

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, 24 February 2026 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor P Peacock (Chair)
Councillor S Crosby, Councillor S Forde, Councillor C Penny, Councillor P Taylor and Councillor J Kellas

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor N Allen and Councillor S Haynes

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor R Cozens and Councillor L Brazier

351 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.

352 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillors S Crosby, J Kellas and P Taylor declared Other Registerable Interests in Agenda Item No. 13 - Local Regeneration Fund and Newark Capital Projects Update as Newark Town Councillors.

Councillor C Penny declared a Non-Registerable Interest in Agenda Item No. 10 - UK Town of Culture - Newark & Sherwood Applications.

353 MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2026

The minutes from the meeting held on 20 January 2026 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

354 2026/27 PROPOSED GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - Financial Services presented a report which enabled Members to consider the spending proposals in the Council's proposed 2026/27 General Fund Revenue Budget. The budget proposals had been prepared in accordance with the Council's budget setting strategy for 2026/27, as approved by the Cabinet on 8 July 2025.

The Local Government Finance Settlement provided councils with the amount of government grant and other information pertinent for setting next year's budget. The provisional settlement was announced on 17 December 2025, and the final settlement was expected in February 2026. It was reported that the proposal within the report was a Council Tax freeze for the 2026/27 financial year.

AGREED (with 5 votes for and 1 abstention) that Cabinet recommends to Full Council at its meeting on 5 March 2026 that:

- i. the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the 2026/27 financial year, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011:
 1. £57,909,340 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for items set out in Section 31A(2)(a) to (f) of the Act, as the District Council's gross expenditure for 2026/27);
 2. £37,209,230 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3)(a) to (d) of the Act, as the District Council's gross income for 2026/27); and
 3. £20,700,110 being the amount by which the aggregate at (b)(i) above exceeds the aggregate at (b)(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Net Budget Requirement for the year;
- ii. the figures shown as i.1. and i.3. above to be increased only by the amount of Parish Precepts for 2026/27;
- iii. the budget amounts included in the report be the Council's budget for 2026/27; and
- iv. the fees and charges shown in Appendices C1-C23 be implemented with effect from 1 April 2026.

Reasons for Decision:

To enable Cabinet to make recommendations to Full Council of the amounts to be calculated in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Localism Act 2011, for the purposes of setting Council Tax levels for the 2026/27 financial year.

Options Considered:

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

355 CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGET 2026/27 TO 2029/30 (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - Financial Services presented a report which detailed the proposed capital schemes over the medium term, together with the available resources to finance them. In accordance with the Financial Regulations, Cabinet was required to consider the Capital Programme and recommend to the Council the final Programme for approval on 5 March 2026.

There was an exempt version of the report which advised of the total of the intended spend on the general fund capital expenditure, as the Ollerton Regeneration scheme costs were commercially sensitive.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet recommend to Full Council on 5 March 2026 the General Fund schemes set out at Appendix A to the report as committed expenditure in the Capital Programme for 2026/27 to 2029/30.

Reasons for Decision:

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

Options Considered:

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

356 2026/27 TO 2029/30 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - Financial Services presented a report detailing the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the four financial years from 2026/27 to 2029/30. The main aims of the MTFP were to deliver the Council's Community Plan objectives; present the Council's current predictions of its financial position between 2026/27 to 2029/30; and to enable Members to make decisions which ensured the Council's future financial sustainability.

AGREED (with 5 votes for and 1 abstention) that Cabinet recommends the 2026/27 to 2029/30 Medium Term Financial Plan for approval by the Full Council at their meeting to be held on 5 March 2026.

Reasons for Decision:

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

Options Considered:

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

357 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026/27 (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - HR & Training presented the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2025/26 which the Council was required to produce annually in accordance with Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011. A copy of the Statement was attached as an appendix to the report. It was reported that the pay award for 2026/27 had not been finalised, therefore the existing pay rates for 2025/26 had been included in the Statement.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet recommend the Pay Policy Statement for 2026/27 to Full Council for approval.

Reasons for Decision:

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

Options Considered:

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

358 UK TOWN OF CULTURE - NEWARK AND SHERWOOD APPLICATIONS (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - Heritage and Culture presented a report which updated Members about the UK Town of Culture competition and the two bids being prepared in the district and the process to be undertaken. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport published guidance on 14 January 2026 and set an Expression of Interest deadline of 31 March 2026. It was reported that if successful, winning places would be required to specify an 'Accountable Body' and 'Delivery Body' for their programme. The two bids being prepared were for Newark and Southwell.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the two bids being developed by towns within the district;
- b) approve a net expenditure budget of up to £10,000 (up to £5,000 per town) to be added in 2025/26 to support and facilitate towns in Newark and Sherwood in the development of their Expressions of Interest, with the allocation of funding to be subject to a lead organisation being formally identified through a partnership and subject to proof of expenditure;
- c) subject to either or both bids being shortlisted, Newark & Sherwood District Council to be the accountable body if required as a partner organisation in any bid developed within the district for the 2028 UK Town of Culture; and
- d) subject to c above, the net expenditure budget and income budget of up to £120,000 be added in the respective financial year, should either or both towns from within Newark and Sherwood be shortlisted at the Expression of Interest stage for the £60,000 grant.

