

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, 11 November 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 and Councillor P Rainbow

314 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.

315 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no declarations of interest.

316 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2025

The minutes from the meeting held on 14 October 2025 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

317 LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2026/27

The Business Manager – Revenues & Benefits presented a report in relation to 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 (DWP). By applying the annual uprating of income and disregards to the 2026/27 scheme, the Council would continue to maintain the current level of support to all Council Tax Support claimants and ensure that the scheme continued to benefit the most vulnerable and low-income households using nationally recognised rates of DWP income rather than continuing with the 2025 rates that were being used in the current scheme.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet recommends to Full Council the uprating of the applicable amounts, premiums, state benefits and disregard criteria in accordance with the annual uprating amounts applied by the Department for Works & Pensions (DWP); whilst continuing the current Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2026/27 financial year.

Reasons for Decision:

To ensure the Council discharges its responsibilities to agree its Council Tax Support scheme by 31 January 2026.

Options Considered:

An alternative option would be to increase the maximum award of 80% - the cost of doing this has been considered within the financial implications section in the report.

318 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ONSITE MONITORING FEES (KEY DECISION)

The Biodiversity and Ecology Lead Officer presented a report which informed the Cabinet of issues arising with current approved fees for monitoring onsite Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in relation to small developments, and which made a recommendation for a temporary relief to cover the interim period before Fees and Charges are set for the 2026-27 financial year.

The report concerned planning applications where if permission were granted, the general Biodiversity Gain Condition would apply. The Condition was discharged by the submission of a Biodiversity Gain Plan which set out how the biodiversity gain objective, a net gain of 10%, would be met. The legislation required that significant onsite habitat enhancement must be subject to a planning condition, Section 106 agreement or conservation covenant that required the habitat to be maintained for at least 30 years after the development was completed. Consequently, there was a need to charge a monitoring fee, and fees were set for 2024/25, and then increased for 2025/26. However, it had become apparent that for small sites of less than 1ha, the fees were disproportionately high. The report therefore recommended relief against the fees and charges for those smaller developments. Two criteria were proposed as detailed in the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approves two levels of relief for the existing fees and charges schedule to create two new lower fee levels for monitoring onsite BNG for the remainder of the financial year 2025-26:

Tier 1 - £1,033 (inc. VAT); and
Tier 2 - £1,722 (inc. VAT).

Reasons for Decision:

The proposed new fee levels are considered necessary in the light of the experiences with having actual small developments that are subject to mandatory BNG. In line with the Council's values, it is considered important that the Council responds appropriately to its experiences with small developments that are subject to mandatory BNG.

Options Considered:

Firstly, to take no action, or secondly to address as part of the setting of Fees and Charges for the 2026-27 Financial Year.

319 PURCHASE, OPERATION AND TRAINING FOR A NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL DRONE ASSET

The Senior Planner (Enforcement) presented a report which presented the case for the purchase a drone asset, principally for use by the Council, but with the potential to offer support to other public sector organisations. It was reported that the Council were increasingly reliant on commissioning drone technology, for both investigatory

and promotional activities, at a cost of just under £6,000 in the last 12 months. It was therefore considered that an in-house resource would increase availability, responsiveness, and be more cost effective going forward. The costs to purchase and for the operation of the drone asset were detailed in the report.

In addition, the report sought approval for a 'Drone Policy' to cover the use of the operation, as it was critical that the circumstances of when the drone would be deployed were understood and managed safely. The training of Senior Responsible Officers was also required.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet approve:

- a) the adoption of a Drone Usage Policy as detailed at Appendix A of the report, with delegated authority being given to the relevant Directors to make necessary amendments to improve operational effectiveness within the first 12 months of its adoption;
- b) the purchase and use of drone assets, primarily for use by NSDC in discharge of its relevant duties and services;
- c) the training of Senior Responsible Officers for the deployment and maintenance of drone asset(s) across the Council; and
- d) the creation of a fee schedule, to be reported to a future Cabinet, to allow NSDC to support other local authorities and public bodies.

Reasons for Decision:

The recommendations align with most of the Community Plan objectives. As set out in the report, this presents a cost-effective way to responsibly best utilise available technology.

Options Considered:

The Council could continue to procure drone support on an ad-hoc basis or seek a more permanent formal arrangement with the commercial market. Both routes would be more costly. Moreover, an NSDC owned and controlled asset will increase resiliency in terms of immediate availability alongside growing staff skills and competencies in this field.

320 PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAMME AND LOCAL ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Economic Development Grants & Programmes Manager presented a report which provided the Cabinet with an update on the delivery of the Plan for Neighbourhoods programme (now referred to as the Pride in Place Programme) and proposed key recommendations to enable programme delivery to commence from April 2026. Additionally, the report updated Cabinet on programme governance processes including a proposed updated Local Assurance Framework required for the Newark Town Board.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the updates provided in relation to the Plan for Neighbourhoods initiative including the recent name change implemented by the UK Government of the 'Pride in Place Programme' (PiPP) and the related role of the Newark Town Board, as set out in section 2.0 of the report;
- b) note and endorse the Newark Town Board's PiPP Regeneration Plan for submission to the UK Government by 28 November 2025 (subject to Board and Section 151 Officer approval), comprising a 10-year vision document and four-year indicative investment profile;
- c) approve the addition of a revenue budget of £1,502,000 and a capital budget of £5,306,000 required for the first four years of the PiPP delivery (2026 to 2030) with individual financial commitments to be approved by the Newark Town Board and the Section 151 Officer. Both budgets remain subject to the Council receiving sufficient assurance of funding through a finalised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from the UK Government, to be approved by the Section 151 Officer, as detailed further in paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the report; and
- d) approve the proposed Newark Town Board Local Assurance Framework (LAF), as provided in Appendix 3 of the report and detailed further in paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13.

Reasons for Decision:

The recommendations within this report are necessary to enable the local Newark Town Board to oversee and deliver the PiPP over the next decade through the provision of programme budgets. The proposed Local Assurance Framework will support the council to effectively fulfil its assurance role, clearly defining roles and processes to be followed by the Newark Town Board throughout programme delivery.

Options Considered:

The governance and funding arrangements detailed within this report are set by the UK Government throughout the PiPP prospectus. In particular, the council's role as the accountable body for programme funding, with the local Newark Town Board considered the strategic decision makers. The recommendations within this report reflect the arrangements and the funding conditions set by MHCLG.

321 SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY 2026 - 2031 (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - Economic Growth & Visitor Economy presented a report which sought approval of the Newark & Sherwood District Council Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy 2026 – 2031. The Strategy, which was attached as an appendix to the report, was proposed based on providing a strategic direction for the Council which provided a data and evidenced based approach. The Strategy identified a number of emerging priorities which aligned with the UK Industrial Strategy and the EMCCA Growth Plan & Inclusive Growth Commission. The Strategy also had a greater focus on health and raising aspirations of young people.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet endorse the Newark & Sherwood District Council Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy for 2026 – 2031.

Reasons for Decision:

To enable a strategic, meaningful direction of travel for local economic growth the proposed recommendation to update the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy based on data and evidence is recommended.

Options Considered:

There is an option to not update the Sustainable Economic Growth Strategy. This option has been discounted as Newark & Sherwood District Council have identified economic growth as a priority.

Meeting closed at 6.47 pm.

Chair