

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Full Council** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Tuesday, 15 October 2024 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor J Hall (Chair)  
Councillor L Tift (Vice-Chair)

Councillor N Allen, Councillor A Amer, Councillor A Brazier, Councillor L Brazier, Councillor C Brooks, Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Crosby, Councillor L Dales, Councillor D Darby, Councillor P Farmer, Councillor A Freeman, Councillor S Forde, Councillor P Harris, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor R Holloway, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor J Kellas, Councillor J Lee, Councillor K Melton, Councillor S Michael, Councillor D Moore, Councillor E Oldham, Councillor P Peacock, Councillor C Penny, Councillor M Pringle, Councillor P Rainbow, Councillor K Roberts, Councillor N Ross, Councillor S Saddington, Councillor T Smith, Councillor M Shakeshaft, Councillor M Spoor, Councillor P Taylor and Councillor T Wildgust

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor I Brown, Councillor T Thompson and Councillor T Wendels

Prior to the transaction of business, the Council stood in silence in memory of Neil Tift who worked in Housing Income & Leaseholder Management.

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

The Chair advised the Council that the meeting was being recorded and streamed online in accordance with usual practice.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

NOTED the interests previously declared by Members in Agenda Item No. 12 – Minutes for Noting.

25 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2024

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

26 COMMUNICATIONS WHICH THE CHAIR, LEADER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS MAY WISH TO LAY BEFORE THE COUNCIL

The Chair informed Members that she had invited two students, Elizabeth Woods and Jaya Kalia, from The Minster School, Southwell, to speak to the Council about their personal aspirations for the future and their thoughts on how the Council may help to improve their community. Elizabeth and Jaya addressed the Council.

The students were thanked for their attendance by Members.

The Chair also informed Members of recent events both herself and the Vice-Chair had attended on behalf of the Council, including the Boots & Berets Awards Ceremony, the Nottinghamshire Day Flag Raising Ceremony, hosting the Merchant Navy Day Flag Raising, the Tour of Britain, the 84<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of Britain and the Council's own Community & Sports Award.

The Chair also extended her congratulations to Officers at the National Civil War Centre – Newark Museum who had been awarded the prestigious accolade of winning a 'Family Friendly Museum of the Year' award.

The Chair also announced her charities as Newark Women's Aid; Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust; and Nottinghamshire Mind (Newark).

The Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment thanked the Street Scene Team for their efforts to open the Sherwood Avenue Park.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing advised that the Council had been shortlisted for the Best Development Team – Rural/Suburban at the Inside Housing Awards. He also advised that Alexander Lodge was being considered for another award as was Dale Lane, Blidworth. He also referred to the recently adopted Garden Tidy Scheme which offered one-off support to residents, thanking the Tenant Engagement Board for their support of this initiative.

## 27 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCIL (IF ANY)

In accordance with Rule No. 3.3.3, one question had been submitted by Councillor R. Jackson to the Council. Details of the question put forward and the response given by Councillor P. Taylor are attached as Appendix A to the minutes.

## 28 LEADERS APPOINTMENTS

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive which detailed changes to the appointments made by the Executive Leader of the Council for Portfolio Holders and the Cabinet and also set out new Portfolio Holder remits following the changes.

AGREED to note the appointments of the Cabinet Members and Portfolio Holders and the revised remits of Portfolio Holders.

## 29 POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought to approve the allocation of seats to Political Groups in accordance with Appendix A to the report and to the changes to appointments to Committees as detailed in Appendix B to the report.

The changes were required following the formation of a Green Party Group on the Council.

AGREED with 34 votes for and 2 abstentions that:

- a) the allocation of seats to Political Groups (as set out in Appendix B to the Minutes) be approved; and
- b) the changes to appointments to Committees (as set out in the Schedule attached as Appendix C to the Minutes) be approved.

30 RECORD OF URGENT DECISION - EXPANSION OF THE CARELINE SERVICE

NOTED the record of the urgent decision taken in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Constitution.

31 NOTICES OF MOTION

**Building Regulations**

In accordance with the Rule No. 3.4.3, Councillor R Jackson moved and Councillor R Holloway, seconded a motion to the following effect:

“There continues to be pressure for renewable energy solutions such as solar to address our moves towards achieving net zero. A simple way we could help and reduce pressure for solar farms taking up valuable agricultural land would be to require all new housing and warehouses to incorporate solar panels. I know that Part L of the Building Regulations goes some way towards this but I think we can and should go further. I would ask that the Council considers how it could introduce such a policy in the future and that it writes to Angela Rayner, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to ask that Building Regulations are strengthened in order to require solar panels on all new appropriate developments as standard.”

The motion, on being put to the vote, was declared lost with 14 votes for, 19 against and 3 abstentions.

