

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Cabinet** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, NG24 1BY on Tuesday, 18 February 2025 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P Peacock (Chair)

Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Crosby, Councillor L Brazier,
Councillor S Forde, Councillor C Penny, Councillor P Taylor and
Councillor J Kellas

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor N Allen, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor R Jackson and
Councillor P Rainbow

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

The Leader advised that the proceedings were being audio recorded and live streamed by the Council.

238 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor S Forde declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 14 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund Updates – as he had been involved in a project which had been given funding.

Councillor L Brazier declared an Other Registerable Interest in the same item as the Council representative of Newark & Sherwood CVS, who had also been allocated funding.

239 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2025

The minutes from the meeting held on 21 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

240 2025/26 PROPOSED GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which enabled Members to consider the spending proposals in the Council's proposed 2025/26 General Fund Revenue Budget. The budget proposals had been prepared in accordance with the Council's budget setting strategy for 2025/26, as approved by Cabinet on 24 September 2024.

The Local Government Finance Settlement provided councils with the amount of government grant and other information pertinent for setting next year's budget. The provisional settlement was announced on 18 December 2024 and the final settlement on 3 February 2025. It was reported that the assumed Council Tax increase within the proposed revenue budget was an increase in the Band D equivalent of 2.99%.

AGREED (with 6 votes for, 1 against and 1 abstention) that Cabinet recommends to Full Council at its meeting on 6 March 2025:

- i. the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the 2025/26 financial year, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:
 1. £57,162,110 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act, as the District Council's gross expenditure for 2024/25);
 2. £36,261,250 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act, as the District Council's gross income for 2024/25); and
 3. £20,900,860 being the amount by which the aggregate at (b)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (b)(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Net Budget Requirement for the year;
- ii. the figures shown as i.1. and i.3. above to be increased only by the amount of Parish Precepts for 2025/26;
- iii. the budget amounts included in the report be the Council's budget for 2025/26; and
- iv. the fees and charges shown in Appendices C1-C22 be implemented with effect from 1 April 2025.

Reasons for Decisions:

To enable Cabinet to make recommendations to Council of the amounts to be calculated in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, for the purposes of setting Council Tax levels for the 2025/26 financial year.

Options Considered:

Not applicable, the Cabinet is required to make recommendations on the budget to the Full Council.

241 CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGET 2025/26 TO 2028/29 (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which detailed the proposed capital schemes over the medium term, together with the available resources to finance them. In accordance with the Financial Regulations, Cabinet was required to consider the Capital Programme and recommend to the Council the final Programme for approval on 6 March 2025.

In respect of the general fund capital expenditure, the Council intended to spend £50.190m from 2025/26 to 2028/29 on the schemes set out in Appendix A to the report.

AGREED (with 7 votes for and 1 abstention) that the 2025 General Fund schemes set out at Appendix A to the report, as committed expenditure in the Capital Programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29, be recommended to the Full Council on 6 March 2025.

Reason for Decisions:

To enable the Capital Programme to be considered by Cabinet in accordance with Financial Regulation 6.2.3 prior to its submission to Council.

Options Considered:

If the Council did not have a Capital Programme, this would result in not being able to deliver the schemes and not achieve the objectives in the Community Plan.

242 2025/26 TO 2028/29 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report detailing the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the four financial years for 2025/26 to 2028/29. The MTFP provided a clear financial framework for delivering the Council's Community Plan objectives over the plan period and maintaining the Council's MTFP was an essential pre-requisite to the annual budget setting process for future years. The MTFP updated assumptions on expenditure, income and financing for the four-year period.

AGREED (with 6 votes for, 1 against and 1 abstention) the Cabinet recommends the 2025/26 to 2028/29 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for approval by the Full Council at their meeting to be held on 6 March 2025.

Reason for Decision:

To provide a framework to support the Council's future spending plans.

Options Considered:

Not applicable, the Cabinet is required to make recommendations on the budget to the Full Council.

243 COUNCIL TAX SECOND HOME PREMIUM AND SHORT-TERM EMPTY DISCOUNT

The Business Manager – Financial Services presented a report which set out the current position relating to second homes in the district and put forward proposals to charge a premium on second homes and changing the discount available for short-term empty properties. The Levelling-Up & Regeneration Act 2023 had introduced new powers for councils to charge premiums on second homes. Councils had discretion to decide whether to introduce the premium and the level up to the maximum threshold of 100%.

