

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, 29 January 2024 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor N Allen (Substitute), Councillor A Brazier, Councillor C Brooks, Councillor S Forde, Councillor A Freeman, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor J Kellas, Councillor P Rainbow, Councillor K Roberts, Councillor M Shakeshaft, Councillor T Smith and Councillor T Thompson

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor D Moore and Councillor S Crosby

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor T Wendels

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

The Chair advised that the proceedings were being recorded by the Council and that the meeting was being livestreamed and broadcast from the Civic Suite, Castle House.

55 DECLARATION OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Agenda Item No. 11 – Support for Active Lifestyles Working Group Update. Councillors Forde; Freeman and Pringle, together with Deborah Johnson, Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development, declared Other Registerable Interests as Directors of Active4Today.

56 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 DECEMBER 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

57 ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE BY NHS NOTTINGHAM & NOTTINGHAMSHIRE ICB

The Committee considered the presentation jointly delivered by: Lucy Dadge, Director of Integration/Accountable Emergency Officer; Alex Ball, Director of Communications & Engagement and David Ainsworth, Director of Strategy & Partnerships from the NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire ICB (NNICB).

The presentation was in relation to the current and future provision at Newark Hospital. It set out how a 'listening exercise' was undertaken with stakeholders and the number of participants. Details of the findings of the exercise were provided together with a summary of the findings of the Clinical Senate. The Options Appraisal process was detailed together with a summary of the next steps to be taken. It was reported that the ICB Board would make a decision in the Spring of 2024 on the next

steps, having taken into consideration the outcome of the listening exercise, the Clinical Senate Review and the Options Appraisal process.

In considering the presentation, a Member commented on the decision of the Lincoln ICB to provide a 24 hour urgent care service to the people of Grantham and that the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) would offer clinical assessment and stabilisation. He noted that the people of Newark had concerns about the journey to Kings Mill Hospital in the event of what they may perceive as a serious illness or injury and that they would wish to be offered the same provision of urgent care as that provided at Grantham. The Member sought clarification from the NNICB for the divergence in provision compared to Grantham. He also suggested that information be sought from the Lincoln ICB to ascertain whether their 24-hour care provision delivered benefits to patients in terms of safety and effectiveness in comparison to a provision of 12 hours a day. In noting the relative isolation from acute hospital care, he stated that this was aggravated by flooding leading to the closure of bridges at Kelham and Gunthorpe and that this be factored into decision on acute service provision.

In response to the above comments, Members were advised that the NNICB commissioned care for Nottinghamshire and that any decision taken by Lincoln ICB would be based on their collection and interpretation of their local data. Grantham Hospital had a different configuration to that of Newark Hospital and the NNICB had reached a different conclusion, noting that the proposed care provision would continue to be monitored.

Members were further advised that following the temporary closure of the Newark UTC, information had been sought to ascertain whether Newark patients had sought their treatment in Grantham. The outcome of that had been that 1 patient per day from the Newark area may be seen in Grantham. In addition, it was noted that the Newark UTC was not an A&E and would not be dealing with major/critical illnesses, i.e. heart attack, road traffic accidents. Advice would be that should a patient experience chest pains they should remain at home and dial 999. However, should someone present to the UTC and become unwell whilst there, they would be treated prior to transfer to an acute care facility.

In noting the projected growth of Newark and its residents, a Member queried whether future proofing of the service provided at Newark Hospital had been considered. In response, Members were advised that all decisions and proposals had been taken within current NHS guidelines. It was noted that the need to provide an A&E facility was partially determined using a threshold of people in the area. When determining provision, forecasting was undertaken for a period of 10 years forward, considering housing provision and the age of the population.

In closing the debate, the Chair thanked the NNICB representatives for their attendance and requested that an update report be presented to the Committee in 2025.

AGREED that:

- a) the presentation by the NNICB be noted; and

- b) future updates be brought to the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee, following the outcome of the decision of the ICB Board.

58 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Customer Services Manager and the Transformation & Service Improvement Officer in relation to the results of the pilot opening hours within the Customer Contact Centre and Housing Repairs, together with the feedback received on the Customer Promise.

The report set out the background to the decision to pilot the extended opening hours on a Monday between 8am and 9am. It was reported that the trial ran for a 12-week period between September and November 2023, with the wind down period running through to 28 November. Details of how the pilot hours were promoted and resourced were provided with the proposals and options considered detailed at paragraph 2.0.

