

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 July 2025 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor L Tift (Chair)
Councillor R Jackson (Vice-Chair)

Councillor N Allen, Councillor A Amer, 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 P Farmer, Councillor S Forde, Councillor J Hall, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor R Holloway, 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 S Saddington, Councillor T Smith, Councillor M Shakeshaft, Councillor M Spoor, Councillor P Taylor, Councillor T Thompson and Councillor T Wendels

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor A Freeman, Councillor P Harris, Councillor N Ross and Councillor T Wildgust

16 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.

Councillors J Lee and P Taylor notified the Council that they would be recording parts of the meeting.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Those Members on Newark Town Council declared other registerable interests in relation to Agenda Item No. 12 – Community Governance Review.

The Council noted the interests previously declared by Members in Agenda Item No. 14 – Minutes for Noting.

18 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2025

AGREED that the minutes from the meeting held on 20 May 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chair opened the meeting with her 'moment of reflection' referring to her recent stay in hospital and the devastating flooding in Texas. The Chair then invited Councillor P Rainbow to read a prayer.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment advised the Council that Sherwood Avenue Park had become the Council's sixth park to achieve Green Flag Award.

The Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture & the Arts updated the Council on the Castle Gatehouse project which was now a reality and thanked officers and the former Portfolio Holder for their work on this long-term project. The Portfolio Holder also informed Members that the unveiling of the Kidney Stones sculptures and Trail was taking place later in the week.

20 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCIL

In accordance with Rule No. 3.3.3, one question had been submitted by Councillor J Lee to the Council. Details of the question put forward and the response given by Councillor S Crosby are attached as Appendix A to the Minutes.

21 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN NOTTINGHAM AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, which provided an update on the Government's requirement for Local Government Reorganisation, including the work undertaken to determine which option to develop as a final proposal for submission to the Government in November 2025.

At the Extraordinary Meeting held on 19 March 2025, the Council agreed to endorse the Interim Plan for submission to the Government. Feedback on the Interim Plan reiterated encouragement for areas to work together to submit a single proposal, whilst acknowledging the opportunity for individual Councils to submit their own proposals. One key theme that emerged more prominently was the need to demonstrate how new unitary structures would enable neighbourhood empowerment, with local areas being invited to come forward with proposals to create local area committees or other local engagement and decision-making forums.

The interim plan contained three options for unitary structures in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire – 1b as Nottingham City conurbation to include Broxtowe and Gedling, and the rest of Nottinghamshire; 1e as Nottingham City conurbation to include Broxtowe and Rushcliffe, and the rest of Nottinghamshire; and 2 as Nottingham City to remain the same and the rest of Nottinghamshire. The option appraisal work undertaken by PWC had concluded that option 2 demonstrated the weakest alignment with the Government's criteria and it was therefore anticipated that this option would be rejected by all Nottinghamshire Councils.

The PWC independent appraisal concluded that options 1b and 1e both met the Government's criteria and the differences between each were marginal. The report gave an officer steer as to a recommended option having regard to the options appraisal. The focus was on the operational, service delivery implications in relation to options 1b and 1e. The differences in geography and land area covered by the two options were also an area of consideration.

As part of the recommendation to progress the development of option 1e as the Council's preferred option, there was a further recommendation to register, as part of the Council's submission to amend the boundary so the whole of the Newark Parliamentary Constituency would form part of the 'north Notts' unitary authority. The rationale for this being that this would strengthen community identity and provide for more "sensible" geography with the whole of the Newark Parliamentary Constituency being covered by a single unitary authority.

Councillor P Peacock proposed, and Councillor R Cozens seconded the report recommendations.

