be taken / Report title and Summary	Decision Maker	Date Decision to be taken	Responsible Portfolio Holder	Responsible Officer	Exempt y/n and Grounds for exemption	Date decision can be implemented
			Wellbeing & Leisure			
2026/27 Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Setting	Cabinet	20 Jan 2026	Portfolio Holder - Housing	Suzanne Shead suzanne.shead@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
Adoption of Public Open Space Fernwood	Cabinet	20 Jan 2026	Portfolio Holder - Climate and the Environment	Matt Lamb, Director - Planning and Growth Matt.Lamb@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
Parks and Open Spaces Development Plans	Cabinet	20 Jan 2026	Portfolio Holder - Climate and the Environment	Matt Finch, Director- Communities & Environment Matthew.Finch@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
Agenda Page 111 New Town of Culture	Cabinet	20 Jan 2026	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder - Heritage, Culture & the Arts	Carys Coulton-Jones, Business Manager- Heritage, Culture and Visitors Carys.Coulton-Jones@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
Wilsthorpe Hub Proposal	Cabinet	20 Jan 2026	Portfolio Holder -	Cara Clarkson, Business	Open	

Decision to be taken / Report title and Summary	Decision Maker	Date Decision to be taken	Responsible Portfolio Holder	Responsible Officer	Exempt y/n and Grounds for exemption	Date decision can be implemented
			Public Protection and Community Relations	Manager - Healthy Places cara.clarkson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk		
2026/27 Proposed General Fund Revenue Budget	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Leader - Portfolio Holder Strategy, Performance & Finance	Nick Wilson, Business Manager- Financial Services Nick.Wilson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
General Fund Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2029/30	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Leader - Portfolio Holder Strategy, Performance & Finance	Nick Wilson, Business Manager- Financial Services Nick.Wilson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
2026/27 to 2029/30 Medium Term Financial Plan	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Leader - Portfolio Holder Strategy, Performance & Finance	Nick Wilson, Business Manager- Financial Services Nick.Wilson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
Pay Policy Statement 2026/27	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Leader - Portfolio Holder Strategy, Performance &	Sarah Lawrie, Business Manager - HR and Training	Open	

Decision to be taken / Report title and Summary	Decision Maker	Date Decision to be taken	Responsible Portfolio Holder	Responsible Officer	Exempt y/n and Grounds for exemption	Date decision can be implemented
			Finance	sarah.lawrie@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk		
Development Plot Adjacent to Newark Lorry Park	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Leader - Portfolio Holder Strategy, Performance & Finance	Steven Chitty, Major Capital Projects Delivery Manager steven.chitty@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Part exempt	
Newark Town Centre Master Plan and Design Code	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Economic Development	Matthew Norton, Business Manager - Planning Policy and Infrastructure matthew.norton@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	
Newark Market Place - Full Business Case	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Economic Development	Lisa Chaney, Senior Regeneration Officer Lisa.Chaney@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Part exempt	
Clipstone LUF Update	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Economic Development	Lisa Chaney, Senior Regeneration Officer Lisa.Chaney@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	

Decision to be taken / Report title and Summary	Decision Maker	Date Decision to be taken	Responsible Portfolio Holder	Responsible Officer	Exempt y/n and Grounds for exemption	Date decision can be implemented
Chatham Court Partnership Hub	Cabinet	24 Feb 2026	Portfolio Holder - Housing	Julie Davidson, Business Manager- Housing and Estates Julie.Davidson@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk	Open	

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Cabinet** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Tuesday, 11 November 2025 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P Peacock (Chair)

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor N Allen and Councillor P Rainbow

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

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

315 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

316 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2025

The minutes from the meeting held on 14 October 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

317 LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026/27

The Business Manager – Revenues & Benefits presented a report in relation to the continuation of the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27 with minor changes in accordance with the annual uprating amounts applied by the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP). By applying the annual uprating of income and disregards to the 2026/27 scheme, the Council would continue to maintain the current level of support to all Council Tax Support claimants and ensure that the scheme continued to benefit the most vulnerable and low-income households using nationally recognised rates of DWP income rather than continuing with the 2025 rates that were being used in the current scheme.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet recommends to Full Council the uprating of the applicable amounts, premiums, state benefits and disregard criteria in accordance with the annual uprating amounts applied by the Department for Works & Pensions (DWP); whilst continuing the current Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27 financial year.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure the Council discharges its responsibilities to agree its Council Tax Support scheme by 31 January 2026.

Options Considered:

An alternative option would be to increase the maximum award of 80% - the cost of doing this has been considered within the financial implications section in the report.

318 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ONSITE MONITORING FEES (KEY DECISION)

The Biodiversity and Ecology Lead Officer presented a report which informed the Cabinet of issues arising with current approved fees for monitoring onsite Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in relation to small developments, and which made a recommendation for a temporary relief to cover the interim period before Fees and Charges are set for the 2026-27 financial year.