In relation to the Customer Promise, it was reported that this had arisen from the Resident Survey 2022 consultation when residents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the Council. Following this, a working group had been established to develop a Customer Experience Strategy. The Customer Promise was a document designed to deliver the message of the Customer Experience Strategy. It had been displayed for a period of four weeks with customers offered the opportunity to comment or suggest how it could be improved.

In considering the report, Members welcomed the feedback from the pilot to extend the opening hours and the proposal to resume the current opening hours. Members noted that the provision for out of hours emergency repairs remained unaltered.

Members agreed that the Customer Services Team be praised for their expertise, knowledge and approach, providing an excellent service to the Council's customers.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the recommendation to resume the Council's opening hours of 9am to 5pm within the Customer Contact Centre and Housing Repairs be endorsed; and
- b) the results of the customer feedback about the Customer Promise be noted.

59 ATTENDANCE BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS TO FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE POLICY & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the report of the Democratic Services Officer in relation to the proposed schedule of attendance by Portfolio Holders at future meetings of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee.

The report provided Members with a suggested calendar of attendance by the Portfolio Holders, subject to their availability. Attached as an appendix to the report was a list of proposed actions for 2024/2025 as detailed in the Community Plan which had been sub-divided into each portfolio area.

In considering the report Members agreed that it would be beneficial to receive a presentation from each of the Portfolio Holders.

Having considered the actions detailed in the report appendix, a Member requested that a separate report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to the Climate Change Portfolio, specifically the weekly food waste collections, noting that this was a major issue for local authorities and that consideration of a solution should be at a county level.

In noting the recommendation to provide areas of focus for each of the portfolio remits, a Member suggested that the Portfolio Holder give a presentation, detailing their priorities and their proposed actions, following which the Committee could ask questions relevant to their remit. He added that it may be too restrictive to only be able to ask questions on previously identified focussed areas.

In considering the above comments, the Chair set out his vision for how the Committee would engage effectively with Portfolio Holders to ensure the session was constructive. He added that should Members not wish to adopt that approach he would consider a positive alternative which fulfilled the scrutiny function of the Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the proposed schedule of attendance by Portfolio Holders, subject to their availability, be noted;
- b) the actions within each portfolio area as detailed in the appendix to the report be noted; and
- c) a report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee in relation to weekly food waste collections.

## 60 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & ROUGH SLEEPERS STRATEGY 2024/2029

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager – Regeneration & Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy & Safeguarding Officer in relation to providing Members with an opportunity to review the draft Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024/2029 prior to it being presented to Cabinet for approval.

It was reported that the production of a Homelessness Strategy, every five years, was a statutory requirement. Additional duties had been introduced via the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018. Newark & Sherwood District Council have brought together the duties to create a collective Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024-2029. It was noted that the

Strategy could only be delivered through effective partnership working and that a draft delivery plan was included within the document. Details of the six priorities and how these would be delivered and progress monitored were listed in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of the report.

In considering the report, a Member queried what provision was in place to assist rough sleepers or those on the verge of sleeping rough who experienced mental health issues. In response, Members were advised that should an individual be identified as needing support, they would be referred onwards to the appropriate partner organisation.

A Member queried when the temporary accommodation at Alexandra Lodge would be opened. Members were informed that the building part of the project was complete and that there would now be a period of 4 weeks to enable the building to be ready for residents. It was anticipated that the first residents would be placed there in early-March 2024.

In response to whether the annual progress review would be presented to the Policy & Performance Committee for scrutiny, the Chair confirmed that there would be a general review of the strategy each year presented to Committee for consideration.

AGREED (unanimously) that the draft Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024-2029 be noted, prior to its presentation to Cabinet for approval.

## 61 CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Environmental Policy & Projects Officer which sought to provide Members with an update on the progress of the Climate Emergency Strategy and associated Action Plan.

The report set out the background to the declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and the work undertaken since that time resulting in the Council's agreed target for carbon reduction and the development of the Action Plan to deliver the vision outlined in the Climate Emergency Strategy. Details were provided in relation to the ongoing projects: the Green Rewards App; Accelerator Training Workshops; Solar PV Installation; Decarbonisation Plan; Climate Awareness Training; Electric Vehicle Charge Points; Energy Efficiency Improvements to Homes; Tree Planting; and the Local Area Energy Plan. Paragraph 3 of the report provided detailed information as to the monitoring and measuring of the Council's carbon emissions and how this would assist in being accountable to residents. It also enabled identification of areas with high carbon emissions suitable for targeted action.