In accordance with Rule No. 4.6.1, Councillor J Kellas moved and Councillor T Wendels seconded an amendment to the report recommendations as follows:

The Full Council endorses the following recommendations to Cabinet for formal approval:

- a) to consider the options appraisal and summary document provided by PwC UK (Appendices 1 and 2 to the report);
- b) to recommend to Cabinet the development of Option 1B as this Council's preferred option for submission as a final proposal to Government by 28 November 2025;
- c) to ensure the involvement of Town and Parish Councils and other local community and business organisations in the development of the final proposal;
- d) to request regular updates to and from the Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee to ensure all members are kept informed and have an opportunity to input their views; and
- e) to delegate the creation of a budget to the Leader of the Council through a Portfolio Holder decision in consultation with the Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee.

The amendment, on being put to the vote, was lost with 14 votes for, 19 against and 2 Abstentions. In accordance with Rule No. 5.4 a recorded vote was taken as follows:

Councillor	Vote
Neil Allen	For
Adrian Amer	For
Alice Brazier	Against
Lee Brazier	Against
Celia Brooks	Against
Irene Brown	For
Rowan Cozens	Against
Susan Crosby	Against
Linda Dales	For
Debbie Darby	Against
Phil Farmer	For

Simon Forde	Against
Jean Hall	Against
Simon Haynes	For
Rhona Holloway	Against
Roger Jackson	For
Jack Kellas	For
John Lee	For
Keith Melton	Against
Sylvia Michael	For
David Moore	Against
Emma Oldham	Abstain
Paul Peacock	Against
Claire Penny	Against
Mike Pringle	Against
Penny Rainbow	For
Karen Roberts	Against
Sue Saddington	For
Maurice Shakeshaft	Against
Tom Smith	For
Matthew Spoors	Abstain
Paul Taylor	Against
Tina Thompson	Against
Linda Tift	Against
Timothy Wendels	For

Following the vote on the amendment and during the debate on the substantive motion, there was a suggestion that a further amendment was proposed effectively deferring any decision on a preferred option until further work, such as an environmental impact assessment on options 1b and 1e had been undertaken.

(Meeting adjourned at 7.41pm to consider the impact of deferral and recommenced at 7.49pm).

Following advice that further work around the environmental impact could be undertaken during the work on putting together any final proposal, the Council debated the substantive motion.

AGREED (with 19 votes for, 14 votes against and 2 abstentions) that Full Council endorses the following recommendations to Cabinet for formal approval:

- a) to consider the options appraisal and summary document provided by PWC UK (Appendices 1 and 2 to the report);
- b) to recommend to Cabinet the development of Option 1e as this Council's preferred option for submission as a final proposal to Government by 28 November 2025;

- c) to register as part of the submission, a request for consideration of including the whole of the Newark Parliamentary Constituency within the boundary of the proposed 1e unitary authority, to strengthen community identity and provide for more “sensible” geography;
- d) to ensure the involvement of Town and Parish Councils and other local community and business organisations in the development of the final proposal;
- e) to request regular updates to and from the Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee to ensure all members are kept informed and have an opportunity to input their views; and
- f) to delegate the creation of a budget to the Leader of the Council through a Portfolio Holder decision in consultation with the Chair of the Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation Committee.

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

Councillor	Vote
Neil Allen	Against
Adrian Amer	Against
Alice Brazier	For
Lee Brazier	For
Celia Brooks	For
Irene Brown	Against
Rowan Cozens	For
Susan Crosby	For
Linda Dales	Against
Debbie Darby	For
Phil Farmer	Against
Simon Forde	For
Jean Hall	For
Simon Haynes	Against
Rhona Holloway	For
Roger Jackson	Against
Jack Kellas	Against
Johnno Lee	Against
Keith Melton	For
Sylvia Michael	Against
David Moore	For
Emma Oldham	Abstain
Paul Peacock	For
Claire Penny	For
Mike Pringle	For
Penny Rainbow	Against
Karen Roberts	For

Sue Saddington	Against
Maurice Shakeshaft	For
Tom Smith	Against
Matthew Spoors	Abstain
Paul Taylor	For
Tina Thompson	For
Linda Tift	For
Timothy Wendels	Against

(The Chair left the meeting following the vote on this item. The Vice-Chair took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting).

