

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, 20 February 2024 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P Peacock (Chair)

Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Crosby, Councillor L Brazier,  
Councillor K Melton, Councillor E Oldham, Councillor M Spoons,  
Councillor P Taylor and Councillor R Holloway

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor N Allen, Councillor R Jackson and Councillor P Rainbow

85 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.

86 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor K Melton declared an other registerable interest in relation to Agenda Item No. 12 – Southwell Leisure Centre - as a Trustee of Southwell Leisure Centre, but advised that he did not consider there was any conflict of interest which would prevent him taking part in any debate and vote on the item.

87 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2024

The minutes from the meeting held on 23 January 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

88 2024/25 PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which enabled Members to consider the spending proposals in the Council's proposed 2024/25 General Fund Revenue Budget. The budget proposals had been prepared in accordance with the Council's budget setting strategy for 2024/25, as approved by Cabinet on 11 July 2023.

The Local Government Finance Settlement provided key figures for Government Grant that formed part of the Council's budget. The provisional settlement was announced on 18 December 2023 with the final settlement still to be announced. It was reported that the assumed Council Tax increase within the proposed revenue budget was an increase in the Band D equivalent of 2.99%.

AGREED (with 7 votes for and 2 abstentions) that Cabinet recommends to Full Council 7 March 2024:

- i. the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the 2024/25 financial year, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:
- ii. the figures shown as i.1. and i.3. above to be increased only by the amount of Parish Precepts for 2024/25;
  1. £57,602,680 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act, as the District Council's gross expenditure for 2024/25);
  2. £37,723,830 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act, as the District Council's gross income for 2024/25); and
  3. £19,878,850 being the amount by which the aggregate at (b)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (b)(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Net Budget Requirement for the year;
- iii. the budget amounts included in the report be the Council's budget for 2024/25; and
- iv. the fees and charges shown in Appendices C1-C22 be implemented with effect from 1 April 2024.

Reasons for Decision:

To enable Cabinet to make recommendations to Council of the amounts to be calculated in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, for the purposes of setting Council Tax levels for the 2024/25 financial year.

Options Considered:

Not applicable, the Cabinet is required to make recommendations on the budget to the Full Council.

89 CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGET 2024/25 TO 2027/28 (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which detailed the proposed capital schemes over the medium term, together with the available resources to finance them. In accordance with the Financial Regulations, Cabinet was required to consider the Capital Programme and recommend to the Council the final Programme for approval on 7 March 2024.

In respect of the general fund capital expenditure, the Council intended to spend £64.401m from 2024/25 to 2027/28 on the schemes set out in Appendix A to the report. In respect of the Housing Revenue Account expenditure, the Council intended

to spend £84.927m from 2024/25 to 2027/28. This was made up of £52.802m on existing property investment and £32.125m on additional Affordable Housing. Details of the individual schemes were set out in Appendix B to the report.

AGREED (with 8 votes for and 1 abstention) that Cabinet recommend to the Full Council on 7 March 2024 the General Fund schemes set out at **Appendix A** to the report and the Housing Services schemes set out at **Appendix B** to the report as committed expenditure in the Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28.

Reasons for Decision:

To enable the Capital Programme to be considered by Cabinet in accordance with Financial Regulation 6.2.3 prior to its submission to Council.

Options Considered:

If the Council did not have a Capital Programme, this would result in not being able to deliver the schemes and not achieve the objectives in the Community Plan.

90 2024/25 TO 2027/28 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report detailing the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the four financial years for 2024/25 to 2027/28. A copy of the MTFP was attached as an appendix to the report.

The MTFP provided Members and Officers with a clear financial framework for delivering the Council’s Community Plan objectives over the plan period and maintaining the Council’s MTFP was an essential pre-requisite to the annual budget setting process for future years.

The MTFP showed that the Council was able to set a balanced budget for 2024/25, though would need to reduce expenditure and/or increase income to pay for service delivery in future years.

AGREED (with 8 votes for and 1 abstention) that Cabinet recommends to the Full Council on 7 March 2024, for approval, the 2024/25 to 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Plan. .

Reasons for Decision:

To provide a framework to support the Council’s future spending plans.

Options Considered:

Not applicable, the MTFP is an essential element in the Council’s financial framework.

91 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

The Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development presented the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 which the Council was required to produce annually in accordance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy Statement set out the authority’s policies for the financial year relating to:

- the remuneration of the authority’s lowest-paid employees (together with a

definition of “lowest-paid employees”) and the reasons for adopting that definition;

- the relationship between remuneration of Chief Officers and that of other officers (pay multiples); and
- the remuneration of Chief Officers.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet recommend the Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 to Full Council for approval.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure compliance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011.