The proposal in the report was to apply a 100% second home premium with effect from 1 April 2026, and to extend the discount period for short-term empty property charges to a maximum of 84 days but to reduce the awarded discount to 25%.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the position in relation to Second Homes and short-term empty properties; and
- b) recommend to Full Council for approval to levy a Second Homes premium with effect from 1 April 2026, in line with recent legislative changes and to amend the discount for short-term empty properties from 1 April 2025.

Reason for Decision:

To assist the Council with achieving its objectives of creating more and better-quality homes through our roles as landlord, developer and planning authority and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour within our communities.

Options Considered:

The alternative options were detailed in the body of the report.

244 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26

The Business Manager – HR & Training presented the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 which the Council was required to produce annually in accordance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. A copy of the Statement was attached as an appendix to the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet recommend the Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 to Full Council for approval.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure compliance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011.

Options Considered:

Not applicable, the publication of the Pay Policy Statement is required by the Localism Act 2011.

245 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) PEER CHALLENGE

The Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development presented a report which updated the Cabinet on the results from the Council's Peer Challenge undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) and set out the next steps towards the development of an action plan to tackle the report findings. The full report was attached as an appendix to the report.

The LGA report recommendations were summarised, and it was proposed to convene a member Working Group to discuss the report findings and agree an action plan to respond to any areas that require development. The membership of the Working Group was set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet note:

- a) the report at Appendix A and its recommendations; and
- b) the formation of a Working Group tasked with forming an action plan to address those findings.

Reasons for Decisions:

The LGA team provided a presentation of key findings on the last day of the Peer Challenge and have now followed this up with a full report. It is now important for the Council to examine those findings and produce an action plan on how we will use the recommendations to improve our performance.

Options Considered:

The review could be delegated to the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee, but it is considered appropriate for the Leader of the council to chair the group and for senior Members of Cabinet, Policy & Performance Improvement and Audit & Governance Committees all to be involved. Work streams can be delegated to Policy & Performance Improvement Committee, Audit & Governance Committee and other Council bodies as appropriate.

246 MAJOR NEW WOODLAND PLANTING SCHEMES (KEY DECISION)

The Director – Communities & Environment presented a report which appraised Members of the potential for the Council to contribute to two major tree planting schemes in Newark & Sherwood with the aim of increasing habitat connectivity and biodiversity, health and wellbeing and with a potential to help offset the Council's future carbon emissions.

Nottinghamshire County Council had purchased two large parcels of land within the district to create significant woodland areas. The sites were in Little Carlton and Torney Abbey Farm near Southwell. The budget commitment required for the development of the two sites was set out in the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) close the capital schemes in relation to climate change and PV solar panels realising a saving of £414,341; and
- b) invest £309,915 of the savings identified at a) in creating a new capital scheme in relation to the contribution to Nottinghamshire County Council for the two major, tree planting trees in the District.

Reasons for Decision:

In line with the objectives set out in the Community Plan, this is an opportunity to create 2 significant woodland areas in Newark & Sherwood and to offset some of our future carbon output. The schemes also protect and enhance the district's natural environment and green spaces and reduce the impact of climate change.

Options Considered:

Newark & Sherwood does not currently hold sufficient land to be able to deliver schemes of the size and scale being suggested within this report. This is not a project we could deliver in our own right. We could choose not to allocate funding to the project and this would leave a funding gap for NCC to fill. This would be met in time through NCC selling carbon offsets and would mean the scheme is likely to come to fruition in Newark & Sherwood without NSDC support. However, we would not have played a direct delivery role which would be at odds with aspirations within the Community Plan and mean we would not be able to claim 30% of the carbon as future offsetting.

