

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, 16 December 2025 at 6.00 pm.

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

Councillor N Allen, Councillor A Brazier, Councillor L Brazier, Councillor C Brooks, Councillor I Brown, Councillor R Cozens, Councillor S Crosby, Councillor L Dales, Councillor D Darby, Councillor P Farmer, Councillor A Freeman, Councillor S Forde, Councillor J Hall, Councillor P Harris, Councillor S Haynes, Councillor R Holloway, Councillor M Home, Councillor J Kellas, Councillor S Michael, Councillor D Moore, Councillor P Peacock, Councillor C Penny, Councillor M Pringle, Councillor P Rainbow, Councillor K Roberts, Councillor N Ross, Councillor S Saddington, Councillor M Shakeshaft, Councillor K Smith, Councillor T Smith, Councillor M Spoor, Councillor P Taylor and Councillor T Wildgust

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor K Melton, Councillor T Thompson and Councillor T Wendels

40 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.

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

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

42 MINUTES FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2025

AGREED that the minutes from the meeting held on 21 October 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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

The Chair invited Councillor P Harris to provide a ‘moment of reflection’ for the Council.

The Chair informed Members that she had recently represented the Council at two events. A Veterans’ Lunch at Balderton Village Hall and the Pantomime at the Palace Theatre, Newark. She also advised that the Chair’s raffle had raised £770 and that she had also received an anonymous donation of £200 for her chosen charities.

The Chair welcomed the two newly elected Members, Councillors M Home and K Smith to the Council following the by-elections held on 6 November 2025.

The Chair also announced the winners of the 'Serving People – Improving Lives' Awards for staff in 2025. The winners were invited to the Full Council to have their awards re-presented by the Chair and to celebrate their success with Members.

Team of the Year – Administrative Services

Manager of the Year – Oliver Scott

Colleague of the Year – Ashley Kitchen

Apprentice of the Year – Philene Evason-Bacon

Chief Executive's Award – The Bank Holiday Gypsy, Romany & Travellers Response Team and the Local Government Reorganisation Submission Team.

The Chair invited Councillor M Pringle, Chair of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee to update Members on the Council Tax Support Scheme for Terminally Ill Residents following the Motion agreed at the last meeting.

The Leader of the Council advised that the Corporate Peer Team had recently revisited the Council following the Peer Challenge in 2024, reporting that positive initial feedback had been received, confirming they were pleased with the progress made.

The Deputy Leader of the Council thanked the Director – Communities & Environment and the Heritage & Culture Team for their work throughout the year.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing thanked all the Housing Teams for their work throughout the year. He also thanked Officers for their work in relation to Ollerton Hall.

44 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCIL

In accordance with Rule No. 3.3.3, a question had been submitted by Councillor P Harris.

Details of the question and response given by the Leader of the Council are attached as Appendix A to the Minutes.

45 LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026-27

The Council considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Director – Resources and Section 151 Officer, which sought to confirm the continuation of the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27 with minor changes in accordance with the annual uprating amounts applied by the Department for Works and Pensions. By applying the annual uprating, the Council will continue to maintain the current level of support to all Council Tax Support claimants and ensure that the scheme continues to benefit the most vulnerable and low-income households. The Cabinet considered the report at their meeting held on 11 November 2025 and had recommended approval.

AGREED (with 32 votes for and 2 abstentions) that the Council continues to adopt the existing Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for all potential claimants for the financial year 2026/27 and uprates the applicable amounts, premiums, state benefits and disregard criteria in accordance with the annual uprating amounts applied by the Departments for Works & Pensions.

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

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive concerning the allocation of seats on Committees to political groups, following the by-elections to fill the vacancies in the Balderton North & Coddington and Castle Wards held on 6 November 2025. The Allocation of Seats to Political Groups and the Schedule of Members' Appointments to Committees can be found respectively at Appendices B and C to the Minutes.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the allocation of seats to Political Groups (as set out in Appendix B to the minutes) be approved; and
- b) the Schedule of Members Appointments to Committees (as set out in the Schedule attached as Appendix C to the minutes) be noted.

47 PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2026-27

The Council considered the report of the Director – Customer Services & Organisational Development which sought approval of the Schedule of Meetings for the period May 2026 to May 2027.

AGREED (unanimously) that the proposed Schedule of Meetings for 2026/27, be approved. The schedule is attached as Appendix D to the minutes.

48 UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

The Council considered the report of the Monitoring Officer which provided an update on the changes made to the arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints, as agreed by the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee on 27 November 2025.

The report set out that the previous arrangements did not provide a clear mechanism for the early filtering and rejection of invalid complaints. The amendment approved was to include additional wording into the arrangements which provided clarity on how complaints would be dealt with if they were considered to be invalid, without engagement with the Independent Person. The report also provided information as to the Government's published response to the consultation on changes to the Standards regime.

AGREED (unanimously) that Full Council note:

- a) the changes made to the Council's arrangements for dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints as agreed by the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee and as set out in paragraph 1.4 of the report;
- b) the ongoing work to review the arrangements through a cross-party working group of the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee; and
- c) the changes to the Standards regime recently announced by Government which would be subject to future legislative change.