22 CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION - REPLACING THE AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Council considered the report of the Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer, which sought to adopt the terms of reference and membership for the two new committees – Audit & Accounts Committee and Governance, General Purposes & Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Committee.

Further to the resolution of the Full Council at the last meeting, the Audit & Governance Committee had considered draft terms of reference for the two new Committees at its meeting held on 2 July 2025. The terms of reference for the two new committees were set out in the appendix to the report, and these had been recommended for approval by the Audit & Governance Committee.

The report also proposed a schedule of meetings for the two new committees for the remainder of the municipal year and proposed arrangements for convening the Independent Remuneration Panel to consider Special Responsibility Allowances.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the Terms of Reference for the two new Committees as set out in the Appendix B to the report be approved;
- b) the proposed meeting schedule for the two new Committees as set out in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the report be approved;
- c) the arrangements to convene an Independent Remuneration Panel to undertake a full review of Members' Special Responsibility Allowances as set out in the report, be noted; and
- d) a cost envelope of £2,200 for the Independent Remuneration Panel is confirmed.

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

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive, which sought to reconsider the allocation of seats to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules, following the changes made to the Council's Committees.

The political composition of the Council and allocation of seats to committees was considered at the Annual Meeting held on 20 May 2025. Whilst the political composition of the Council remained unchanged from the last meeting, the changes in the structure of committees had impacted on the number of seats on committees, which had decreased from 77 to 71. The matrix at Appendix A to the report set out the proposed allocation of seats to political groups on committees reflecting this change.

AGREED (unanimously) that the allocation of seats to Political Groups (as set out at Appendix B to these minutes) be approved.

24 TO ALLOCATE MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES

The Council were circulated with a proposed schedule of appointments to the Council's Committees following the changes made to the structure of the Committees. The resolution of the Annual Meeting of the Council had confirmed the appointments of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees.

AGREED (unanimously) that the appointments of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs on Committees be noted, and the appointment of other Members to Committees etc. as set out in the schedule attached as Appendix C to these minutes, be approved.

25 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - NEWARK TOWN COUNCIL

The Council considered the report of the Assistant Director – Legal & Democratic Services, which sought to approve the Final Recommendations following the Community Government Review of Newark Town Council which had been undertaken by the General Purposes Committee.

In accordance with the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the Council had the responsibility for undertaking community governance reviews. The context for the review was the housing development that was being delivered in the south of the town and the anticipated development that was not being delivered in the east. The review also sought to ensure that Member representation was equitable across the Town Council.

The Final Recommendations, as set out in Appendix B to the report, contained minimal changes to existing arrangements, but it was considered that these would ensure appropriate electoral arrangements ahead of the next full Town Council election scheduled to be held in May 2027.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the Final Recommendations as set out at Appendix B to the report be approved and published on the Council's website; and
- b) the appropriate Community Governance Order be made following notification to interested parties of the outcome of the review.

26 NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion One – Mandating Swift Bricks in New Developments

In accordance with Rule No. 3.4.3 Councillor E Oldham moved and Councillor C Penny seconded a motion to the following effect:

“This Council acknowledges the significant and ongoing decline in swift and other cavity-nesting bird populations across the UK, with four species known to use swift bricks now on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. These species, including swifts and house martins, rely entirely on buildings for breeding and are rapidly losing nesting sites due to modern construction practices and insulation schemes that seal off access to traditional cavities.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Formally support the call to mandate swift bricks through an amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill and/or via changes to Building Regulations.
2. Write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the two local MP's for Newark and Sherwood Forest, and relevant Ministers at DEFRA, urging the UK Government to:
 - Accept or table an amendment to the Bill requiring mandatory installation of swift bricks in all suitable new housing developments
 - Commit to updating Building Regulations to incorporate integral nest bricks for cavity-nesting birds as standard.
3. Ask officers to explore the implications of mandating swift bricks across all new HRA suitable properties and NSDC commercial buildings and report to Cabinet as soon as practicable.
4. Ask Arkwood to consider committing to installing swift bricks across all suitable properties, complementing those planned for Lowfield Lane.
5. Encourage developers within Newark and Sherwood District to install swift bricks in all suitable new residential developments and publish guidance on best practice placement.
6. Support the Planning Policy team to continue exploring opportunities to embed swift bricks within local planning policy or supplementary planning guidance—such as in future iterations of the Newark Town Centre Design Code—and report back with options for their inclusion in upcoming Local Plan updates and biodiversity net gain assessments.”

