Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee Meeting: 24 June 2024

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

Lead Officer: Mark Randle, Transformation & Improvement Officer

Report Summary	
Report Title	Outcomes of Information Sharing with Elected Councillors Working Group
Purpose of Report	To update the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) on the work of the member working group on Information Sharing with Elected Councillors.
Recommendations	That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee endorse and forward to Cabinet, for consideration and approval, the recommendations of the Working Group as follows: a) that the amendment is made to the website, including a postcode search for 'find your ward member'.(NB postcode search has now been implemented); b) that all elected councillors are automatically signed up to the Council's Official Newsletters; c) the Communications & Marketing Team to set up a further drop in session for elected councillors to help with social media and Google Alerts; d) the posters at **Appendix C** will be made available for all elected councillors to use; e) that the Democratic Services Team will re advertise the allocated Democratic Services Officer (DSO) list and actively promote the support they can offer to elected councillors; and f) that the Power BI system is developed and provided to all councillors and that the system is further developed over time to include other service requests and reports.

1.0 <u>Background</u>

This Working Group was created after a submission of a Topic Request Form at Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) on 11 September 2023, titled

'What and how information relevant to their ward and residents can be shared with elected Councillors?'

Councillor Kellas proposed the 'Topic Request' and it was seconded by Councillor Jackson. There had previously been a discussion on this topic at Full Council on 18 July 2023.

The request was made to help understand what type of information elected councillors would find useful to help them be effective in their roles as ward councillors. Also, to consider what information can and cannot be shared with them and what format that could take.

Councillors are seen as a point of information to the residents in their Ward. They need to be kept informed of what is happening in their areas so that they can answer questions when asked.

They can be approached by an individual or groups of residents, asking them to raise issues on their behalf. They need to be kept up to date with any actions this may trigger. Currently sometimes Councillors feel at a disadvantage because they do not have the information that they need.

<u>The Working Group</u>
The group met four times between November 2023 and March 2024 with input from the following working group elected councillors: -

- Councillor Kellas(chair)
- Councillor Jackson
- Councillor Shakeshaft
- Councillor Allen
- Councillor Freeman
- Councillor Smith

The working group was supported by a team of officers who, considering the direction given by elected councillors, gathered information and data to inform the sessions.

The agreed objectives of the working group were:

- To understand what information councillors can lawfully be provided with considering GDPR.
- To discover what information would be needed and in which formats, to enable them to best serve their wards.
- To understand how the handling of data may be different regarding individuals, businesses, and general council business.

- To research and identify what information is already provided to councillors at NSDC and how this information compares to that provided to councillors in other Local Authorities?
- To identify what further information is available, in what format and how accessible and cost effective it is to obtain?

2.0   Conclusions and Recommendations of the Working Group

2.1   General Data Protection Rules (GDPR)

The Council's Data Protection Officer advised the working group that there was no basis by which all elected councillors could be copied into all responses to residents in their ward.

In respect of resident enquiries, if they are acting on behalf of someone, the essential personal data can only be provided if the resident has given their consent for their personal data to be shared with their ward councillor or they have contacted them directly and requested they act on their behalf.

There is a considerable amount of data produced through the council's Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) with a high number and frequency of enquiries across the whole District, example data shown in **Appendix A**. The sheer volume could deluge councillors if it was not in a managed form.

a.)   Recommendation:- Data can only be shared if it does not include personal data. This should be selected for its relevance to councillors and in a managed form to enable to use the data effectively.

2.2   Complaints Procedure

It was agreed to 'signpost' complainants through the council's website, providing information on how to contact their councillor, highlighting that their local councillor is available, if they required it, to help and advise them, putting the onus on the complainant to do this.

b.)   Recommendation: - That the amendment is made to the website, including a postcode search for 'find your ward member'.
(NB postcode search has now been implemented)

2.3   Communications Support

Not all elected councillors appear to have signed up to the official council newsletters. It was proposed that councillors would be forwarded all newsletters sent out by the communication team and then they can unsubscribe if they no longer wish to receive certain newsletters. This means that they have access to the information seen by our residents.

It was suggested that the Communications and Marketing Team will promote a repeat session where councillors will be able to gain help in setting up their Social Media presence. They will also offer help to set up Google Alerts which can assist councillors in discovering non-council activity which is happening in their Wards.

To aid residents being able to identify and contact their ward elected councillors a template for a poster was suggested, which elected councillors can put up in locations around their Wards. (Examples are shown in **Appendix B**.) This will come with clear guidelines on use including that no political branding can be added to the template.

c.) **Recommendation:** - That all councillors are automatically signed up to the Council's Official Newsletters.

d.) **Recommendation;-** The Communications and Marketing Team will set up a further drop in session for councillors to help with social media and Google Alerts.

e.) **Recommendation:-** The posters at **Appendix B** will be made available for all councillors to use.