247 NEWARK AND SHERWOOD FUNDING UPDATES (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager – Economic Growth & Visitor Economy presented a report which provided an update on the Newark and Sherwood funding programmes, specifically the Long-Term Plan for Towns (Newark); the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (District wide); and the delivery of the remaining Newark Towns fund projects. The report included specific updates on the Newark Castle Gatehouse and Newark Cultural Heart (Newark Market Place improvements) projects.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the update for the Long-Term Plan for Towns Funding opportunity and support the ongoing liaison with the Town Board to review and shape a Newark Investment Plan upon publication of the revised Prospectus;
- b) approve £100,000 of additional revenue budget funded from the Capital Feasibility Reserve to allow the continued progression of feasibility and design work for the Newark Market Place improvements, which forms part of the Newark Cultural Heart Towns Fund, as detailed in paragraphs 4.4 of this report;
- c) approve an additional capital budget of £1,020,600 for Newark Castle Gatehouse financed by the Change Management Reserve, as noted in paragraph 3.0 of this report; and
- d) note the expected contribution of up to £1.345m of UK Shared Prosperity Funding and approve a revenue budget of £433,000 for 2025/2026, as detailed in 2.8 of this report, subject to formal confirmation of the Council's UKSPF allocation. The remaining £912,487 may be added to the Council's capital programme, subject to a future Cabinet report regarding proposed commitments.

Reasons for Decision:

To continue to deliver catalyst regeneration projects for Newark through the delivery of Newark Cultural Heart, Newark Castle Gatehouse, and new opportunities through a revised Long-Term Plan for Towns Fund, as well as support for district wide schemes, with funding available through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Options Considered:

There is the option to not engage in any revised Long-Term Plan for Towns process and to leave any Investment Plan to Newark Towns Board. This has been discounted on the basis that the Council remains an important partner within the Towns Board and will continue to offer insight, influence and ability to deliver in addition to having an ongoing role as accountable body. Moreover, the Council has a track record, with partners of delivering catalyst and transformative regeneration within the Town.

There is the option not to 'front-load' support the delivery of the Newark Market Place improvements or to decline to increase the capital budget to allow delivery of the Newark Castle Gatehouse Project. This has been discounted as the alternative would be to return the remaining Towns Fund Grant to Government and not implement schemes that have community and stakeholder support.

248 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND 2025/26

The Shared Prosperity Fund Programme Manager presented a report which gave a comprehensive update on the regional and local delivery of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund from April 2025. The Council had been awarded £1,345,487 for UKSPF in 2025/26 which was assumed by the East Midlands Combined Authority to be split £589,492 capital and £755,995 revenue but it was possible to amend those allocations providing minimum capital thresholds were met. It was therefore proposed to use £912,487 capital and the remaining £433,000 revenue in accordance with the proposed local commitments schedule set out in table 3 of the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the report, including the updates associated with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF);
- b) approve the proposed UKSPF revenue commitments detailed in Table 3 of the report, subject to; a) separate Cabinet approval of the budget of £433,000 required in 2025/2026; b) formal confirmation of the Council's funding allocation; and c) any necessary funding due-diligence checks, including from the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA);
- c) note the 'in-principle' capital commitment of £912,487, detailed in Table 3 of the report, subject to; a) a future Cabinet report relating to the relevant project to seek approval to commit the funding within the Council's Capital programme; b) formal confirmation of the Council's 2025/2026 UKSPF allocation; and c) any required due-diligence checks from EMCCA; and

- d) approve the proposed underspend and change control process, as outlined in 1.15 of this report.

Reasons for Decision:

The recommendations in the report are presented to enable continued delivery of the UKSPF strategic priorities identified by community partners, focussing on the commitment of funding towards projects that deliver the Council's Community Plan objectives, the UKSPF sub-themes as set out by MHCLG, and to avoid gaps in community, skills and business support provision.

Options Considered:

There is the option for the Council not to accept any future UKSPF allocation and decide not to participate in delivery of the scheme. This is not recommended as it represents a missed opportunity to deliver impactful priority projects, that deliver the Council's community plan objectives.

There is also the option not to commit funding to existing priorities identified within the current UKSPF programme. This approach is not recommended as it would likely fail to recognise the strategic investment priorities identified by the Council, and key stakeholders. This would also result in the withdrawal of valued support programmes for businesses and residents, linked to core services and mainstream skills provision.

249 SOUTHWELL AMENDED NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Director – Planning & Growth presented a report which updated the Cabinet on the progress of the development of the Southwell Amended Neighbourhood Plan and sought to approve the District Council response to the same. The current Southwell Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2016, and since 2020 Southwell Town Council as the 'Qualifying Body' had been carrying out a review of the Plan with the intention of modifying it and replacing it with an Amended Neighbourhood Plan.