In considering the report a Member queried as to what, if any, were the limiting factors on the installation of solar panels on Council owned building: economical or the structure of the building itself. In response, Members were advised that it was likely both would impact on any decision. Options were being explored to fit them retrospectively on older buildings and whether their installation could be included during the development stage of any new builds.

In noting the above response, a Member commented that storage batteries would also be required alongside the solar panels. He added that every effort should be made to insist that solar panels were fitted on new builds to ensure they were as 'green' as possible. He also acknowledged the cost of fitting solar panels retrospectively. In relation to the Council's programme of tree planting, he suggested that a strategy was required to ensure they were kept healthy, both existing trees and those newly planted.

In noting the Green Award's App. a Member suggested that it lacked ambition and growth. He requested that the next update report contain details of how the App. could be improved and become more challenging in comparison to how easy it was to reach the existing targets. The Member also stated that he was awaiting a response from the Audit & Governance Committee in relation to how much the Climate Awareness Refresh Training had cost but to-date had not received a reply.

In closing the debate, the Chair stated that Officers made every effort to deliver the vision outlined in the Climate Emergency Strategy within known financial constraints, noting that the Committee were required to scrutinise the performance.

AGREED that the progress on the Climate Emergency Strategy Action Plan and its key projects be noted.

## 62 TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES (TSM) SURVEY 2023/2024

The Committee considered the report of the Housing Regulatory Compliance Manager which sought to outline to Members the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) Survey Report.

The report set out the background to the requirement for landlords with 1000+ properties to carry out an annual TSM with the results being submitted to the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH). Attached as an appendix to the report was the results of the Council's survey undertaken between September and October 2023. It was reported that some optional questions were also asked of tenants in relation to their satisfaction with lettings and gas servicing. Details of how the survey was undertaken were provided at paragraph 1.5 together with a table noting the direction of travel in comparison to previous surveys undertaken.

In considering the report a Member referred to the response of the Repairs: Time Taken. He noted that as a Ward Councillor, the majority of comments he received were in relation to how long it took for them to be carried out and not the quality of the repair. He also commented on the difference in age to those who accepted the length of time it took to those who did not. Members were advised that the older generation tenants were more accepting across the board than those of a younger age but that the reason for this was not known.

Members agreed that a complaint should not always be viewed negatively, more so that the tenant was comfortable in reporting any issues they may have.

AGREED that:

- a) the report content be noted;
- b) it be noted that the report had been presented to the Senior Leadership Team and the Tenant Engagement Board in September 2023.

63 SUPPORT FOR ACTIVE LIFESTYLES WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Committee considered the verbal update of the Chair of the Active Lifestyles Working Group, Councillor Celia Brooks.

Councillor Brooks set out the work undertaken so far by the Group, particularly noting how the Council communicated with individuals who did not wish to participate in group settings. She thanked Officers for their attendance at the Group and noted that the topic under consideration was far wider than initially anticipated. It was noted that the next meeting of the Group was scheduled for 1 March 2024.

AGREED that the verbal report be noted.

64 INFORMATION SHARING WITH MEMBERS WORKING GROUP UPDATE

The Committee considered the verbal update of the Chair of the Information Sharing with Members Working Group, Councillor Jack Kellas.

Councillor Kellas advised that the scope of the Group was much wider and more diverse than initially anticipated. The Council's Senior Information Governance & DPO Officer had advised as to what information could be shared with Members and provided scenarios as to what type of information could not be shared. At the last meeting of the Group, they had looked at bench marking with other local authorities as to the type of information they shared with their Members. The Group also discussed a potential platform for accessing reporting of issues to enable Members to see what was happening in their wards – a Members' Portal. Once this was ready, all Members would be invited to look at how it would work.

He advised that at the next meeting they would be looking at the complaints process and invited the Chair to attend as the Member responsible for complaints. Democratic Services would also be in attendance at the meeting to discuss how Members can be better supported.

A Member of the Committee and the Working Group commented that the data was available but not always accessible due to data protection. He added that the collation of data into ward information would be very useful for the elected Member.

AGREED that the verbal report be noted.

65 CABINET FORWARD PLAN - JANUARY TO APRIL 2024

NOTED the Forward Plan of the Cabinet for the period January to April 2024.

66 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2023

NOTED the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 31 October 2023.

67 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2023

NOTED the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 5 December 2023.

68 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2023

NOTED the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting held on 19 December 2023.

69 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

NOTED the provision Agenda items for future meetings.

Meeting closed at 7.40 pm.

Chairman