**Winter Fuel Allowance**

In accordance with the Rule No. 3.4.3, Councillor R Holloway moved and Councillor T Smith, seconded a motion to the following effect:

“The Labour Government has chosen to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as recently announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.

We know that the Winter Fuel Payments play a significant role in helping older residents of Newark and Sherwood and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.

It is nationally acknowledged that this Winter Fuel payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship, this will have a direct impact on 23,970 Pensioners across the Newark and Sherwood District.

Many of those Pensioners will have been relying on this payment to see them through the coldest winter months and now have no time to set money aside to meet the rising cost of keeping warm.

The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.

This Council resolves to:

- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment, and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Newark and Sherwood are supported in claiming their entitlement.”

In accordance with Rule No. 4.6.1, Councillor P Peacock moved and Councillor L Brazier seconded an amendment to the motion as follows:

“The Labour Government has chosen to restrict the Winter Fuel Allowance to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as recently announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.

We know that the Winter Fuel Allowance plays a significant role in helping older residents of Newark & Sherwood and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing ‘heat or eat’ dilemmas and safeguarding health.

It is nationally acknowledged that this Winter Fuel Allowance has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship, this will have a direct impact on many pensioners across the Newark & Sherwood district.

Many of those pensions will have been relying on this payment to see them through the coldest winter months and now have no time to set money aside to meet the rising cost of keeping warm. The decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Allowance, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures will disproportionately affect the health and wellbeing of our poorest older residents.

It is noted that the Winter Fuel Allowance is not enough to take our most vulnerable pensioners out of fuel poverty.

This Council acknowledges that households with children are the hardest hit by fuel poverty with more than 6 million children living in households suffering from fuel poverty. These families have been let down for many years, without any extra help with their heating costs.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the threshold for Winter Fuel Allowance eligibility and review the financial support to our most vulnerable families to ensure they are protected from fuel poverty; and
- Continue to encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through Council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensions in Newark & Sherwood are supported in claiming their entitlement. “

(Meeting adjourned at 7.51pm and recommenced at 8.05pm)

Following the adjournment the Chair announced that the amendment to the original motion had been accepted by Councillor R Holloway as the mover. This therefore became an alternation to the motion in accordance with Rule No. 4.7.1 and was debated by the Council.

The motion, on being put to the vote, was agreed unanimously.

In accordance with Rule No. 5.4 a recorded vote was taken as follows:

<b>Name of Councillor</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Neil Allen	For
Adrian Amer	For
Alice Brazier	For
Lee Brazier	For
Celia Brooks	For
Rowan Cozens	For
Susan Crosby	For
Linda Dales	For
Debbie Darby	For
Phil Farmer	For
Simon Forde	For
Andy Freeman	For
Jean Hall	For
Peter Harris	For
Simon Haynes	For
Rhona Holloway	For
Roger Jackson	For
Jack Kellas	For
Johno Lee	For
Keith Melton	For
Sylvia Michael	For
David Moore	For
Emma Oldham	For
Paul Peacock	For
Claire Penny	For
Mike Pringle	For
Penny Rainbow	For
Karen Roberts	For

Neil Ross	For
Sue Saddington	For
Maurice Shakeshaft	For
Tom Smith	For
Matthew Spoons	For
Paul Taylor	For
Linda Tift	For
Tim Wildgust	For

Note: The Chair advised that although some Members may have a non-registerable interest in this motion, this did not prevent them from taking part in the debate and voting.

### **Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls**

In accordance with the Rule No. 3.4.3, Councillor P Taylor moved and Councillor M Shakeshaft, seconded a motion to the following effect:

“The aim of the motion is to express the seriousness of the amount of violence against women and girls. 1 in 4 women and girls experience violence from male perpetrators.

The Council’s commitment to do all within its power to highlight the issue and assist in increasing the safety of women and girls across Newark and Sherwood.

The Council commits to

- a. Continuing to actively participate in the white ribbon campaign - The [White Ribbon](#) is the globally recognised symbol to end men’s violence against women and girls. Allyship is a central message of the White Ribbon; it represents men taking responsibility to challenge this issue and being allies, every day, to stop violence against women and girls before it starts.
- b. Achieving the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance accreditation (DAHA) which ensures the Council deliver safe and effective responses to incidents of domestic abuse in our district.
- c. Working with partners including the Police & Crime Commissioners Office to make women and girls safer.
- d. Castle House becoming a safe space for women and girls to request support and that all other Council premises should aim to become safe spaces once staff have been trained.
- e. Involving more businesses in this campaign to make women and girls safer.
- f. Ensuring our staff and Councillors are trained to support women and girls when it is needed.

It is time that men who are the principal perpetrators take ownership of addressing this issue in order to reduce the number of women and girls who suffer from violence against them.”

The motion, on being put to the vote, was agreed unanimously.

During the debate, in accordance with Rule No. 2.7.2, a Motion to continue the meeting for a further hour was agreed.