Following the first public consultation stage, Southwell Town Council submitted a Submission Draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council. Officers had prepared comments on the Submission Draft version of the Amendment Neighbourhood Plan which were attached as Appendix A to the report. It was noted that the proposed Design Code represented one of the more significant areas of concern with the District Council's comments from the previous stage not seeming to have been accepted.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approve the District Council consultation response to the Southwell Amended Neighbourhood Plan as set out in Appendix A of the report.

Reason for Decision:

To allow the District Council to submit a consultation response on the Southwell Amended Neighbourhood Plan.

Options Considered:

It is necessary for the District Council to run the Regulation 16 Consultation on the Southwell Amended Neighbourhood Plan because Southwell Town Council have submitted a Neighbourhood Plan proposal under Regulation 15 (1) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Officers' comments are necessary to address issues around consistency with national and local planning policy, and to improve the precision and effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan in reaching decisions on development proposals in Southwell Parish.

250 WINTHORPE WITH LANGFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Director – Planning & Growth presented a report which updated the Cabinet on the progress of the development of the Winthorpe with Langford Neighbourhood Plan and sought to approve the District Council response to the same. Since 2020, a steering group of local residents, had led the production of the Winthorpe with Langford Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan identified key issues relating to development for the community, set out a vision and objectives for development in Winthorpe with Langford Parish and contained a range of policies to be used in the assessment of development proposals.

Following several rounds of consultation, Winthorpe with Langford Parish Council had submitted a Submission Draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council. Officers had prepared a consultation response on the Submission Draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan which was attached as Appendix A to the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approve the District Council consultation response to the Winthorpe with Langford Neighbourhood Plan as set out in Appendix A of the report.

Reason for Decision:

To allow the District Council to submit a consultation response on the Winthorpe with Langford Neighbourhood Plan.

Options Considered:

It is necessary for the District Council to run the Regulation 16 Consultation on the Winthorpe with Langford Neighbourhood Plan because Winthorpe with Langford Parish Council have submitted a Neighbourhood Plan proposal under Regulation 15 (1) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Officers' comments are in some cases necessary to correct inaccurate or misleading material in the Neighbourhood Plan and in other cases intended to make the document easier to understand and use in reaching decisions on development proposals in the Parish.

251 UPDATE ON THE CREATION OF AN IN-HOUSE CCTV CONTROL ROOM (KEY DECISION)

The Portfolio Holder and Director – Communities & Environment presented a report which provided the Cabinet with an update on the project to create an in-house CCTV Control Room based in the District. The report set out the background to the project

which was last reported to the Cabinet in March 2024 and the latest funding position given delays to the funding release for the Long-Term Towns Fund in 2026/27 and pending Government guidance. A full review of the internal CCTV system was appended to the report as exempt information given it was commercially sensitive and could pose a cyber risk if disclosed.

The Cabinet debated the merits of going into partnership with other local authorities to share costs.

AGREED (with 7 votes for and 1 abstention) that Cabinet:

- a) note the findings of the internal CCTV Review;
- b) approve the integration of the internal cameras within the new control room;
- c) note the changes in the Long-Term Towns Funding;
- d) approve the Capital Budget, financed by the Change Management Reserve as set out in Section 6.3 of the report for the:
 - New control room at £700,000
 - Integration of internal CCTV systems into the new control room at £40,000; and
- e) approve procurement via the ESPO Framework of:
 - Consultant costs for complete start-to-finish project management of £39,160 funded from the General Fund favourable variance in 2024/25.

Reasons for Decision:

The creation of the CCTV Control Room previously approved at Cabinet aligns with the Community Plan Objective 4 – Reduce Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour.

Bringing NSDC CCTV Assets centrally into the control room ensures legal compliance and increases the control reach.

Options Considered:

Work with an external existing control room to monitor our cameras – this would not allow for a dedicated Newark & Sherwood monitoring as it would sit within another partnership.

Create a new partnership with shared resources and a new control room – it is possible once the new control is set up that decisions are made to bring in further CCTV cameras from outside of the district for a revenue fee. This would need to be considered in line with the control room aims.

Meeting closed at 7.54 pm.

Chair