(Councillor T Smith entered the meeting at the conclusion of the previous item).

49 NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion One – Code of Conduct

In accordance with Rule No. 3.4.3, Councillor P Taylor moved and Councillor S Forde seconded a motion to the following effect:

“Newark & Sherwood District Council welcomes the proposed changes to the Code of Conduct which the Government intends to legislate for a whole system of reform of the current Code of Conduct and sanctions regime as set out in the Localism Act 2011.

The measures will include:

- the introduction of a mandatory code of conduct, which will include a behavioural code, for all local authority types and tiers.
- a requirement that all principal authorities convene formal standards committees, to include provisions on the constitution of standards committees to ensure objectivity, accountability and transparency.
- the requirement that all principal authorities offer individual support during any investigation into code of conduct allegations to both the complainant and the councillor subject to the allegation.
- the introduction at the authority level of a ‘right for review’ for both complainant and the subject elected member to have the case reassessed on grounds that will be set out in legislation.
- powers for authorities to suspend elected members for a maximum of 6 months for serious code of conduct breaches, with the option to withhold allowances during suspension for the most serious breaches and introduce premises and facilities bans either in addition or as standalone sanctions.
- in response to the most serious allegations involving police investigation, or where sentencing is pending, the introduction of powers to suspend elected members on an interim basis for an initial period of 3 months which, if extended, will require regular review.
- a new disqualification criterion for any elected member subject to the maximum period of suspension more than once within 5 years.

- the creation of a new national appeals function, to consider appeals from elected members to decisions to suspend them and/or withhold allowances, and for complainants if they consider their complaint was mishandled. Any appeal submitted will only be permitted after complainant or elected member has invoked their 'right for review' of the local standards committee decision has been invoked and that process is completed".

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

Motion Two – Union Flag to be Flown Permanently at Castle House

In accordance with Rule No. 3.4.3, Councillor P Peacock moved and Councillor S Crosby seconded an altered motion (in accordance with Rule 4.7.1) to the following effect:

"Newark & Sherwood District Council is committed to promoting unity, compassion and trust in authority and agree the following:

1. The Council believes that the Union Flag is a symbol of Pride in Place and symbolises the British values of tolerance, community cohesion, decency and fairness.
2. The Council agrees that the Union Flag should be flown at Castle House every day except on certain occasions when other flags may be flown.
3. By flying the Union Flag at Castle House, the Council is declaring Castle House as a place of sanctuary, safety and security for all communities.
4. The Council notes that the Leader of this Council wrote to the Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council on 20 November 2025 to express his disappointment that Nottinghamshire County Council has cut funding for community and voluntary organisations such as Your CVS, Citizens Advice Central Nottinghamshire and Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire, instead, spending £75,000 to attach union flags to lampposts.
5. That the Council's flag will be flown at Castle House below the Union Flag".

The altered motion, on being put to the vote, was agreed with 34 votes for with 1 vote against.

50 MINUTES FOR NOTING

50a CABINET - 14 OCTOBER 2025

Minute No. 311 – Green Gateways Update

Councillor P Harris sought an explanation as to how this initiative would work given contracts were let through Via at the County Council to mow grass verges and he referred to an example in his Ward where there had been a loss of biodiversity.

The Chair added that it would be helpful for the local community to be made aware of when sub-contractors were due to cut verges.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment advised that he would provide a written response.

50b CABINET - 11 NOVEMBER 2025

Minute No. 320 – Plan for Neighbourhoods Programme and Local Assurance Framework Update

Councillor P Harris asked what measures Cabinet would take to extend ‘Pride of Place’ in communities that did not benefit from government local development funding.

The Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development advised that ‘Pride of Place’ was a funded government programme so extending across the district was not within the Council’s gift, but there was a pipeline of projects across the district which could be mobilised if funding did become available.

50c CABINET - 26 NOVEMBER 2025

Minute No. 324 – Local Government Reorganisation in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire

Councillor P Harris expressed concerns about the warding arrangements included in the Council’s Final Proposal submitted to government, suggesting that polling districts should have been used as the building blocks for smaller single Member seats which would deliver better democratic representation.

The Leader of the Council advised that the warding arrangement proposals were only indicative at this stage and there would be further opportunities to review these as part of the local government reorganisation process.

50d POLICY & PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE - 1 DECEMBER 2025

Minute No. 169 – Presentation by the Environment Agency

Councillor P Harris stated that the Environment Agency had a statutory responsibility for dealing with sewage in rivers and suggested that the Chair of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee invite them to a further meeting of the Committee to inform the Council how this issue is dealt with.

The Chair of the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee advised that the Environment Agency had delivered an extremely informative presentation to the Committee covering local issues. He confirmed that he would invite them back to a future meeting at which sewage could be raised if they were given sufficient notice.

50e PLANNING COMMITTEE - 13 NOVEMBER 2025

50f GOVERNANCE, GENERAL PURPOSES & LGR COMMITTEE - 27 NOVEMBER 2025

50g AUDIT & ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE - 15 OCTOBER 2025

Meeting closed at 7.22 pm.

Chair