

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Homes & Communities Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 7 June 2021 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor T Wendels (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs R Holloway (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor M Brock, Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor M Brown,
Councillor S Carlton, Councillor R Crowe, Councillor Mrs L Dales,
Councillor L Goff, Councillor J Lee and Councillor P Peacock

ALSO IN
ATTENDANCE:

APOLOGIES FOR Councillor Mrs K Arnold (Committee Member)
ABSENCE:

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman, Councillor T Wendels, thanked Councillor Mrs I Brown who had recently retired as a District Councillor for her contribution to the Homes & Communities Committee. The Chairman also thanked Councillor Mrs S Saddington for her time on the committee having stepped down from the Homes & Communities Committee and her position replaced by Councillor R Crow.

2 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

that there would be an audio recording of the meeting undertaken by the Council.

3 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2021

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the order of business on the agenda would be that Agenda Item 19 would be taken between Agenda Item 12 and Agenda Item 13.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first in person committee for over twelve months and how it was great to see everyone in person. Adapting to being back in the offices and working safely, the reports will be presented by a small number of officers rather than necessarily by the author. Any questions unable to be answered would of

course be followed up after the meeting.

The Chairman advised that the local Area Commander for Newark and Sherwood, Inspector Heather Sutton has been promoted to Chief Inspector and is now the Neighbourhood policing lead for - Bassetlaw, Newark and Sherwood & Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe. She is also the force lead on rural crime and is already speaking with officers from the council about the rural crime issues in the district. The new Area Commander for Newark and Sherwood is Inspector Charlotte Allardice who is keen to work closely with the council on a number of issues and will look forward to working with Charlotte.

The Safer Streets Project was successfully completed at the end of March and there is commitment from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, the Police and the Council to implement the learning and best practice from Safer Streets 1 into the continuation of some of the themes into neighbouring areas. The main themes will centre on burglary reduction and vehicle crime.

The Chairman informed the committee that whilst having seen some sunshine recently, our flooding preparation continues. The council is working with partners in both Southwell and Lowdham to implement flood mitigation measures to reduce the chance of future flooding in these communities. The Scheme in Southwell is progressing well (within the confines of what Covid has allowed over the past 12 months).

The main scheme for Lowdham is still being developed, although work on the banks of the Cocker Beck should be taking place later this year. In response to the floods in November 2019 and February 2020 the council is still administering Property Flood Resilience grants to home owners wishing to improve their home from the impact of flooding, so far having received around 50 applications.

The Chairman informed the committee that the Community Lottery is now live and the first draw took place on Saturday 29th May. As at 2nd June having 49 good causes registered and one or two more in progress, 392 players and good causes are forecast to receive around £23.5K currently, they are hopeful ongoing promotion will see the numbers increase which is great news and will generate more funding for our good causes.

The ban on evictions was ended on 31st May 2021, the Council will continue the no eviction approach for tenants who are working with the council to address their debts and enter into a manageable arrangement. The council are also prepared for opening up the community centres as soon as receiving the green light to do so.

Finally, the Chairman wanted to draw the Committee's attention to the end of year performance reports presented this evening, and for it to join the Chairman in recognising the hard work and commitment taken to achieve the levels of performance during such an unusual year.

5 FORWARD PLAN - JULY 2021 TO JUNE 2022

The committee considered the Forward Plan for July 2021 to June 2022 with the

Chairman inviting Members to put forward any items they would wish to be considered by Committee at a future meeting.

The committee requested an invitation be made to the newly elected Police & Crime Commissioner to attend the November Homes & Communities Committee meeting, the Business Manager for Public Protection to arrange an invitation.

6 REVIEW OF TENANT ACCESS SERVICE OPENING HOURS

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Customer Services to review the opening hours of the Customer Access Service (CAS) contact centre and recommend alignment with the opening times of the main council contact centre.

At the 15 March 2021 committee, Members considered a report to align the opening hours and agreed that a decision would be deferred to the 7 June 2021 meeting so that further information regarding service demand could be obtained.

The report provided further analysis of the number of calls received by the CAS team between 8.30am and 9.00am, during a more recent four week period it has shown that the number of calls received remains static with an average of less than two calls per day. During this twenty day period a total of only nine calls were received during between 5pm and 5.15pm.

The committee noted that in February 2021 the Tenants Forum had agreed unanimously that the service opening hours times should be altered in line with recommendations as tenants needed to have uniformity across all council services. Out of hours calls would remain as they are currently, tenants who need to report an emergency will transfer through to the Careline.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee approved the alignment of the opening hours.

7 REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection providing changes to the Corporate Health and Safety Policy and to confirm the amendments prior to the report being presented to the Policy and Finance Committee.

The report informed the Members that the current policy had been reviewed and updated to reflect recent organisational changes including the in-house provision of Housing Services, providing the revised policy as an appendix to the report.

The meeting highlighted 2.3 bullet point 5 of the report referring to the removal of the use of latex gloves from the policy, the committee noted that latex gloves can cause allergies and would therefore sit outside of this policy.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) Members considered the reviewed Health and Safety Policy and any suggested amendments for deliberation by the Policy & Finance Committee.

