

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, 25 November 2024 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor N Allen, Councillor A Brazier, Councillor C Brooks, Councillor S Forde, Councillor A Freeman, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor J Kellas, Councillor D Moore, Councillor P Rainbow, Councillor K Roberts, Councillor M Spoons, Councillor T Thompson and Councillor T Wendels

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S Haynes, Councillor J Lee and Councillor E Oldham and Councillor L Tift.

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

The Chair advised that, due to a technical issue, the meeting would not be live streamed. It was, however, still being recorded and requested that Members use their microphones when speaking. He noted that the recording would be published on the Council's website the following day.

56 DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

57 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2024

The minutes from the meeting held on 28 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

58 PROJECTED GENERAL FUND AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2025 AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Financial Services which provided Members with the forecast position for the 2024/25 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 2024) variances. Table 1 showed a projected favourable variance against the revised budget of £0.421m, with an overall favourable variance of £0.719m that would require transferring to the General Fund reserves. Table 2 provided an overview of projected Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Outturn for 2024/25 with a favourable variance on

the net cost of HRA Services against the revised budget of £0.134m with an overall increase in the forecast transfer to the Major Repairs Reserve of £0.033m. Details of the overview of the Projected Capital Outturn 2024/25 were also provided.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the General Fund projected favourable outturn variance of £0.719m be noted;
- b) the Housing Revenue Account projected favourable outturn variance of £0.033m to the Major Repairs Reserve be noted; and
- c) the Capital Programme revised budget and financing of £49.467m be noted.

59 REVIEW OF HRA BUSINESS PLAN ASSUMPTIONS

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Financial Services which provided Members with an overview of the key assumptions to be made within the production of the 30-year Housing Revenue Account 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. Those 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.

In response to whether the Council was liable for payment of Council Tax on NSDC void properties, the Business Manager confirmed that to be the case.

Members queried whether there had been any changes in the number of properties being sold under the Right to Buy Scheme. The Business Manager advised that the usual annual figure had been between 20-25 but following announcement from central Government in relation to the reduction in discount, the expectation was that this figure would reduce.

Members also queried what impact the number of empty properties on the Yorke Drive Estate had had on Council Tax receipts. The Business Manager advised he would circulate the information.

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

60 NEWARK TOWNS FUND UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director – Planning & Growth which provided Members with an update on the progress and achievements of Newark Towns Fund projects. The report set out the background to the awarding of the Town Fund Grant and the selection of the ten priority projects as listed within the report.

Details of the assurance framework were provided together with progress for each of the projects, which included changes to grant profiles following approval of project adjustment requests as detailed within the report.

In considering the report a Member queried the number of apprenticeships delivered at the YMCA's Community Activity Village, noting that it was below the agreed target. In response, Members were advised that the YMCA ran a scholarship programme which was similar to an apprenticeship scheme, but not accredited. Officers assured Members that they would continue to work with the YMCA to ensure the apprenticeship numbers were monitored.

AGREED that the progress made in the delivery of the various Newark Towns Fund projects be noted and welcomed.

61 UPDATE FOR KERBSIDE GLASS RECYCLING SCHEME

The Committee considered the report of the Waste & Recycling Manager which provided Members with information as to the current performance and future risks of the glass recycling project. The report set out that kerbside glass recycling had commenced on 8 April 2024 following a period of 8 weeks when wheeled bins had been distributed. It also provided information as to the take-up of the service by residents and the gradual withdrawal of Glass Recycling UK bottle banks sites across the district. It was reported that where these had high usage, NSDC own glass collection points had been installed. Statistical information was provided as to the amount of glass collected and how this compared favourably to the estimates calculated as the scheme was being developed.

In considering the report Members raised a number of queries in relation to: capturing data as to the number of bins that were not emptied every 8 weeks and the reason for that; information on the future income likely to be realised by glass recycling; issues around capacity at the Newark Lorry Park for the storage of collected glass; use of a sticker to remind residents when their bins were due for collection; contamination of silver bins by residents putting glass in them; the final destination of the glass the Council sells; method used to determine the regularity of collections; and any noise issues from residents due to the emptying of glass bins. The Waste & Recycling Manager provided satisfactory answers to all the points raised by Members within the meeting.

