



NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Policy and Performance Improvement Committee Annual Report 2024-25



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Introduction to Newark and Sherwood

Newark, and Sherwood District Council (NSDC), are one of seven District Councils in Nottinghamshire. We are the middle layer of local government in this area with Nottinghamshire County Council covering the whole County and 77 Parish and Town Councils sitting within the NSDC area.

Our area

Our district is the largest in Nottinghamshire and covers a third of the county with an area of over 250 square miles. Below is a map of the district showing the main urban areas and key transport connections.



Our Residents (2021 Census):

- A resident population of 122,956 made up of 50.8% female and 49.2% male.
- Newark and Sherwood are the largest district in Nottinghamshire with an area of 251 square miles (or 651 Sq. kilometres).
- Newark and Sherwood have an ageing population. 6.2% of the district's population are between 70 and 74. This is 1.2% higher than the English average.
- In 2011, 19.2% of the district's population was over 65. This has risen by 3.4% and in 2021, with 22.6% of the district's population being over 65. This is predicted to rise further, with 27.7% of the district's population set to be 65 or above by 2040.
- 17.1% of the district's population are schoolchildren and full-time students.
- There are 53,331 dwellings, of which around 10% are owned by the District Council (social housing).

Our services

For every £1 a resident pays in Council Tax, 8 pence is allocated to NSDC, with the remaining funds going to Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue and Parish/Town Councils.

We deliver a wide range of services for our residents, and the diagram below summarises these.



We are also a landlord to over 5,500 Council homes and in this role we conduct all housing management functions such as allocating tenancies, undertaking repairs and maintenance, maintaining housing estates and collecting rent.

Foreword

I am pleased to present this report detailing the work of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee. It provides a wealth of information on the activities Councillors have undertaken over the past year and, most importantly, the impacts of those activities.

Throughout the past year, the committee has collaborated closely with officers in conducting the Council's business. Whether that is the introduction of kerbside glass collection or the Newark Town Centre Master Plan, the Committee have focused on significant issues, offering constructive input to improve outcomes for residents and consistently providing valuable challenges and recommendations to the Cabinet.

The Committee remains dedicated to enhancing the lives of our tenants. This includes efforts to improve tenant engagement and satisfaction measures, as well as updates to our Building Safety Policy and our property repair and letting arrangements. I would like to extend my gratitude to fellow Councillors involved in the Working Groups for their contributions, which have led to valuable recommendations that officers will implement in the coming year.

A heartfelt thank you goes to the officers supporting this committee, who continue to bring energy and enthusiasm to their roles. I also wish to express my appreciation to my Vice Chair, Cllr Nick Ross, for his support over the past year, as well as to the various officers and partners who have presented to the committee.

I look forward to another year of efforts on this committee, striving to ensure improved outcomes for all customers, residents, and businesses within Newark & Sherwood.

Cllr Mike Pringle

Chair of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee



Overview of the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC)

Our Policy and Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) fulfils the 'scrutiny' function required in the Cabinet model, as well as serving as an integral role in improving the work of the Council. All meetings are streamed live and are 'open meetings', meaning public and press can attend. The committee meets at least six times a year.

PPIC itself is not a decision-making body, it offers recommendations to the relevant Portfolio Holder's. These recommendations help improve policies, services, and their implementation. PPIC also contributes to policy and strategy development and oversees partnership work with regular input from the Nottinghamshire Police Authority, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), and Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

PPIC may also choose to look at a specific issue, decision, or topic by adding a review to the work programme. For example, they may review a service pilot, scrutinise progress of a key project or review an area where performance is not as expected. This can be done after a decision has been made or they may choose to feed into the decision making by reviewing the topic to ensure a decision is well made.

Where more detailed work is required, such as the development of a policy or the detailed review of a service area, a Working Group is set-up to undertake this work. Working Groups meet 3 to 5 times, listen to evidence, and examine data, then develop recommendations which are forwarded for a relevant decision.



PPIC also has statutory powers to scrutinise decisions that Cabinet is planning to take and those that have already been taken. In practice much of their work is a form of scrutiny, including inviting Portfolio Holders to present at PPIC.

Composition of membership

PPIC consists of 15 Councillors, including a chair and vice chair, who are appointed by full Council, which reflect the political balance of the Council. The committee has had a busy year examining a broad range of issues affecting the Council, its services, and local people. PPIC has also had a watching brief of all items going to Cabinet for decision, raising queries as appropriate and providing comments. This has led to a variety of topics being reviewed, both in committee and by working groups. Any Councillors can submit a topic to be examined, and apart from Cabinet members, any Councillor can request to join a working group.