8 PROPOSAL FOR PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS - NEWARK TOWN CENTRE AND SITES IN BALDERTON

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection to report the findings of the consultation with key partners and members of the public, on the proposed Public Space Protection Order (“PSPO”) in the following areas:

- a. Newark Town Centre
- b. Coronation Park, Balderton
- c. Balderton Lakes
- d. Lakeside Shopping Centre, Balderton

and to seek approval for the formal making of the Public Space Protection Orders.

The report highlighted to the committee that in March 2021 they had considered a report on a Public Space Protection Order in relation to controls to combat anti-social behaviour in Newark town centre, Coronation Park, Balderton Lakes, and Lakeside shopping centre and recommended that formal consultation took place.

The report advised that a consultation had been carried out in accordance with Government guidance which took varying forms, such as questionnaires for partnership agencies, proposals on the council’s website and questionnaires for retail premises in the town centre and Lakeside shopping centre.

The responses received were set out in a summary document at Appendix One of the report.

The Committee thanked the Officers and the Police for their involvement in progressing the PSPOs.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

Members:

- (A) Agreed the terms of the PSPO as being
 - a. *Leave the location, or part of the location, and*
 - b. *Not to return to the location, or part of the location, for the period specified in the direction (“the exclusion period”)*

The exclusion period must not exceed 48 hours and must

- I. Be given in writing, unless that is not reasonably practicable*
- II. Must specify the area to which it relates*

III. May impose requirements as to the time by which the person must leave the area and the manner in which the person must do so (including the routes)

(B) Agree the areas as set out below and defined in the maps in Appendix Two and Appendix Three,

- a. Newark town centre
- b. Coronation Park, Balderton
- c. Balderton Lakes
- d. Lakeside shopping centre, Balderton

9 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EXEMPT REPORTS CONSIDERED BY THE HOMES & COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Elections & Democratic Services providing the Homes & Communities Committee with a list of the exempt business considered by the committee for the period 14 September 2020 to date.

The report highlighted four reports that had been taken as exempt for consideration and had received comment back from the report authors that these reports in their opinion to remain exempt due to commercially sensitivity.

The Chairman did suggest for future annual reports an additional column be included to expand the detail as to why they should remain exempt.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the content of the reports to remain exempt.

10 SAFER STREETS FUND - END OF PROJECT REPORT

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection to update Members on the successful completion of the Safer Streets Fund and the early impacts that have been identified.

The report highlighted in April 2020 the Council (in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the County Council) were successful in obtaining funding for the Home Office initiative of Safer Streets that was designed to address domestic and acquisitive crime. Two Lower Super Output Areas were identified in the bid and have formed the geographical footprint for the bid. These were the areas around Chatham Court and area on Northgate/Lovers Lane.

The Newark bid was successful in obtaining an award of £550,000 of which the District Council's allocation was £118,580.

A copy of the full survey and its results were included with the report at Appendix 1.

A summary of key headline results were as below:

- 83% of respondents feel safer
- 53 % feel the area is cleaner
- 40% of respondents feel safer after dark
- 44% of respondents feels the community looks out for each other better than it did

In order to build on the positive work that has taken place as part of this project agreement has already been made to develop a further Safer Streets initiative. This will again be a partnership with the Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

A member of the committee would also like to see it benefiting more rural areas in the future.

The Committee thanked everyone involved and how it had been a comprehensive report and a successful project.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Members noted the success of the Safer Streets initiative and the positive survey results.

11 ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Public Protection providing information on the current position with regard to anti-social behaviour across the district and the range of intervention and enforcement used to combat this behaviour.

The report highlighted that the Police are a key partner in addressing ASB and they record levels of ASB. The figures for the year 20/21 compared to the previous 12 months were provided:

April 19 to March 20	April 20 to March 21	% change
2,552	4,366	+71%

Over the last year ASB has increased due to youngsters not attending school and the effects of covid-19. The committee thanked the team for their input, noting that there have been more people on the streets, more people working from home leading to increasing ASB in bigger groups over a wider geographical area.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

the committee noted the data relating to ASB and the range of activities, both delivered and planned that are in place to address ASB.

12 HOMES & COMMUNITIES REVENUE AND CAPITAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2021

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Financial Services presenting to the Members the 2020/21 financial outturn position on the Homes & Communities Committee's revenue and capital budgets, including:

- General Fund (GF) Revenue
- Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Capital Programme

Members at the Policy & Finance Committee during February 2020 requested that reports were presented to individual committees, for them to note and understand the financial position of their committee.

The report informed Members of the Homes & Communities Committee of the financial outturn position as at 31 March 2021 and provided the main reasons for the variances when referring to the GF, HRA and Capital Programme.

One of the members enquired if after taking Newark and Sherwood Homes back in-house had any savings been included in the figures. The meeting was advised not at the moment and that overall there will be a reduction.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the contents of the report be noted.

13 COMMISSIONING SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS - ANNUAL REVIEW 2020/21

The Committee considered the report from the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager providing an overview of the 2020/2021 outcomes of the commissioned service level agreements between the council and its three service providers, Newark and Sherwood CVS, Newark and Sherwood Community Hub and Home-Start Newark.

