

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, 11 February 2025 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor N Allen, Councillor A Brazier, Councillor L Brazier, Councillor C Brooks, Councillor I Brown, Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Crosby, Councillor L Dales, Councillor D Darby, Councillor A Freeman, Councillor S Forde, Councillor P Harris, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor R Holloway, Councillor R Jackson, Councillor J Kellas, Councillor K Melton, Councillor S Michael, Councillor D Moore, 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 P Taylor and Councillor T Wendels

APOLOGIES FOR Councillor P Farmer, Councillor J Lee, Councillor E Oldham, Councillor
ABSENCE: M Spoons, Councillor T Thompson and Councillor T Wildgust

45 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.

46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

The interests previously declared by Members in Agenda Item No. 13 – Minutes for Noting – were noted.

47 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2024

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chair advised that the Christmas raffle had raised £641 for her chosen charities for the year (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Nottinghamshire MIND and Newark Women's Aid) and to raise further monies she was to undertake her 'Chair's Challenge' of walking / cycling around the District and encouraged other Members to join her.

The Chair also informed the Council of various events she had recently including an Armed Forces Network, Bilsthorpe Breakfast Club, Sterling Memorial Anniversary in Ashfield, Plough Sunday, Burns Night, 100 years of the Rotary Club, 'Last Night at the Proms' at the Palace Theatre and a coffee morning at Willam Ghent House.

The Leader of the Council referred to the cards on Members desks, provided by the Transformation team, which had been provided to signpost constituents to the Residents Panel and Green Rewards initiatives.

The Leader of the Council also provided the Council with an update on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), advising that all Councils were required to submit plans to the government by 21 March. He reminded all Members of the briefing meeting which had been convened for Wednesday 12 February to explore potential options, which would help inform his discussions with Leaders of the other Nottinghamshire authorities.

The Leader also confirmed that the Corporate Peer Challenge Report had now been published and a working group would be established to consider an action plan to address the report recommendations.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing advised that the project at Dale Lane, Blidworth had been a finalist at the recent national LABC Building Excellence Awards 2024 in the Best Small Social Housing Development category.

49 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCIL

In accordance with Rule No. 3.3.3, two questions had been submitted from Members of the Council. One question from Councillor R Jackson to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development and one from Councillor S Saddington to the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing & Leisure.

Details of the two questions put forward and the responses given by Councillors C Penny and S Crosby are attached as Appendix A to these minutes.

50 2025/2026 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND RENT SETTING

The Council considered the joint report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Director – Resources and Section 151 Officer and Director – Housing, Health & Wellbeing which set out the proposed income and expenditure on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for both revenue and capital for the 2025/26 financial year, provided indicative amounts of income and expenditure for the 2026/27 to 2028/29 financial years; and sought approval for rent levels and service charges for 2025/26 (with effect from the first Monday in April 2025) as detailed in Appendices A, B, C and D to the report.

The Cabinet, at their meeting held on 21 January 2025, recommended approval of the HRA budget for 2025/26, with an increase of 2.7% on rents of all properties in the HRA, and service charges as detailed.

In accordance with Rule 3.4.3 (b), Councillor T Wendels proposed and Councillor J Kellas seconded an amendment that Council approve:

- a) the HRA budget for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix A to the report, subject to the addition of a £250,000 budget to create an Improving Places Fund. This would enable Members and tenant groups to bid for works to enhance our estates and

complement the additional budget allocations to our repairs and maintenance service and the existing community chest fund. Members can feed in proposals identified through casework, estate walkabouts or other observations and this would feed into the existing estate improvement process for prioritisation and approval of bids. This will include tenant consultation on proposals which will ensure that money is being spent in areas that our tenants value. Detailed criteria for the Fund will be produced and agreed following budget approval;

- b) an increase of 2.7% in the 2025/26 rents of all current HRA tenancies will be applied from 7 April 2025;
- c) the 2025/26 service charges, as set out in Appendix C to the report; and
- d) the Capital Budget set out in Appendix D to the report are committed expenditure in the Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29.

In accordance with Rule 4.7.3 the proposed amendment was accepted by Councillor L Brazier as the Portfolio Holder and proposer of the report recommendations.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the HRA budget for 2025/26, as set out in Appendix A to the report, subject to the addition of a £250,000 budget to create an Improving Places Fund. This would enable Members and tenant groups to bid for works to enhance our estates and complement the additional budget allocations to our repairs and maintenance service and the existing community chest fund. Members can feed in proposals identified through casework, estate walkabouts or other observations and this would feed into the existing estate improvement process for prioritisation and approval of bids. This will include tenant consultation on proposals which will ensure that money is being spent in areas that our tenants value. Detailed criteria for the Fund will be produced and agreed following budget approval;
- b) an increase of 2.7% in the 2025/26 rents of all current HRA tenancies will be applied from 7 April 2025;
- c) the 2025/26 service charges, as set out in Appendix C to the report; and
- d) the Capital Budget set out in Appendix D to the report are committed expenditure in the Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29.

51 AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Council considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Director – Resources and Section 151 Officer, which informed the Council of the activity undertaken by the Audit & Governance Committee between 27 September 2023 and 31 July 2024. The report detailed how the Committee has discharged its responsibilities throughout the year in accordance with the Constitution.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report be noted.

52 REVISION TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Council considered the report of the Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer proposing an amendment to the Council's Constitution in respect of annual budget meetings. The Audit & Governance Committee had considered that the Procedure Rules for the Council's General Fund Budget and Precept or Housing Revenue Account Budget and Rent Setting would benefit from greater clarity in relation to motions for amendment. The proposed amendments were set out in the appendices to the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Council adopts the amendments to the Constitution as set out in the appendices to the report.

53 POLITICAL COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL AND ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive informing the Council of the political composition of the Council following a further change and sought to approve the allocation of seats on Committees and changes to the Audit & Government Committee.

The changes were required following the notice given by Councillor J Lee that he would sit as an Independent non-aligned Member on the Council and the report findings of the Corporate Peer Challenge team in relation to improvements to the Audit & Governance Committee.

In accordance with Rule 4.6.1, Councillor K Melton proposed and Councillor K Roberts seconded that recommendation (b) be deleted and an additional recommendation (f) be inserted 'to consider the appointment of a new Chair of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee and a new vice-Chair be appointed should the current vice-chair take up the role of Chair.

This proposed amendment on being put to the vote was lost with 3 votes for and 29 against.

AGREED that:

- (a) the allocation of seats to political groups (as set out in Appendix B to these minutes) be approved (unanimous);
- (b) the appointment of Councillor R Holloway as Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee to replace Councillor P Harris be approved (28 votes for, 3 against and 1 abstention);
- (c) the appointment of Councillor S Michael as Vice-Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee to replace Councillor S Forde be approved (29 votes for and 3 abstentions);

- (d) the changes to other appointments to Committees (as set out in the Schedule at Appendix C to these minutes) be approved (unanimous); and
- (e) endorses the Constitution review work outlined in paragraph 2.7 of the report (unanimous).

54 MINUTES FOR NOTING

54a CABINET - 10 DECEMBER 2024

54b CABINET - 21 JANUARY 2025

Minute No. 232 – Update on Jubilee Bridge – Condition of Bridge and Usage

Councillor P Peacock highlighted to the Council the cost savings achieved following a further review of the condition and use of Jubilee Bridge.

54c PLANNING COMMITTEE - 16 JANUARY 2025

54d AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 11 DECEMBER 2024

54e GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 12 DECEMBER 2024

54f LICENSING COMMITTEE - 12 DECEMBER 2024

Meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

Chair