A work programme is developed for the year but has suitable capacity to ensure issues can be considered as they arise.

2024/25 in numbers

o Committee members	-	15
o Substitute members	-	6
o Meetings	-	9
o Reports/presentations	-	50
o Working Groups	-	2



Review of work

PPIC have been involved in developing and shaping Council policies and strategies, questioning the Council's performance, and driving improvement to services. During the year PPIC received information in the form of presentations, updates, and reports. Reported below is a snapshot of the work PPIC have been doing in the last 12 months, separated into the 4 key areas that demonstrate PPIC's responsibilities:

1. Working groups
2. Shaping policy and strategy
3. Driving service improvement
4. Scrutinising and questioning performance.

1. Working Groups

Working groups are set up to conduct detailed pieces of work, such as a piece of development or a review, outside of the main committee agenda. So that this can happen, any working group must have a clear aim as part of its set-up. The aims must:

- Improve the quality of life of residents, or
- Enable value for money of local services.

The topic of a working group can be proposed by the committee or by a Councillor completing a 'Topic Request Form.' This form will be considered by officers who will add further information as required before being considered by PPIC.

Working groups consist of up to 9 Councillors (excluding Cabinet Members) who volunteer, with the final membership agreed by the Chair of PPIC. Working groups can be put in place to develop a policy or strategy, undertake a piece of development work such as shaping a bid, or undertake a review of an area experiencing poor performance.

Two working groups were completed in 2024-25.

1.1 NSDC Digital Strategy

In June 2024 PPIC received a formal topic request concerning the refresh of 'NSDC Digital Strategy 2024-2028'. A Digital Strategy provides a clear roadmap for NSDC and its partners for the next four years, ensuring we remain adaptable to the ever-evolving landscape of digital technologies. The previous digital strategy concluded in 2024, and this new strategy aims to build upon it with a focus on future advancements.

The working group looked at some of the many areas that needed consideration using the four pillars of:

1. Digital Council.
2. Digital Customer.
3. Digital Place.
4. Digital Community.

These included, emerging technologies, post covid customer expectations, Amazon like services and digital poverty.

The objectives of the working group were to:

1. Understand what Councillors and their constituents need from a digital strategy that will help them over the next 4 years.
2. Discover what are the emerging technologies and how they will impact residents, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning.
3. Understand what the barriers are to lifting residents out of digital poverty and how we can help to overcome them.

The working group convened five times between September 2024 and March 2025, incorporating input from elected Councillors and supported by a team of officers. These officers provided vital information and data to guide the sessions according to the direction set by the Councillors. Key areas of discussion that would influence the refresh of the digital strategy included the 'Digital Council,' specifically focusing on cyber and IT strategy as well as digital training and champions. The group also explored what Local Government reform meant to the digital agenda, the 'AI' Government action plan, and digital infrastructure, with several presentations from notable guest speakers in the digital sector.

The working group commissioned a survey between May and June 2025 to gather input from

Elected Members, employees, tenants, and residents for refreshing the strategy. The survey aimed to identify barriers to digital access and included both digital and in-person responses, especially for residents and tenants.

The insight and information gained from the working group's sessions and the results from the surveys helped influence the strategic direction of NSDC Digital Strategy 2024-2028, which was presented and adopted by Cabinet in September 2025.



1.2 Kidney Stones

In June 2024, PPIC received a formal topic request concerning the proposed public consultation on the installation of the artwork known as the 'Kidney Stones'. This artwork comprises twelve sandstone tablets, which collectively form four large panels depicting historical scenes of electricity production, created by local artist Robert Kidney.

In response, a cross-party working group was established, with support from the Director of Communities and Environment and officers from the Transformation team.

The primary objective of the working group was to contribute to the design and development of a consultation process that would effectively capture public opinion on the proposed installation. The consultation was structured to ensure that the questions posed would enable residents to provide meaningful feedback on the plans presented. The insights gathered were intended to represent the collective views of the community and inform Cabinet decision-making.

The group convened once and worked collaboratively to shape the consultation's content and methodology. In August 2024, the group agreed that the consultation would include engagement with key stakeholders, followed by a public online survey comprising three questions:

1. Respondent postcode.
2. Their connection to Newark and Sherwood District.
3. An open-text response (limited to 150 words) inviting views on the proposal.

The survey was developed in line with methodology agreed by the working group and the consultation period on the proposal to site the Kiddey Stones at Castle House ran from 2nd to 30th September 2024.

The results were presented to PPIC in November 2024, in which the Committee agreed that the contents of the consultation should be noted and in light of the consultation results posed key questions to Cabinet for consideration prior to final approval.