The summary reports outlined in Appendix A demonstrated what each partner organisation has delivered in the financial year April 2020 to March 2021 which having been an unprecedented year due to the impact of Covid 19. From the appended reports each partner organisation was able to adjust its service delivery model around the challenges of Covid 19 in order to continue to provide support to residents through innovative ways of working throughout the pandemic.

The committee thanked the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager for his work and to present again next year in 2022.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the report and Appendix A are noted; and
- (b) the annual review for 2021/2022 be presented to Committee in 2022.

14 ANNUAL REPORT COMMUNITY CENTRES GENERAL FUND REVIEW 2020/21

The Committee considered the report from the Health Improvement and Community Relations Manager providing an overview of operational activities, compliance and assurance arrangements in place at the 4 General Fund Council owned community centre/village halls and to note the recommendations in the report to ensure that the operational management oversight of these assets is robust and meets the council's assurance requirements.

The report highlighted to Members that the Council currently owns four community centres/village halls, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, which are all managed through a leasehold relationship.

Appendix A provided a short summary of the previous 12 months for each community centre/village hall. The annual review will come to committee once again in 2022.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the report and Appendix A are noted; and
- (b) the annual review for 2021/2022 be presented to Committee in 2022.

15 HOUSING SERVICE COMPLIANCE END OF YEAR OUT TURN PERFORMANCE

The Committee considered the report from the Director for Housing, Health & Wellbeing providing an overview of compliance performance of the housing service at the end of March 2021.

The report provided the end of year position and noted the excellent performance throughout the year having encountered significant challenges for service delivery.

The committee congratulated the team and noted that performance at the end of the year had been really strong. The report author thanked the committee for their positive comments and would pass on to other members of the team.

The committee noted that for 2021/22 they would see a revised layout and content.

One Members did discuss with the committee his concerns for tenants living in properties with adaptations and not being able to take up the 'Right to Buy' option and could be seen as discriminatory. The Chairman did remind Members that this is primary legislation and not 'District' decision.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee noted the performance of the housing service compliance functions.

16 HOUSING SERVICES YEAR END PERFORMANCE 2020/21

The Committee considered the report from the Transformation Manager providing an overview of performance and satisfaction with the council's housing services for

2020/21 year end.

The report informed the committee of the overall satisfaction for 2020-21 as 93%, which gave the committee reassurance that bringing the service back in house had not adversely affected the customer experience and in fact had achieved a 2 point increase on 2019/20.

The Chairman highlighted that this was an excellent report with pleasing figures and gave a 'well done' to the team again.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee noted the excellent end of year performance of the housing service.
- (b) Members fed back their observations about the content and presentation of performance information.

17 HOUSING SERVICES CUSTOMER JOURNEY FEEDBACK

The Committee considered the report from the Project Research Officer informing Members of the customer journey insight project outcomes in relation to housing services and to advise Members of the planned actions to improve services and the customer experience in light of this insight.

As well as the report the committee were provided at the meeting with a handout from a nine slide presentation, providing a summary of the customer journey insight.

The report explained that this paper had been presented to SLT on 18 May 2021 and who supported all recommendations and asked for regular updates on progress against related actions to be reported to this Committee and tenant forums.

This data will be presented to involved tenants once the STAR feedback is available as well as being published in the 2020/21 Tenant Annual Report.

One of the Members requested a meeting to discuss voids, whilst another highlighted the provision of recycling in areas such as Chatham Court, Grange Road and St Mary's Gardens which the Director for Housing, Health & Wellbeing advised may involve communal bins and assured the Member that this would be looked in to with the refuge team.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee noted the overall positive responses to housing services provided by the Council.
- (b) the Committee noted the identified work streams and proposals highlighted within section 3, which will form an action plan for regular monitoring and reporting until implementation.

18 ANNUAL TENANCY AUDIT PROCESS: "GETTING TO KNOW YOU" VISITS

The Committee considered the report from the Business Manager for Housing & Estates Management providing information on the planned implementation of a rolling programme of tenancy audits across all Council tenancies and for Members to support the programme with tenants within the communities in which they serve.

The report explained that this was an essential activity to improve the maturity of the tenant data and will serve a number of purposes as outlined in the report, including helping to combat issues of property condition, so that early intervention can be instigated when a tenancy is showing signs of failing and the tenant needs support.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the Committee noted the planned implementation of a rolling programme of tenancy audit visits across all Council tenancies; and that,
- (b) Members support the programme within their communities.

19 URGENCY ITEM - GREEN HOMES GRANT LOCAL AUTHORITY DELIVERY PHASE 2 (LAD2)

The report provided the committee with the urgency decision that had been taken with respect to Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery phase 2 (LAD2).

Due to the tight timescales involved and the need to consider if it the project was feasible and the Council could participate and accept the grant funding there was not time to report to the relevant committees. To receive funding the Council had to sign and return the award letter/grant form by 15th April 2021.

The Chairman informed the committee that this was a good news story and that a decision had to be taken at short notice.

NOTED the Urgency Item – Minute of Decision.

Meeting closed at 8.15 pm.

Chairman