AGREED that:

- a) the current status of the project be noted; and
- b) further updated be provided as required.

62 COMMUNITY PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE - Q2

The Committee considered the report of the Transformation & Service Improvement Officer which presented to Members the Quarter 2 Community Plan Performance Report (July to September 2024). 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 sought further detail on how the Council was working with Nottinghamshire County Council to deliver the Family Hub initiative and how this would continue into the future. The Transformation & Service Improvement Officer advised she would provide a written response to Members.

AGREED that the Community Plan Performance Report Q2 be noted.

63 RESPONSE TO KIDDEY STONES CONSULTATION

The Committee considered the report of the Transformation & Business Improvement Manager which provided Members with the results of the recent consultation on the proposal to site the Kiddey Stones at Castle House. The report set out the background leading to the Cabinet determining to agree, in principle, with the proposals pending a public consultation of the Kiddey Stones being installed at Castle House. The report provided details of the consultation method and the analysis of the results.

In considering the report Members commented on the location chosen for the siting of the stones. Suggestions were made for alternative locations with some Members indicating that should the location be changed, they could support the project.

Members sought clarity on how the project was to be financed, querying which budget it would be funded from and when this had been accounted for. They also raised the issue of: additional costs that would be incurred, should the recommendations of the Police be followed; what the final overall cost of the project would be and what that would cover; and whether alternative funding had been considered.

General comment was made as to whether Cabinet would consider not proceeding with the project in light of the public response; whether a Deed of Gift from Newark Town Council to Newark & Sherwood District Council had been considered; and whether the accuracy of the responses following their analysis could be relied upon.

Councillor J. Lee, who was in attendance at the meeting was invited by the Chair to put forward any comments he would wish to be submitted to Cabinet alongside those of the Committee Members.

All the themes that the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee Members wished Cabinet to consider when reviewing the report were captured, with the Chair relaying these back to the meeting at the end of the discussion.

AGREED that:

- a) the contents of the report and consultation responses as detailed in Appendices A to E be noted; and
- b) the comments, as detailed above, be included in the Kiddey Stones report to the meeting of Cabinet scheduled for 10 December 2024.

64 PRESENTATION BY COUNCILLOR E. OLDHAM - PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CLIMATE & THE ENVIRONMENT

The Committee considered the presentation delivered by Councillor Emma Oldham, the Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment. Detailed within the presentation were a number of projects undertaken, these included: Climate Change Action Plan; energy generation, energy management and tackling fuel poverty; waste collection and recycling; fleet management and maintenance; air quality; biodiversity and conservation; Council's Tree Strategy; maintenance and enhancement of parks and open spaces; public engagement in relation to the natural environment; and statistical data from the residents' survey.

In noting the presentation, a Member commented that much of the activities undertaken were Newark centric and queried whether it would be possible to work with Edwinstowe Parish Council to assist them in improving their playgrounds for areas where there was no district council provision. She added that events held in Newark were difficult for residents in the west of the district to access as bus services were limited. The Portfolio Holder responded that she was actively pushing for additional funding for district wide activities, noting that access to external funding was limited.

In relation to waste collection, Members made comment on whether data was captured on emptying rates as that would enable a data led provision. Reference was made about potentially including a 'micro-chip' in future bin provision and also whether information was available as to the final destination of recycled materials.

Referring to the Woodland Trust's Tree Equity Score, a Member commented that there was a perception that some areas benefited more than others and queried whether it was possible for information to be circulated on the location of the target areas. The Portfolio Holder advised that the Tree Equity Score was a free online tool. She added that Hawtonville and Brunel Drive were lower than the national average in terms of tree coverage and that Hawtonville had been chosen to find potential locations for new trees.

AGREED that Councillor Emma Oldham, Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment be thanked for her attendance.

65 CABINET FORWARD PLAN - NOVEMBER 2024 TO FEBRUARY 2025

NOTED the Forward Plan of the Cabinet for the period November 2024 to February 2025.

66 ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA

AGREED that the provisions items for future Agendas be noted and that the following be brought to a future meeting of the Committee:

Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood SCO Progress & Performance/Review of Priorities
Portfolio Holder Presentation – Cllr. Susan Crosby

Newark Town Centre Master Plan
Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation
Consultation on the Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Meeting closed at 8.58 pm.

Chair