2. Shaping Policies and Strategies

2.1 Resident Panel refresh (Sept 2024)

The Transformation & Service Improvement Manager and Officer provided the Committee with an update on the progress of the refreshing of the Resident Panel.

Members were provided with a background to the establishment of the Panel in 2018 together with the number of residents involved. The proposed refresh will be separated into 5 key elements:

1. Data cleanse.
2. Youth engagement.
3. Demographic profile.
4. Tailored consultation.
5. Long-term engagement.

Councillors were informed that tracking the engagements would help determine the number of active participants and knowing the demographics of the panel members would enable a more targeted approach to consultations in the future.

Outcome

Councillors noted the progress of the Resident Panel refresh and commented that they would wish to increase participation by 16–24-year-olds age group and supported the approach of the activities programmed



2.2 Climate emergency update (Oct 2024)

The Committee considered the report of the Environmental Policy & Projects Officer who set out the progress of the Climate Emergency Strategy and associated Action Plan.

The report set out the background to the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 and the work undertaken since that time resulting in the Council's agreed target for carbon reduction and the development of the Action Plan to deliver the vision outlined in the Climate Emergency Strategy.

Details were provided in relation to the initiatives which the Council were committed to which included:

- The Green Rewards App
- Climate Awareness Training
- Net Zero Accelerator Training Workshops
- Solar PV Installation
- Local Area Energy Plan
- Energy Efficiency Improvements to Homes
- Electric Vehicle Charge Points

Outcome

Councillors noted the update and action plan, they asked a number of specific questions, including:

- Alternative methods of travelling to work for staff.
- Use of solar panels and battery storage on Council owned building.
- Time frame for the adoption of using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel.
- Supply and planting of trees in the District.
- The Council's own energy consumption.
- Engagement with landowners and farmers in relation to biodiversity and tree planning.

Councillors were provided with the information requested with a written response to follow.

2.3 Tenant engagement update – Embedding the tenant voice (Oct 2024)

The Committee considered the report and presentation from the Tenant Engagement Officers, who provided a progress report on tenant engagement methodology and practices, together with new activities towards maximum compliance with the new consumer regulation regime. The report provided the background to the changes to tenant engagement, highlighting that the latest changes were as a result of the introduction of the new National Consumer Standards.

Details of the existing tenant engagement framework and the review undertaken were reported together with statistical information on the tenant engagement survey conducted. Details were set out on how the tenant voice at the Council was to be re-engineered following the appointment of the Tenant Participation Advisory Services (TPAS).

Outcome

In considering the report, Councillors raised a number of queries in relation to:

- The benefits of the 'getting to know you' visits.
- Data collection of tenants who responded with repeat issues.
- Proportion of housing stock in the Sherwood constituency.
- Did tenants in the Sherwood constituency engage with the Council.
- Benchmarking with other local authorities and their engagement with TPA.
- Recruitment of officers in order to comply with Awaab's Law.
- Possible training session for Elected Members on housing issues in order for them to assist their constituents.
- Analysis of the type of complaints.

Councillors were provided with the information as requested, with a written response to follow and agreed that the following be noted:

1. The responsibilities of the Council as a housing authority in relation to consumer regulation.
2. Progress and planned engagement with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service on creating a new tenant engagement structure.
3. Feedback from the tenant engagement survey to be used alongside tenant satisfaction measures performance and learning from complaints to inform the workplan for service improvement for the next 18 months.
4. The way in which the above activity fits in the programme of scrutiny for the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee.
5. The results of the TPAS re-engineering project will be reported to the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee in June 2025 to scrutinise the detailed action plan and plans for implementation.
6. The endorsement for approval by the Tenant Engagement Board and Cabinet.

2.4 Building Safety Policy (Mar 2025)

The Committee considered the draft Building Safety Policy, which now included how tenants and leaseholders in Council owned homes, could raise safety concerns together with the Council's own responsibilities to keep homes warm, safe, and decent.

The aim of the Policy was to set out how the Council met the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022, the Fire Safety Act 2021 and other legislative and regulatory changes that had been introduced and proposed following the Grenfell tragedy and how it discharged those duties to residents and other stakeholders to keep residents and buildings safe.

Outcome

Councillors asked about what process was in place should there be a lift failure at one of the Council's 'Housing with Care' facilities, the Director advised that this was set out in the Fire Safety Strategy. Councillors endorsed the Building Safety Policy.

2.5 Community Plan refresh (Mar 2025)

The Committee considered the refreshed Community Plan 2023/2027.

