

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **General Purposes Committee** held in the Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Thursday, 12 December 2024 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor J Hall (Chair)

Councillor N Allen, Councillor A Brazier, Councillor L Brazier, Councillor D Darby, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor S Michael, Councillor D Moore, Councillor K Roberts, Councillor S Saddington, Councillor M Spoor, Councillor P Taylor, Councillor T Wendels and Councillor T Wildgust

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor L Tift (Vice-Chair)

35 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.

36 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

NOTED that Councillors M Spoor and P Taylor declared other registerable interests in Agenda Item No. 5 – Community Governance Review – Newark Town Council as elected Members of Newark Town Council.

37 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2024

The minutes from the meeting held on 12 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

38 NEWARK COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Business Manager - Elections & Democratic Services presented a report which sought approval for the Terms of Reference, including a timetable to undertake a Community Governance Review of Newark Town Council.

It was reported that the Council were seeking to undertake a community governance review of Newark Town Council to ensure the ward boundaries and electoral arrangements remained effective and convenient for the local community. The draft Terms of Reference and map were appended to the report for Members.

Members considered the report, noting the list of consultees. The Business Manager - Elections & Democratic Services confirmed that Members would be kept informed of progress. No changes would be made to either the District or County ward boundaries.

AGREED that the Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved for the first stage of public consultation.

39 REVISION TO COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Public Protection which sought to advise Members of the rationale for the revision to the format of the statistical and performance reports.

In presenting the report, the Business Manager noted the Members' concerns and comments from the previous meeting. She advised them that the Licensing Team were currently undergoing a transformation review. The review was seeking to: upgrade the licensing system; install and set up the public access system for licensing; to move away from paper-based licensing applications, wherever possible; and to continue to develop the payment system to allow customers to self-serve their application fees etc.

In considering the report a Member reiterated his concerns from the previous meeting. He stated the importance of receiving the information to ensure Members were kept informed as to what was happening within the district. He acknowledged the need for change to the reporting format to assist the resource issue within the Licensing Team but commented that the proposed revised format did not provide with sufficient information.

In response to whether it would be possible for the new online application process to be linked into a national database e.g. DVLA whereby when the applicant entered their Driving Licence No. it would automatically populate the form with any driving related endorsements they had received, the Business Manager advised that this would not be possible. Officers would still be required to carry out separate checks. She added that warning screens could be included in the online process to remind applicants that they must declare all relevant convictions and/or endorsements.

In referring to the weekly planning lists which were circulated to all members of the Council, a Member queried whether it would be possible for the Licensing and General Purposes Committees' Members to receive a similar weekly update following the completion of the aforementioned upgrade to the licensing system. The Business Manager confirmed that this would be possible when the new system was operational.

In response to the legal implications, the Council's Principal Legal Officer reiterated her comments contained within paragraph 3.3 of the report in relation to the proposed changes and the current reporting arrangements.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the rationale for the report changes be noted; and
- b) approval of the new format and information provided be deferred pending further discussions with Members and Officers.

40 UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AND ENFORCEMENT MATTERS

The Committee considered the report of the Senior Licensing Officer, which set out the range and number of license applications received during the period April to June 2024 in relation to Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Drivers, Private Ambulance Drivers together with House to House and Street Collections.

AGREED that the report be noted.

Meeting closed at 6.48 pm.

Chair