Options Considered:

Not applicable, the publication of the Pay Policy Statement is required by the Localism Act 2011.

92 UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Regeneration & Housing Strategy presented a report which provided an update on the delivery of proposals to assist tenants and residents, local businesses and employees with the rise in the cost of living and set out proposals for ongoing support and activity in 2024/25. As part of the future plans, the Cabinet noted the creation of the food creator role on a two-year fixed term contract.

AGREED (unanimously) that: Cabinet:

- a) subject to approval by Full Council of the Revenue Budget for 2024-25, allocates the budget proposed for 2024/25 for the activities as described in the tables in Section 2 of the report; and
- b) notes and endorses an additional £18,830 budget to be added to the 2025/26 financial year Revenue Budget to cover the shortfall in funding necessary.

Reasons for Decision:

To support tenants, residents, businesses and employees with the ongoing cost of living challenges.

Options Considered:

Alternative options include not providing a cost-of-living response however this has not been considered viable given the pressures faced by residents, staff and business.

93 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY: PILOT OPENING HOURS AND CUSTOMER PROMISE FEEDBACK RESULTS (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Customer Services presented a report which informed the Cabinet of the results of the pilot for potential changes to the opening hours of the customer contact centre and housing repairs and advised of the feedback received on the Council’s Customer Promise.

The pilot trialled opening hours of 8am to 9am on a Monday for a 12 week period. Based on the findings of the pilot, the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee

recommended the resumption of the opening hours of 9am to 5pm given the relatively low demands experienced in the earlier hour for the duration of the pilot. The report also updated on the positive feedback in relation to the proposed Customer Promise which set out the behaviour the Council will follow when interacting with customers.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) approve the recommendation to resume the Council's opening hours of 9:00am - 5:00pm within the Customer Contact Centre and Housing Repairs; and
- b) note the results of customer feedback about the Customer Promise, formally adopt the Promise and embed it in the Council.

Reasons for Decision:

This aim of this pilot was to understand whether the extra opening hour supported customers who may have work or personal commitments during the opening hours of the Council, to get in touch with an advisor when they would have otherwise not have been able to.

Options Considered:

The alternative option considered based on the results of the opening hours pilot was to adopt the extended opening hours permanently.

94 PORTFOLIO HOLDERS ATTENDANCE AT THE POLICY & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

The Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development presented a report set out the proposed schedule of Portfolio Holders attendance at future meetings of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee at which they would provide an overview of their remit and the key elements they wish to achieve as per the Community Plan.

AGREED (unanimously) that the proposed schedule of attendance by Portfolio Holders at future meetings of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

Portfolio Holders attendance has been requested by the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee. This will provide them with the opportunity to scrutinise the actions listed in the Council's Community Plan and highlight activities within their respective portfolio areas.

Options Considered:

None, it was considered important to establish a schedule of briefings by Portfolio Holders to the Council's overview and scrutiny body.

95 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Regeneration & Housing Strategy presented a report which sought approval for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for 2024 to 2029. The Strategy followed on from the existing Homelessness Prevention and Rough

Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024. Consultation on the strategy had been undertaken with a range of stakeholders and had been recommended for approval by the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024-2029 as at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

Reasons for Decision:

Newark and Sherwood District Council has a statutory requirement to deliver a Homelessness Strategy every five years as a minimum.

The delivery of this strategy also supports key community plan objectives: To improve health and wellbeing and to increase the supply, choice and standard of housing.

Options Considered:

Under the Homelessness Act 2002, local housing authorities have a statutory duty to have a Homelessness Strategy. Alternative options therefore relate only to the actions within the strategy and not the decision to have a strategy.

Priorities for Newark and Sherwood and actions to be delivered under the strategy have been developed following a robust review of local and national evidence.

96 PROPOSED OPERATING MODEL FOR ALEXANDER LODGE, NEWARK (KEY DECISION)

The Assistant Business Manager – Housing & Estate Management presented a report which provided an overview of the Alexander Lodge temporary accommodation project and set out the proposed service model and associated costs. Alexander Lodge was the Council's Newark offer of temporary accommodation for those who are owed statutory duties and provision of accommodation pending assessment as per the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. It was noted that the new facility was due to open in early March, four weeks ahead of schedule.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the progress of the scheme and the allocated budgets for 2024-25;
- b) approve the transfer of £17,033 from the Homelessness Reserve to revenue for the one-off items listed in the table at 4.3 (summarised at 5.2.3) of the report;
- c) approve budgetary provision a caretaker post, funded through service charges;
- d) note that costs of the caretaker role of £28,195 will be funded from the existing budget set for 2024/25; and
- e) approve additional budget of £30,000 for the purchase of a vehicle (subject to caretaker role approval) and inclusion into vehicle replacement programme.