The Community Plan is a key direction setting document used to outline the priorities and vision for the Council for a four-year term. Portfolio Holders, committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs had been working to review progress against the Community Plan as it entered the start of the third year, which has led to the document being refreshed.

Outcome

Councillors endorsed the refreshed Community Plan 2023/2027 which was forwarded to Cabinet for consideration. At the Cabinet meeting on the 1st April 2025, after some amendments, the Community Plan refresh was referred to Full Council in May 2025, where it was approved.



2.6 Newark Town Centre Master Plan (Apr 2025)

A presentation, which set out the timeline of the Masterplan and provided a summary of the results of a survey which has been undertaken, was presented to Committee members.

The structure of the Masterplan was outlined and the six key themes:



Within the town there were nine character areas listed as: The Medieval Core; Friary; Barnby Gate; the College Quarter; North Gate Station Quarter; North Gate; Mill Gate and Sconce; Riverside; and London Road.

The design code is a set of simple, concise, and illustrated design requirements and provide clear rules and standards for new development in each of the aforementioned character areas.

The design code is mandatory and strikes a balance between providing clear rules but not restricting high quality creative design. The code was supplemented by looser 'guidance' should coding not be possible. The design code would be taken forward as a supplementary planning document and would be a material consideration in planning decisions.

A consultation of the Masterplan and the Design Code would run for a period of 6 weeks in May and June 2025. There would also be an exhibition, explaining how the Masterplan had been developed together with an explanation of the Design Code process.

Outcome

The presentation was noted by the Committee and the Chair of the Committee thanked the Officers for their presentation noting the importance of maximising tourist provision in the town.

3. Driving Service Improvement

Review the Executive Forward Plan

It is a standard item that the committee reviews the Council's Executive Forward Plan and the minutes from Cabinet. This enables the committee to see what decisions are being made across the Council. To review and comment on progress & performance and to request more information and updates from officers as required.

3.1 Revised Customer Complaint & Feedback Policy and Housing Ombudsman complaint handling code self-assessment update (June 2024)

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager for Customer Services updating the committee on the changes required to the Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy to ensure the Council met its statutory requirements of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.

Outcome

The Committee endorsed the revised Customer Complaints & Feedback Policy and the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment, and it was recommended for approval to the Audit and Governance Committee. The Chair thanked the Business Manager and her team for her work on this topic. Audit and Governance approved the Policy and Self-Assessment in July 2024.

3.2 Delivery update on UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund (June 2024)

The Committee were provided with an update on the projects funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

The Business Manager explained that the Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural Prosperity Fund were established by the government in 2022, replacing the previous European Fund. These funds are intended to be used within the local community from 2022 to 2025. Each locality received a specific allocation of funds to be spent on community projects. The Programme Manager then detailed how this funding was being implemented locally.

Outcome

Councillors queried if part of the report would be looking at what other districts were doing as a comparison to our district. It was agreed that there was a good understanding of what others were doing, but this could be formalised in the evaluation report.

The Committee noted the high-level outputs and outcomes achieved through funding to date and the finalised list of funding allocations/interventions as detailed within the report

3.3 Annual compliance update – housing stock (July 2024)

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager for Housing Maintenance & Asset Management which provided Councillors with the performance position as of 31 March 2024 with regard to compliance, including actions to rectify identified issues.

Councillors spent time examining elements around compliance, including whether it was possible to secure additional monies to continue the programme of change. They were advised that funding was part of a package which included solar panels. NSDC were ahead of other local authorities in their cohort, and it was hoped to commence the programme to change the remaining properties in April 2025.

Where the responsibility lay with ensuring compliance for non-housing community centres and residential leasehold/shared ownerships. The Business Manager advised that if the building was situated on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land the responsibility sat with the housing team, any residual community centres will be the responsibility of Corporate Property.

In relation to leased buildings, it was the responsibility of the leaseholder to conduct the compliance checks. The Council would then request the certificates. If fire doors were present in the buildings, the Council would advise what works, if any, needed to be done but the leaseholder would be responsible for undertaking those works.

Outcome

The Committee noted the recommendations of the report and requested a report be provided to a future Committee meeting, in relation to compliance checks conducted in leased/shared ownership and community centres.



3.4 Green Rewards Programme - update (Sept 2024)

The Committee considered a report on the progress of the Green Rewards Programme.

The report included the background to the development of the App and how it is used as a tool by local authorities to encourage residents to undertake environmentally friendly activities and to reduce their carbon footprint. The implementation of the App assists with the delivery of the Council's climate change ambitions, as outlined in the Community Plan. The report provided details of how the App worked and how winning participants were chosen monthly and the reward received. It was reported that there were currently 611 members, an increase of 5.4% since April 2024, the largest growth in the county.