2.4   Democratic Services

It was considered that Democratic Services should re-advertise the allocated Democratic Services Officer (DSO) list and to encourage councillors to use the Democratic Services Team to help them locate officers or provide other information. This was originally produced immediately after the election and some councillors had considered it was a time limited offer.
(NB – This has now been distributed)

Democratic Services could promote to elected councillors what support and help they can give them in their role.

f.) **Recommendation:-** That Democratic Services Team will re advertise the allocated Democratic Services Officer (DSO) list (**Appendix C**) and actively promote the support they can offer to elected councillors.

2.5   Interactive Data Map for each Ward

Councillors considered two systems, one provided by Meritec, the provider of the council's CRM system and an inhouse version provided through Microsoft's 'Power BI'. On examining both systems it was apparent that both operated fundamentally in the same way, with Power BI having more ability for customisation. There was a clear preference for the Power BI system which had the ability to be more useful to councillors and had no cost, the Meritec version costing approximately £10k per annum.

The system would be self-serve for all councillors where they could see data on reported issues in their ward. This would initially include:- Flytipping, Graffiti, Missed Bins, Street Cleansing, Waste Investigations and Abandoned Vehicles. The initial build will only contain data from Meritec ESB, with additional functionality around ASB reporting being further explored.

Elected councillors would be able to see their own ward data and that of the whole district, there would be an average data function. Data was uploaded overnight and therefore refreshed every 24 hour period.

The data could be displayed in a variety of ways including a 'heat map' of the ward with the ability to compare data in different periods. It would enable councillors to look at 'live' open requests as well as closed requests. There would be a quick link to the report form for that request so that elected councillors could report issues if they could see they had not already been reported.

Elected councillors who do not have ICT access could have hard copy on a regular basis.

Screenshots of the system are shown in **Appendix D** and are based on the Farndon Ward.

All Member Power Bi demonstration – 15 May
All councillors were invited to attend an online demonstration from Dave Richardson, Business Manager for ICT, on what Microsoft 'Power BI' can offer, providing ward level data, drawn down from our CRM.

The session was chaired by Councillor Kellas. The general consensus from attendees was really positive with some councillors providing feedback to Dave Richardson on elements for improvement and clarification.

g.) **Recommendation:** that the Power BI system is developed and provided to all councillors. That the system is further developed over time to include other service requests and reports.

4.0 **Implications**
In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment below where appropriate.

Financial Implications
All tools used to create the Power BI report are included in the existing Microsoft Office 365 Licensing contract, thus come at no additional cost*.*

HR Implications

Whilst there is no request for additional resource, there is a resource implication in terms of officer time for a number of the recommendations above. All Business Mangers have confirmed they can support the recommendations and release officers to undertake the activity.

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

2023	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Abandoned vehicles	18	22	27	28	18	29	20	16	31
Anti-social behaviour	23	24	18	27	28	15	20	24	6
Damaged street nameplate	15	11	7	10	6	5	10	9	15
Flytipping	189	231	204	221	193	144	230	88	173
Graffiti or flyposting	1	16	12	2	6	8	10	3	2
Litter bins	9	10	14	7	9	12	3	3	7
Noise problems	43	38	55	61	47	37	28	16	16
Street cleaning	92	87	111	89	64	100	111	129	111
Total per month	**390**	**439**	**448**	**445**	**371**	**350**	**432**	**288**	**361**

Your Local Ward Councillor

NEWARK & SHERWOOD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Name:

Paul Peacock

Ward:

Edwinstowe

Contact details:

07123456789

paul.peacock@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

As a local ward Councillor at Newark and Sherwood District Council, I can:

- respond to your questions and assist with any concerns you have.

- share Council decisions that affect our ward.

- report any problems in our ward.

- work with local organisations, interest groups and businesses.

- represent your views at Council meetings.

Please get in touch if you would like to know more.

Date of display: 20 December 2023

KEEP UP TO DATE

NEWARK & SHERWOOD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

The best way to keep up to date on information from Newark and Sherwood District Council is to sign up to its free electronic newsletters.

It issues three different newsletters:

1. A resident newsletter, issued once a month.

2. A business newsletter, issued bi-monthly.

3. A tenant newsletter, issued quarterly.

You can sign up for any of these on its website or by scanning the QR code below.

Alternatively, follow them on social media

Newark and Sherwood District Council

NSDCouncil

www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY

District Councillors 2023

Helen Brandham	Karen Langford	Catharine Saxton
Neil Allen	Jean Hall	Mike Pringle
Adrian Amer	Peter Harris	Penny Rainbow
Alice Brazier	Simon Haynes	Karen Roberts
Lee Brazier	Rhona Holloway	Neil Ross
Celia Brooks	Roger Jackson	Sue Saddington
Irene Brown	Jack Kellas	Maurice Shakeshaft
Rowan Cozens	Johno Lee	Tom Smith
Susan Crosby	Keith Melton	Matthew Spoors
Linda Dales	Sylvia Michael	Paul Taylor
Debbie Darby	David Moore	Tina Thompson
Phil Farmer	Emma Oldham	Linda Tift
Simon Forde	Paul Peacock	Timothy Wendels
Andy Freeman	Claire Penny	Tim Wildgust