Reasons for Decision:

To provide a strong homelessness support service that complements the investment in temporary accommodation in the District; improving the standard of housing available and extending the services available within and from Alexander Lodge.

Aligning to 24/27 Community Plan objectives:

- Increase the supply, choice, and standard of housing;
- Raise peoples' skills levels and create employment opportunities for the to fulfil their potential; and
- To be a top performing, modern and accessible Council.

Options Considered:

Alternative lesser service models could be an option, but this would have an impact on the service and its deliverables, management of the site and could lead to damage to the structure and wasted community space.

97 SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION AT THE BROADLEAVES AND GLADSTONE HOUSE

The Portfolio Holder for Housing presented a report which sought approval for the proposed installation of solar panela at The Broadleaves and Gladstone House Housing Care Scheme sites in order to continue the move to renewable energy sources and to benefit residents through lower energy costs. The capital investment required was £217,000 and the Council would be monitoring the potential to generate income through selling electricity back to the grid.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approve funding of £217,000 for the installation of solar panels at The Broadleaves and Gladstone House, to be included in the Capital Budget 24/25 financed by the Major Repairs Reserve.

Reasons for Decision:

To assist the Council in achieving its objectives as set out in the Community Plan. The lower utility costs at the schemes will directly benefit tenants as this will reduce the service charges and reduce impact of cost of living.

Community Plan 24/27 alignment:

- Increase the supply, choice, and standard of housing;
- Reduce the impact of climate change; and
- To be a top performing, modern and accessible Council

Options Considered:

Undertaking other identified energy saving measures alone without the installation of solar panels would limit both the benefits to tenants and the wider Council objectives.

98 SURVEYOR - DAMP & MOULD - NEW POST

The Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing presented a report which sought to approve a new post to manage reported damp and mould cases and assist with disrepair claims. To ensure the Council identifies the causes of damp and mould correctly and commission appropriate works to remedy reporte4d cases, it was proposed that these should be managed by a qualified surveyor. The role of the proposed new post would be to cover other complex repairs but with priority being given to cases of damp and mould.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approves the recommendation to make the necessary budgetary allowance as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report, to increase establishment by 1x FTE to create a surveyor role with a focus on damp and mould,

subject to the HRA revenue budget being approved by the Full Council on 13 February which includes the funding for this role from 2024-25.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure that the Council can respond proactively and promptly to reports of damp and mould and provide additional technical knowledge to the Assets and Repairs functions.

This aligns to Community Plan Objective 1 – improving health and well-being and Objective 2 - Increasing the supply, choice, and standard of housing.

Options Considered:

To add these additional activities to existing posts which would not provide the resource needed to prioritise responses to damp and mould.

99 PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDERS WITHIN NEWARK & SHERWOOD (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Public Protection presented a report which outlined to Cabinet the existing Public Space Protection Orders in place, their end dates and draft Orders for first stage public consultation. With some of the current orders ending in 2024, it was proposed to put in place a number of orders in place across the District. The proposed orders (District Wide Dog Control; Fire Control – Vicar Water and Sconce and Devon; Alcohol Controls; Dispersal; and Restriction of Vehicles – Eaking Road) were included as appendices to the report. Following the first public consultation stage, comments and amendments would be considered, ahead of a further four week consultation, with final orders being brought back to the Cabinet for final approval. It was planned that the orders would become effective in June 2024 and remain in place for three years.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) approve the draft Public Spaces Protection Orders, as set out in the report, to be issued for the first stage public consultation for a period of 6 weeks; and
- b) give delegated authority to the Director of Communities and Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection & Community Relations, to approve amendments from the first stage consultation to be made to the final draft order to be issued for the final 4 week consultation period.

Reasons for Decision:

The implementation of PSPOs within Newark and Sherwood aligns with the Community Plan objective to Reduce Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour.

Options Considered:

- Do nothing – a number of orders that are due to end in 2024 would not be renewed in time and would lapse. This would mean there would be no controls in place and no enforcement action could be taken.
- Reduce the number of orders – This would reduce the ability for enforcement action to be taken in certain areas where ASB is causing an issue.

Increase the number of orders – PSPOs can only be placed where there is a justification and evidence to support. They must also be enforceable.



100 NEWARK & SHERWOOD'S PLAYING PITCH AND OUTDOOR SPORTS STRATEGY 2023-2033 (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Regeneration & Housing Strategy presented a report which sought approval for the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy for 2023 to 2033. In December 2022, the Council commissioned Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd to develop the strategy and action plan for the District. The strategy supported the wider objectives within the Community Plan and had been developed using Sport England's 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' and 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide'. The strategy identified priority recommendations across each sport as set out in the report. It was noted that any future decisions in terms of future delivery of 3G pitches would be subject to a decision of the Cabinet.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approve the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy, as at Appendix A to the report.