Committee members asked a number of questions including that the use of an App was generally done using a smartphone and queried as to the usage rate for the older generation. It was informed that demographical information was not collected but this will be investigated with the provider.

Outcome

In closing the debate, the Chair asked that Elected Members be approached to sign-up. He also suggested that there be a targeted approach to younger ambassadors as they had the potential to make longer term positive changes. The progress of the Green Awards Programme was noted by the Committee.



3.5 Residents survey temperature check - findings (Oct 2024)

The Committee considered the report and presentation of the Transformation & Service Improvement Officer who provided a summary of the findings of the resident survey temperature check.

The report set out the background to the district wide consultation for the 2022 resident survey with details of the number of responses and how these were gathered. It was reported that in July 2024 approval was given to undertake the temperature check with the aim of aligning the survey with the Local Government Association (LGA) project of 'Are You Being Served?'.

This nationally recognised question set measures six key indicators of resident satisfaction: overall satisfaction with Council operations, trust in the Council, perceived value for money, perceptions of community safety, and satisfaction with specific Council-run services.

A total of 123 residents participated in the survey, primarily via telephone interviews. Additional engagement was achieved through in-person participation at community events, including the GRT Community Engagement session, the Yorke Drive Family Fun Day, and the Refugee Coffee Morning.



Survey results demonstrated strong performance, with scores exceeding the LGA national average in all but one category. Notably:

- 65% of respondents felt the Council acts on the concerns of local residents to a great or fair extent and this is 18% above the LGA benchmark.
- 72% reported feeling very or fairly well informed about Council activities and this is 20% above the LGA benchmark.
- 74% expressed a great deal or fair amount of trust in the Council and this is 21% above the LGA benchmark.

While direct comparisons with the 2022 open survey are limited due to differences in methodology and sample size, the data suggests a positive shift in public perception regarding Council performance and community safety.

One area that required further attention is the response to a question which asked residents about their sense of safety outdoors in the local area after dark. The Council's score was 2% below the LGA average. However, the report shared with the committee several initiatives that were undertaken to address these issues, including enhanced partnership and collaborative working arrangements aimed at improving community safety.

Outcome

In considering the report, Councillors discussed some of the questions within the survey and the Committee noted the recommendations in the report.



3.6 Update for kerbside glass recycling scheme (Nov 2024)

The Committee considered information on the current performance and future risks of the glass recycling project.

The report set out that kerbside glass recycling had commenced on 8 April 2024 following a period of 8 weeks when wheeled bins had been distributed. It also provided information as to the take-up of the service by residents and the gradual withdrawal of Glass Recycling UK bottle banks sites across the district.

Statistical information was provided as to the amount of glass collected and how this compared favourably to the estimates calculated as the scheme was being developed.

In considering the report Councillors raised a number of queries in relation to:

- Capturing data as to the number of bins that were not emptied every 8 weeks and the reason for that.
- Information on the future income likely to be realised by glass recycling; issues around capacity at the Newark Lorry Park for the storage of collected glass.
- Use of a sticker to remind residents when their bins were due for collection.
- Contamination of silver bins by residents putting glass in them.
- The final destination of the glass the Council sells.
- Method used to determine the regularity of collections.
- Any noise issues from residents due to the emptying of glass bins.

Outcome

The Committee agreed that the current status of the project be noted and that further updates to be provided as required.



4. Scrutinising and Questioning Performance

Performance Reporting

It is also the role of the committee to review how the Council is performing in three key areas:

- **Financial performance**
How the Council is performing against the Medium-Term Financial Plan
- **Service performance**
How the Council is performing against its Community Plan
- **Customer feedback**
How the Council is performing in complaint handling

The committee received quarterly reports reviewing the Council performance. Committee members are actively engaged in reviewing these reports every quarter. The committee asked questions, scrutinised, and requested more information and updates from officers on areas of improvement as required. These are reported back to committee from the relevant service and progress is monitored.

4.1 Corporate estate – annual compliance update (June 2024)

The Committee considered the report on compliance management across the Estate, focusing on the Corporate Estate and Commercial Tenanted Properties.

Outcome

In noting the report, the Committee referred to the Fire Risk Assessments and queried why 16 assessments remained outstanding. The Committee were advised that the Assurance Template Report included figures that were captured as a snapshot in time and that the figures had since been updated.



4.2 Update on property repair and letting arrangements for Council owned homes (July 2024)

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager for Housing Services who provided the progress of each of the recommendations endorsed by the PPIC on 11 September 2023.