The report concerned planning applications where if permission were granted, the general Biodiversity Gain Condition would apply. The Condition was discharged by the submission of a Biodiversity Gain Plan which set out how the biodiversity gain objective, a net gain of 10%, would be met. The legislation required that significant onsite habitat enhancement must be subject to a planning condition, Section 106 agreement or conservation covenant that required the habitat to be maintained for at least 30 years after the development was completed. Consequently, there was a need to charge a monitoring fee, and fees were set for 2024/25, and then increased for 2025/26. However, it had become apparent that for small sites of less than 1ha, the fees were disproportionately high. The report therefore recommended relief against the fees and charges for those smaller developments. Two criteria were proposed as detailed in the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approves two levels of relief for the existing fees and charges schedule to create two new lower fee levels for monitoring onsite BNG for the remainder of the financial year 2025-26:

Tier 1 - £1,033 (inc. VAT); and
Tier 2 - £1,722 (inc. VAT).

Reasons for Decision:

The proposed new fee levels are considered necessary in the light of the experiences with having actual small developments that are subject to mandatory BNG. In line with the Council's values, it is considered important that the Council responds appropriately to its experiences with small developments that are subject to mandatory BNG.

Options Considered:

Firstly, to take no action, or secondly to address as part of the setting of Fees and Charges for the 2026-27 Financial Year.

319 PURCHASE, OPERATION AND TRAINING FOR A NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL DRONE ASSET

The Senior Planner (Enforcement) presented a report which presented the case for the purchase a drone asset, principally for use by the Council, but with the potential to offer support to other public sector organisations. It was reported that the Council were increasingly reliant on commissioning drone technology, for both investigatory

and promotional activities, at a cost of just under £6,000 in the last 12 months. It was therefore considered that an in-house resource would increase availability, responsiveness, and be more cost effective going forward. The costs to purchase and for the operation of the drone asset were detailed in the report.

In addition, the report sought approval for a 'Drone Policy' to cover the use of the operation, as it was critical that the circumstances of when the drone would be deployed were understood and managed safely. The training of Senior Responsible Officers was also required.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approve:

- a) the adoption of a Drone Usage Policy as detailed at Appendix A of the report, with delegated authority being given to the relevant Directors to make necessary amendments to improve operational effectiveness within the first 12 months of its adoption;
- b) the purchase and use of drone assets, primarily for use by NSDC in discharge of its relevant duties and services;
- c) the training of Senior Responsible Officers for the deployment and maintenance of drone asset(s) across the Council; and
- d) the creation of a fee schedule, to be reported to a future Cabinet, to allow NSDC to support other local authorities and public bodies.

Reasons for Decision:

The recommendations align with most of the Community Plan objectives. As set out in the report, this presents a cost-effective way to responsibly best utilise available technology.

Options Considered:

The Council could continue to procure drone support on an ad-hoc basis or seek a more permanent formal arrangement with the commercial market. Both routes would be more costly. Moreover, an NSDC owned and controlled asset will increase resiliency in terms of immediate availability alongside growing staff skills and competencies in this field.

320 PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAMME AND LOCAL ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Economic Development Grants & Programmes Manager presented a report which provided the Cabinet with an update on the delivery of the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme (now referred to as the Pride in Place Programme) and proposed key recommendations to enable programme delivery to commence from April 2026. Additionally, the report updated Cabinet on programme governance processes including a proposed updated Local Assurance Framework required for the Newark Town Board.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the updates provided in relation to the Plan for Neighbourhoods initiative including the recent name change implemented by the UK Government of the 'Pride in Place Programme' (PiPP) and the related role of the Newark Town Board, as set out in section 2.0 of the report;
- b) note and endorse the Newark Town Board's PiPP Regeneration Plan for submission to the UK Government by 28 November 2025 (subject to Board and Section 151 Officer approval), comprising a 10-year vision document and four-year indicative investment profile;
- c) approve the addition of a revenue budget of £1,502,000 and a capital budget of £5,306,000 required for the first four years of the PiPP delivery (2026 to 2030) with individual financial commitments to be approved by the Newark Town Board and the Section 151 Officer. Both budgets remain subject to the Council receiving sufficient assurance of funding through a finalised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from the UK Government, to be approved by the Section 151 Officer, as detailed further in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the report; and
- d) approve the proposed Newark Town Board Local Assurance Framework (LAF), as provided in Appendix 3 of the report and detailed further in paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13.

Reasons for Decision:

The recommendations within this report are necessary to enable the local Newark Town Board to oversee and deliver the PiPP over the next decade through the provision of programme budgets. The proposed Local Assurance Framework will support the council to effectively fulfil its assurance role, clearly defining roles and processes to be followed by the Newark Town Board throughout programme delivery.