Reasons for Decision:

The adoption of this strategy supports delivery across a wide range of community plan objectives, provides an evidence base for planning policy and future funding, and sets out priorities for investment to ensure that playing pitches and outdoor sports meet the needs of the growing population of Newark and Sherwood.

In particular, the adoption of the strategy supports the following Community Plan objectives:

Objective 1: Improve health and wellbeing;

Objective 5: Protect and enhance the district's natural environment and green spaces; and

Objective 7: Celebrate and invigorate community spirit, pride of place and a sense of belonging.

Options Considered:

The alternative option is to not adopt a Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy.

Neither the strategy itself, nor direct investment in playing pitches/ outdoor sports facilities, are a statutory responsibility of the District Council. However, as articulated in section 1.2 and 1.3 of the report, the evidence to support the District Council contributing to the delivery of facilities through its role as Local Planning Authority and in its role supporting healthy, active and sustainable communities, is strong.

101 NEWARK & SHERWOOD'S SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES STRATEGY 2023-2033 (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Regeneration & Housing Strategy presented a report which sought approval for the Sport & Recreation Facilities Strategy for 2023 – 2033. The Strategy outlined how the Council will assess future investment in sport and recreation facilities against a 'Hierarchy of Provision' taking into consideration key factors including predicted population growth, impact on demand and current facilities and the aspirations of local sports clubs to develop.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Sport & Recreation Facilities Strategy 2023-2033, as at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

Reasons for Decision:

The adoption of this strategy directly supports delivery across a number of community plan objectives, provides an evidence base for planning policy and future funding, and sets out the strategic approach to identify priorities for investment to ensure that sports and recreation facilities provided across the District meet the needs of Newark & Sherwood's growing population.

Specifically, the adoption of the strategy supports the following community plan objectives:

Objective 1: 'Improve health and wellbeing'; and

Objective 7: 'Celebrate and invigorate community spirit, pride of place and a sense of belonging' and will contribute to Objective 4 'Reduce Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour'.

Options Considered:

The alternative option is to not adopt a Sport & Recreation Facilities Strategy.

Neither the strategy itself, nor direct investment in sport and recreation facilities, are a statutory responsibility of the District Council. However, as articulated in section 1.2 of the report and within the strategy itself, the evidence to support the District Council contributing to the delivery of facilities through its role as Local Planning Authority and in its role supporting healthy, active and sustainable communities, is strong.

102 SOUTHWELL LEISURE CENTRE

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance presented a report which provided the Cabinet with an update on progress and proposed next steps towards the development of a new swimming facility at Southwell Leisure Centre. The decision taken by the Cabinet at their meeting held on 19 December 2023 to provide a replacement learner and main pool had not changed, however, agreement to land transfer had not yet been confirmed by the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust. This was further complicated given the approval of the Charity Commission was required and complications with landlord / tenant lease relationship which existed. The Chief Executive referred to further correspondence received from the Southwell Leisure Centre Trust earlier in the day, which reflected the recommendations considered by the Cabinet.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) expresses its disappointment with the lack of progress, since 19 December, to transfer the land from Southwell Leisure Centre Trust to the Council;
- b) confirms its continued commitment to invest £5.5m in the development of a new swimming facility and not to repair the current pool;
- c) confirms that the investment referred to in recommendation (b) above is subject to the freehold transfer of all land currently in the ownership of Southwell Leisure Centre Trust, it being noted that this would be subject to the agreement

of the Charity Commission and for the legal agreement to include a covenant to restrict the use of the land transferred for the provision of leisure services;

- d) requests Southwell Leisure Centre Trust to agree to make a joint submission to the Charity Commission to propose the freehold disposal of all designated land in its ownership in return for the Council's £5.5m investment in a new pool and an estimated £740,000 investment in the "dry side", on the grounds that this is in the best interests of the beneficiaries of the charity and to enable the charity to meet its charitable objectives; and
- e) in order to avoid abortive work and costs, officers freeze any further work on the provision of a new pool until Southwell Leisure Centre Trust provide written agreement to (d) above. If and when agreement is reached the Council will commit to a 24 month project programme which will be shared with relevant stakeholders.

Reasons for Decision:

To progress and expedite the provision of a replacement swimming facility at Southwell.

Options Considered:

Three other options have already been discounted and covered in the report to Cabinet dated 19 December 2023; "Do nothing" and leave Southwell without a swimming facility, sleeve the pipework which was considered not to be viable and line the pool at a cost of £645,435.

Meeting closed at 8.26 pm.

Chair