These were:

- The provision of floor covering in all new lettings.
- The design of a simplified Empty Homes Standard.
- The introduction of a satisfaction measures for quality of temporary accommodation.
- The development of a policy to pilot the Council assisting tenants with maintaining trees within their gardens funded through remaining efficiency savings.

Outcome

The Committee noted the recommendations of the report:

- Floor coverings in new lets to be approved, subject to a degree of flexibility being introduced to allow Tenancy Officers a degree of discretion when assessing a tenant's needs.
- The progress with the simplified letting standard being introduced.
- The introduction and outturn of the satisfaction measure for temporary accommodation satisfaction of 86%.
- The progress of the Tree Policy which, once finalised, would be adopted through a Portfolio Holder decision.



4.3 Newark & Sherwood Community Lottery annual update (July 2024)

The Committee considered an update on the progress of the Newark & Sherwood Community Lottery since its launch in May 2021.

The report set out the impact of the scheme since its launch, providing information as to the number of 'good causes' registered with the lottery who were receiving financial support through ticket sales. It was also reported that regular marketing and promotion of the lottery was undertaken together with the number of supporters purchasing tickets each week. A sum of £34,569.60 had been generated in the third year of operation, which compared favourably in comparison with other community lotteries across the county.

Outcome

The report was noted by the Committee, and it was agreed that the Director for Customer Services & Organisational Development, together with the Communication & Marketing Manager, undertake to create a communications package to assist the smaller charities who benefit from the Community Lottery Fund with its promotion.

4.4 Housing compliance assurance report (Sept 2024)

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager for Housing Maintenance & Asset Management who provided the committee with the performance position as of 30 June 2024 (Q1). The information was presented in a new format with the focus of the report on exceptions performance, which were outside of the Council's target parameters.

In presenting the report, the Committee were advised that since it had been written, there had been an improvement in the compliance levels for gas and oil servicing and also the EICR certifications less than five years old.

Members asked why there was a spike in properties without gas safety certificates and whether it could be fully compliant. The Business Manager explained the issue was due to an outside contractor failing to meet terms, but it had been resolved. She also noted that while the Council aimed for full compliance, some tenants did not cooperate, necessitating legal action to access their properties.

Members discussed the new RAG ratings and their impact on performance. The Business Manager assured that the adjustments were made following regulatory feedback, and that performance would be monitored closely.

Outcome

The Committee noted the exceptions to performance of the housing service compliance functions and the new format for performance for Quarter 1, 2024/2025 onwards.

4.5 Review of HRA Business Plan assumptions (Nov 2024)

The Committee considered the report of the Business Manager for Financial Services who provided Councillors with an overview of the key assumptions to be made within the production of the 30-year HRA Business Plan.

The report explained the process for developing and maintaining the HRA Business Plan, including both external and internal factors that influence rent, capital improvements, and services. These assumptions shape the HRA Budget and Rent Setting report. Additionally, it was confirmed that the Council is responsible for paying Council Tax on its void properties.

Outcome

The Committee endorsed that the assumptions presented were to be used in the update of the 30-year HRA Business Plan.

4.6 Newark Towns Fund update (Nov 2024)

The Committee considered an update on the progress and achievements of Newark Towns Fund projects. The report set out the background to the awarding of the Town Fund Grant and the selection of the ten priority projects as listed within the report.

Details of the assurance framework were provided together with progress for each of the projects, which included changes to grant profiles following approval of project adjustment requests as detailed within the report.

The committee queried the number of apprenticeships delivered at the YMCA's Community Activity Village. Officers explained that the YMCA ran a similar, non-accredited scholarship programme and assured that they would monitor apprenticeship numbers closely.

Outcome

The Committee welcomed the progress made in the delivery of the various Newark Towns Fund projects.



4.7 Compliance update (Mar 2025)

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director of Housing, Health & Wellbeing who provided the performance position as of 31 December 2024 (Q3) against the Council's legal and regulatory landlord responsibilities for a range of building safety measures which included:

- Fire protection
- Gas
- Asbestos
- Electrical
- Water

The report also summarised details of the Council's housing stock. The information was presented in a new format with regard to compliance, including actions to rectify identified issues.

Performance exceptions were listed and included:

- Domestic Gas Servicing
- Fire Safety Checks
- Fire Door Inspections
- Domestic Asbestos & Communal
- Water Safety
- Stair Lifts & Hoists
- EICR Electrical Certification
- Solid Fuel & Oil Servicing

The Director addressed damp and mould issues, noting that the causes were varied and work was ongoing to broaden compliance criteria. The Council employed a Damp & Mould Surveyor and had a 24-hour emergency response. Complaints had increased due to proactive engagement with tenants.