Councillor R Jackson left the meeting after this vote was taken.

### **Conduct and Public Service**

In accordance with the Rule No. 3.4.3, Councillor R Cozens moved and Councillor P Peacock, seconded a motion to the following effect:

“Earlier this year the Local Government Information Unit published findings showing that less than half of people in England trusted their local councillors to act in their best interests. Trust in national Government is even lower. Only 25% of people reported that they trusted national Government to act in their interests.

The purpose of this motion is to encourage us to take a good hard look at ourselves and how we are perceived by others.

This matters for all sorts of reasons. We are collectively the employer to over 700 people, the vast majority live and vote in our District. There is a requirement to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour and conduct throughout the entire Council. This is as well as upholding the Members’ Code of Conduct.

In our roles as Councillors we are closely observed, here and online. People expect us to set a good example and be role models for the Council’s values. The public also observe us, perhaps only a small selection here, but plenty online and in the newspaper. When they observe poor behaviour, it reflects badly on us and on public service more generally. It can also have a detrimental effect on the mental health and wellbeing of members, employees and relatives.

There is no place for the increasing toxicity and intimidation that prevails in public debate, particularly online and in social media. It is a real deterrent for the next generation of councillors and creates a risk for the future of representative democracy.

It is the case that the vast majority of councillors work very hard, for little reward and recognition, with the utmost dignity, integrity and compassion.

My proposal therefore is:

That Full Council requests the Audit & Governance Committee to review the Code of Conduct and the LGA’s Civility in Public Life programme, with a view to identifying practical measures the Council could adopt to address poor conduct by members where it arises. This includes a request for clear and robust guidance around member behaviour on social media. If necessary, the Council shall make representations to Government and the Local Government Association for proposed changes and stiffer sanctions.”

The motion, on being put to the vote, was agreed with 26 votes for, 1 against with 8 abstentions.

In accordance with Rule No. 5.4 a recorded vote was taken as follows:

<b>Name of Councillor</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Neil Allen	For
Adrian Amer	Against
Alice Brazier	For
Lee Brazier	For
Celia Brooks	For
Rowan Cozens	For
Susan Crosby	For
Linda Dales	For
Debbie Darby	For
Phil Farmer	Abstain
Simon Forde	Abstain
Andy Freeman	For
Jean Hall	For
Peter Harris	For
Simon Haynes	Abstain
Rhona Holloway	For
Jack Kellas	Abstain
Johno Lee	Abstain
Keith Melton	For
Sylvia Michael	Abstain
David Moore	For
Emma Oldham	For
Paul Peacock	For
Claire Penny	For
Mike Pringle	For
Penny Rainbow	For
Karen Roberts	Abstain
Neil Ross	For
Sue Saddington	Abstain
Maurice Shakeshaft	For
Tom Smith	For
Matthew Spoons	For
Paul Taylor	For
Linda Tift	For
Tim Wildgust	For

In accordance with Rule No. 2.7.2, a Motion to continue the meeting for a further hour was agreed.

32 MINUTES FOR NOTING

32a CABINET - 23 JULY 2024

Minute No. 159 – Long Term Plan for Towns – Town Plan Investment Plan 2024/2027 (Key Decision)

Councillor P Harris queried why there was no mention of other towns, only Newark, in the Long Term Plan for Towns item.

Councillor P Peacock advised that this was specifically a Long Term Plan for Newark.

32b CABINET - 10 SEPTEMBER 2024

32c CABINET - 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

Minute No. 182 – Proposal to Adopt the Land and Ongoing Maintenance of the Middlebeck Phase One Development (Key Decision)

Councillor P Harris expressed concern as to the apparent preferred option of appointing a management company to undertake land maintenance.

Councillor P Peacock advised that it was not possible for the District Council to impose such a condition on a developer, but this was not the position in respect of this site where a management company would not be undertaking the maintenance.

32d EXECUTIVE SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE - 23 JULY 2024

Minute No. 4 – Arkwood Developments Performance Report Quarter 4

Councillor P Harris queried as to why Arkwood Developments were only proposing to fit minimal solar panels on developments whereas they should be leading on this.

Councillor P Peacock advised that he would arrange for Councillor Harris to meet with Arkwood Developments to discuss this further.

32e EXECUTIVE SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE - 10 SEPTEMBER 2024

32f POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE - 22 JULY 2024

32g POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE - 2 SEPTEMBER 2024

32h PLANNING COMMITTEE - 11 JULY 2024

32i PLANNING COMMITTEE - 1 AUGUST 2024

32j PLANNING COMMITTEE - 5 SEPTEMBER 2024

32k AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 31 JULY 2024

32l AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 25 SEPTEMBER 2024

32m GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 12 SEPTEMBER 2024

32n LICENSING COMMITTEE - 12 SEPTEMBER 2024

Meeting closed at 10.20 pm.

Chair