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

Motion Two – Protecting Areas of Significance for Nature

In accordance with Rule No. 3.4.3 Councillor K Melton moved and Councillor M Spoors seconded a motion to the following effect:

“Newark and Sherwood District Council calls upon the Government to amend Part 3 of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill before it becomes an Act of Parliament.

Developers must be required to demonstrate that their projects will not harm biodiversity or reduce the resilience of natural ecosystems, with financial offsets only used as a supplementary measure under strict regulatory oversight.

Furthermore, NSDC resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to express our concerns regarding these changes in the following terms:

Re: Concerns Over the Nature Restoration Fund in Part 3 of the Planning and Infrastructure Bill

I am writing on behalf of Newark and Sherwood District Council expressing our serious concerns regarding Part 3 of the Government’s Planning & Infrastructure Bill that involves proposals that will allow some developments to make payments into a Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) thereby disregarding existing, tried and tested legislation, currently affording protection to European Sites, sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and protected species.

Whilst we commend the initiative to establish a UK-wide NRF and its potential to support nature restoration efforts, we believe these changes present substantial risks to biodiversity, ecosystems, and the integrity of protected areas and protected species.

It is our view that Part 3 of the Bill needs substantial amendment before it becomes an Act of parliament. Specifically, we are concerned about:

- The adequacy of financial offsets in fully mitigating environmental damage;
- The potential for short-term solutions that fail to address the root causes of ecological degradation;
- The weakening of protections afforded under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations;
- With the potential removal of site ecological survey work, a subsequent degradation of the application of the ecological mitigation hierarchy;
- The prioritisation of economic development over the long-term sustainability of habitats and species.

We urge the Government to reconsider Part 3 of the P&I Bill and provide greater assurances that protected areas and protected species will continue to receive the highest level of legal protection.

Developers must be held accountable for demonstrating that their activities will not harm biodiversity or reduce the resilience of ecosystems, with financial offsets used only as a supplementary measure under rigorous control.

We are further concerned that the process proposed would be highly likely to remove biodiversity restoration to areas entirely separated from the areas which may be harmed and will, anyway, not be capable of restoration at anything close to a “Like for Like” level.

We look forward to your response and hope to see action taken to address these pressing concerns.”

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

27 MINUTES FOR NOTING

27a CABINET - 10 JUNE 2025

Minute No. 278 – Review of the Council’s Carbon Net Neutral Target (Key Decision)

Councillor K Melton expressed his concern over the decision taken by the Cabinet to retain the current carbon net neutral target and to defer any decision on the housing stock and sought reassurance that this issue is kept under review.

Councillor S Forde confirmed that any well-costed and viable ideas would be considered.

Councillor M Spoors added that ‘cooler homes’ was also an issue that needed to be addressed. Councillor L Brazier confirmed this was being considered.

27b POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE - 2 JUNE 2025

27c PLANNING COMMITTEE - 5 JUNE 2025

27d AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - 2 JULY 2025

27e GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE - 19 JUNE 2025

27f LICENSING COMMITTEE - 19 JUNE 2025

27g TRUSTEE BOARD OF THE GILSTRAP AND WILLIAM EDWARD KNIGHT CHARITIES - 24 JUNE 2025

27h POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE - 30 JUNE 2025

27i PLANNING COMMITTEE - 3 JULY 2025

Meeting closed at 8.47 pm.

Chair