Outcome

The Committee noted the report and in closing the debate, the Chair referred to the annual fire risk assessment and the work undertaken in relation to fire door repairs and also welcomed the inhouse challenges to the housing teams in a drive to improve service provision.

Scrutiny Role

Scrutiny is a statutory requirement for local authorities which operate a Leader and Cabinet (Executive) model of decision making. PPIC does not make decisions but instead monitors, influences and makes recommendations on the work of Cabinet. The overview and scrutiny role, conducted by PPIC Councillors, is designed to support the work of the Council and its Cabinet, and ensure there is the opportunity for checks and balances. The committee also looks to constructively scrutinise the work of our partners and how we deliver better when we deliver together.

Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood CSP progress & performance update and review of priorities (June 2024)

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager for Public Protection and the Police District Commander for Newark and Sherwood, who provided an update on the performance data and activities for crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) across the Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership.

The report set out the 2023/2024 performance and activities and set out the priorities for 2024/2025. In considering the report the Chair stated individual cases could not be discussed.

Outcome

Members of the Committee noted the report on the performance data and activities for crime and ASB across the Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership. They asked questions regarding the accuracy of reporting and efforts to increase it. Both the Council and the Police emphasised the importance of reporting and outlined ongoing efforts to improve it. The Police Inspector provided insights into crime figures, highlighting targeted efforts to address specific issues and the need for partnerships to tackle problems such as homelessness and street drinking. The Committee unanimously agreed to note the performance and priorities of the Community Safety Partnership.

Response to Kidney Stones consultation (Nov 2024)

The Committee considered the report which provided the results of the recent consultation on the proposal to site the Kidney Stones at Castle House. The report set out the background leading to the Cabinet determining to agree, in principle, with the proposals pending a public consultation of the Kidney Stones being installed at Castle House. The report provided details of the consultation method and the analysis of the results.

Members commented on the proposed location for the Kidney Stones, financing and budgeting, potential additional costs, alternative funding, and whether the project should proceed given public response. They also considered the accuracy of consultation responses.

Outcome

All the themes that the PPIC members wished Cabinet to consider when reviewing the report were captured, with the Chair relaying these back to the meeting at the end of the discussion. The Committee agreed that the contents of the report and consultation responses be noted and the comments, be included in the Kidney Stones report to the meeting of Cabinet scheduled for 10 December 2024.

At Cabinet on the 10 December 2024, they agreed the recommendations, as they align with the Community Plan objectives in relation to heritage and culture, particularly the specific actions around increasing the quantity and quality of public art in the district.



Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood CSP progress and performance update and review of priorities (Feb 2025)

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager for Public Protection and the Police District Commander for Newark and Sherwood, who provided Councillors with an update on the performance data and activities for crime and ASB across the Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership.

The report set out the 2024/2025 crime and ASB performance when compared with the previous year and also introduced the new Community Safety Partnership Strategy and Delivery Plan. In considering the report, committee members asked a number of questions.

It was explained that the increase in crime was primarily due to burglaries, auto-crime, and drug-related offences. The Business Manager noted that the CCTV replacement programme would prioritize the oldest cameras first, starting in Newark, with a district-wide 10-year plan to follow.

During the debate, the success of the Immediate Justice pilot scheme was discussed. The Business Manager reported positive feedback, noting the significant impact on individuals involved and the quick delivery of justice for low-level crimes. Inspector Ellam highlighted that the scheme addressed public frustration with slow justice processes.

The Committee questioned why speeding was not listed as a key theme, and the Business Manager clarified that community groups still monitored it, despite its omission. Additionally, it was confirmed that Public Spaces Protection Orders led to a notable reduction in anti-social behaviour in specific locations.

The Committee queried the use of microphones in CCTV cameras and whether footage was being used in prosecutions. The Business Manager confirmed that CCTV footage was frequently used and would investigate the microphone use further.

The committee noted a previous Cabinet report stated that the relocation of the CCTV Control Room would be funded by the Newark Town Fund but questioned if this was still the case. The Business Manager clarified that the funding source had changed.

Outcome

In closing the debate, the Chair sought any comments from committee members they wished to be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration prior to their review and adoption of the CSP Strategy and Delivery Plan in April 2025. A member of the Committee commented that he would like to request Cabinet to reconsider their decision to relocate the CCTV Control Room from the Police HQ at Sherwood Lodge to Newark and associated loss of revenue.

The Committee noted the Community Safety Partnership performance and that Cabinet be requested to clarify the source of funding for the relocation of the CCTV Control Room.