Options Considered:

The governance and funding arrangements detailed within this report are set by the UK Government throughout the PiPP prospectus. In particular, the council's role as the accountable body for programme funding, with the local Newark Town Board considered the strategic decision makers. The recommendations within this report reflect the arrangements and the funding conditions set by MHCLG.

321 SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY 2026 - 2031 (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - Economic Growth & Visitor Economy presented a report which sought approval of the Newark & Sherwood District Council Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy 2026 – 2031. The Strategy, which was attached as an appendix to the report, was proposed based on providing a strategic direction for the Council which provided a data and evidenced based approach. The Strategy identified a number of emerging priorities which aligned with the UK Industrial Strategy and the EMCCA Growth Plan & Inclusive Growth Commission. The Strategy also had a greater focus on health and raising aspirations of young people.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet endorse the Newark & Sherwood District Council Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy for 2026 – 2031.

Reasons for Decision:

To enable a strategic, meaningful direction of travel for local economic growth the proposed recommendation to update the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy based on data and evidence is recommended.

Options Considered:

There is an option to not update the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy. This option has been discounted as Newark & Sherwood District Council have identified economic growth as a priority.

Meeting closed at 6.47 pm.

Chair

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Cabinet** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Wednesday, 26 November 2025 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P Peacock (Chair)

Councillor S Crosby, Councillor L Brazier, Councillor S Forde, Councillor C Penny, Councillor P Taylor and Councillor J Kellas

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor N Allen, Councillor I Brown, Councillor S Haynes and Councillor P Rainbow

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor R Cozens

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

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

323 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

324 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought to endorse the submission of the Final Proposal for the Council's preferred option for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Each Council was only allowed to express support for one option in its submission which was due to be sent to government by 28 November 2025. The report advised of the current indications of how each Council were proposing to respond, with Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe supporting Option 1b; Nottingham considering a model on based on an expanded City known as Option 1bii; Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood supporting Option 1e; Ashfield not determining a preference; and Broxtowe expressing no desire to be part of any reorganisation though had expressed a marginal preference for Option 1e.

Since the Council and Cabinet meetings held on 15 July 2025, work had continued on Option 1e and a submission had been developed by officers from across the four Councils of Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood with input from Ashfield and Broxtowe on an advisory basis. The proposed Option 1e submission which was attached as an appendix to the report, had taken into account the government feedback on the Interim Plan and the Executive Summary highlighted why this option was considered to present the best option to meet the government's criteria and provide a future platform for the delivery of housing and economic growth ambitions in conjunction with EMCCA.

AGREED (with 6 votes for and 1 against) that Cabinet:

- a) endorse the submission of a Final Proposal for a new unitary structure of Local Government for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, as attached as Appendix A to the report, based on two new authorities, the first based on the existing boundaries of Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Gedling, Mansfield and Newark & Sherwood and the second based on the existing boundaries of Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe;
- b) notes the reference within the Final Proposal to the potential for future changes to council size and electoral arrangements as part of the first Electoral Review, and requests the Leader to write formally to the Secretary of State as part of our submission expressing our Council's support to consolidate all of the Newark constituency within the proposed Sherwood Forest unitary Council;
- c) expresses support for continued collaborative working with other local authorities across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire on the implementation proposals for any new authorities;
- d) notes the additional workload and risks associated with reorganisation and commits to ensure; appropriate governance, communication, financial and management arrangements are put in place to mitigate potential impacts during the transition period; and
- e) delegates authority to the Chief Executive to make any minor amendments to Final Proposal, if necessary, prior to submission.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure that the Council meets the requirements of the statutory invitation from government to submit a final proposal for local government reorganisation by 28 November 2025.

The proposed Option 1e is the best for Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. It is also noted that from the public engagement of those respondents expressing a view on the future structure, it is Option 1e that makes most sense to them.

The proposal takes into account the Government's criteria for submissions, namely:

- 1) Sensible single tier of local government.
- 2) 'Right sized' and financially viable local government.
- 3) High quality, sustainable services.
- 4) Meets local needs.
- 5) Supports devolution arrangements.
- 6) Local engagement and empowerment.

Options Considered:

The Council could decide not to respond to the Secretary of State's invitation; however, a new structure will be implemented irrespective of this. Notwithstanding concerns about some aspects of reorganisation, the Council has determined that the responsible thing to do is to participate fully in the process. This includes making its position known on a preferred option that reflects the criteria given for reorganisation.

Councils could have developed proposals in isolation rather than collectively across the whole area of Nottinghamshire. This would have risked options being developed which meet the needs of part of the area but not the whole, and which have less alignment with the criteria set out by MHCLG in the statutory invitation. The proposed options for Local Government Reorganisation outlined in this report and detailed in Appendix A have been developed through a structured and detailed work programme overseen by Leaders/Mayors with support from Chief Executives, other statutory officers, a wide range of other officers and technical advice and analysis from advisors PwC, Peopletoo and CIPFA. Although support for differing options has emerged, this work has continued.

Meeting closed at 6.18 pm.

Chair