Presentations by Portfolio Holders

To enable the Cabinet Portfolio Holders to brief the Committee on their remit, present actions and offer an opportunity to ask focussed questions. Committee members requested that Portfolio Holders be invited to PPIC meetings.

The Portfolio Holders attended between June 2024 and March 2025 in the following order:

- **Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance (March 2024)**

An update of their Portfolio was presented including an update of the East Midlands Combined Authority and the Council's strategic framework. Members discussed funding opportunities, portfolio responsibilities, community engagement, and staffing concerns during the meeting.
- **Portfolio Holder for Housing (June 2024)**

Key updates on housing services and plans were presented, highlighting achievements, challenges, and future initiatives within the Housing directorate for 2023/2024. The discussion covered tenant engagement, housing development, decarbonisation, community hubs, service quality, staff recruitment, green spaces, and resident relations.
- **Portfolio Holder for Public Protection & Community Relations (Sept 2024)**

An update on actions within their Portfolio was presented, covering public protection, community safety, and community development, including recent initiatives and future plans. The presentation addressed topics such as the CCTV review, anti-social behaviour (ASB), flood response, and community engagement.
- **Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture & the Arts (Oct 2024)**

Updates on Heritage, culture, and arts initiatives within the district were presented, highlighting various projects and community engagement efforts. Members discussed concerns about event locations, funding, and inclusivity, seeking ways to expand cultural activities beyond Newark and support music education.

- **Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment (Nov 2024)**

The Portfolio Holder presented on various environmental initiatives including the Climate Change Action Plan, energy management, waste collection, air quality, biodiversity, tree strategy, and public engagement, highlighting challenges such as limited district-wide funding and accessibility of events.

- **Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing & Leisure (Feb 2025)**

An extensive update was presented, covering current initiatives, strategies, and future plans related to health, leisure, and community wellbeing in the district. The discussion included infrastructure projects, health campaigns, urgent care services, and community engagement efforts.

- **Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development (Mar 2025)**

The Committee reviewed a presentation covering key areas such as economic growth, visitor economy, planning development, and policy infrastructure. The presentation outlined current work and future proposals for development and regeneration within the district.

Future Work

Officers and Councillors collaborate with committee members to create a work programme for 2025-26.

However, we know for certain that over the next 12 months PPIC will continue to:

- Review and challenge the performance of the Council.
- Hold Cabinet to account as critical friend.
- Consider topics raised by Councillors.
- Scrutinise the budget and review performance.
- Undertake reviews and develop strategies and policies.
- Scrutinise large-scale projects such as the Newark Town Investment Plan.
- Receive updates from Portfolio Holders.

PPIC will also continue to work alongside its key public sector partners and key stakeholders within the Council.



Appendix One: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee Members

1.	Councillor Mike Pringle (Chair)	Ward: Ollerton
2.	Councillor Neil Ross (Vice-Chair)	Ward: Devon
3.	Councillor Neil Allen	Ward: Farndon & Fernwood
4.	Councillor Alice Brazier	Ward: Ollerton
5.	Councillor Celia Brookes	Ward: Edwinstowe & Clipstone
6.	Councillor Andy Freeman	Ward: Edwinstowe & Clipstone
7.	Councillor Roger Jackson	Ward: Dover Beck
8.	Councillor Jean Hall	Ward: Balderton South
9.	Councillor Rhona Holloway	Ward: Bilsthorpe
10.	Councillor David Moore	Ward: Beacon
11.	Councillor Penny Rainbow	Ward: Southwell
12.	Councillor Karen Roberts	Ward: Southwell
13.	Councillor Matthew Spoors	Ward: Devon
14.	Councillor Tina Thompson	Ward: Rainworth South & Blidworth
15.	Councillor Tim Wendals	Ward: Lowdham

Amendments to membership

•	Councillor Simon Forde	Ward: Balderton South
•	Councillor Jack Kellas	Ward: Farndon & Fernwood
•	Councillor Maurice Shakeshaft	Ward: Farnsfield

Alternates

•	Councillor Phil Farmer	Ward: Collingham
•	Councillor Sylvia Michael	Ward: Sutton-on-Trent
•	Councillor Linda Tift	Ward: Rainworth North & Rufford
•	Councillor Jean Hall	Ward: Balderton South
•	Councillor Peter Harris	Ward: Southwell
•	Councillor Debbie Darby	Ward: Bridge

Officer Support

- Deborah Johnson - Director of Customer Services & Organisational Development
- Carl Burns - Transformation Manager
- Helen Brandham - Democratic Services Officer
- Mark Randle – Transformation & Service Improvement Officer



NEWARK &
SHERWOOD
DISTRICT COUNCIL