Reasons for Decision:

The funding would represent a step change in our ability to promote, maximise and celebrate the diversity of Newark and Sherwood's heritage, culture and community spirit. The recommendation identifies a role for NSDC which is achievable given current workloads, the context of LGR and supports bids from within the district.

Options Considered:

A 'do nothing' option could be considered in light of the timescale, staff capacity and timing of LGR and this funding. However, given the guidance as described within this report, that would preclude any bids coming from Newark and Sherwood. As such, this option was discounted.

359 ADOPTION OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WITHIN THE FERNWOOD NORTH DEVELOPMENT
(KEY DECISION)

The Director - Planning & Growth presented a report which put forward a proposal for the District Council to adopt Public Open Space (POS) within the Fernwood North development. The adoption of the POS would include ownership and ongoing maintenance.

The report to Cabinet on 4 November 2024 set the context of developments taking place in the greater Fernwood area and specifically the negotiations taking place between officers and Barrat David Wilson Homes (BDW) to secure a previous agreement for them to transfer POS to the District Council rather than implement a Management Company which was the extant lawful position for the Fernwood North development. Since then, agreement had been reached on the quantum and types of open space that could be transferred into public ownership. The Council had also resolved in July 2025 to have a 'No Man-Co' preferred approach on strategic urban extension sites such as Fernwood.

It was reported that the Fernwood North development continued at pace and a resolution was required to bring the POS into public ownership. Initial conversations took place between the District Council, BDW and Fernwood Parish Council with the Parish Council resolving in February that they were unable to pursue taking ownership of the land and no further communication had been received. Due diligence had been undertaken such that the District Council were satisfied that a transfer of the first phase of open space could be completed with other phases following.

It was clear that if the District Council were to bring the POS into public ownership that there would be a maintenance shortfall, especially given the stance of Fernwood Parish Council. It was recommended that other Fernwood North Section 106 contributions be utilised in order to provide a commuted payment towards POS maintenance, something which BDW were willing to pursue with the District Council as the local planning authority.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) approve the Council entering into arrangements with Barratt David Wilson Homes (BDW) to purchase (for the consideration of £1) and maintain the Public Open Space within the Fernwood North development, subject to the Council securing:
 - i) an appropriate contribution towards ongoing maintenance costs from BDW, subject to BDW successfully securing and legally executing an agreement with the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, a S106 Deed of Variation as detailed at paragraph 2.4 of the report and within Exempt Appendix A; and
 - ii) completion of satisfactory due diligence by the Director - Communities & Environment, in consultation with the Street Scene Manager and Principal Legal Officer, on the Public Open Space extent, type, and phasing including in relation to the legal title to the land;

- b) approve the Council covering future maintenance revenue requirements, supplemented by and subject to the required 'appropriate contribution' details at a) i) above, as detailed in the Financial Implications section in Exempt Appendix A; and
- c) approve that delegated authority be given to the Council's Director - Communities & Environment, in consultation with the Street Scene Manager, to secure the land transfer from BDW, including appropriate phasing and onboarding of the Public Open Space.

Reasons for Decision:

The recommendations align with the Community Plan objectives in relation to biodiversity, the environment and climate change. As set out in the report, the development has the potential to help the Council secure additionality which is above and beyond simply bringing Public Open Space into public ownership.

Options Considered:

The extant S106 for the Fernwood North development allows BDW to set up a Management Company to cover maintenance costs of Public Open Space. BDW have honoured a previously verbally and written negotiated position that they would not introduce a Management Company in this instance, an agreement predicated on the land being transferred to the District Council for the consideration of £1. The Council could choose not to purchase the Public Open Space for the previously agreed price, in which case BDW would need to find an alternative management route. This would likely mean introducing a management charge on future residents from this point forward, as has been done elsewhere within Fernwood. This would not be appropriate.

360 NEWARK TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN AND DESIGN CODE UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Town Centres & Visitor Economy and Senior Planner jointly presented a report which provided an update on and sought adoption of the Newark Town Centre Masterplan and Design Code.

The purpose of the Town Centre Masterplan was to provide a strategic framework to guide development, regeneration and investment within Newark's Conservation Area. The vision was that Newark Town Centre would remain a historic market town while embracing sustainable growth, creativity and connectivity. The purpose of the Design Code was to provide clear, detailed design requirements for development within the town centre, helping to deliver the vision and principles set out in the Masterplan. It would establish consistent standards for architecture, materials, public realm and sustainability, ensuring that new development respects Newark's historic character whilst meeting modern requirements for accessibility, climate resilience and quality of life.

It was noted that the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee had recommended approval of both the Masterplan and Design Code at their meeting held on 23 February 2026.

AGREED (with 5 votes for and 1 abstention) that Cabinet:

- a) note the update provided in relation to the Newark Town Centre Masterplan;
- b) adopt the Newark Town Centre Masterplan as planning guidance from 1 April 2026;
- c) allow for a review of not less than 6 months of the implementation of the Town Centre Masterplan, with delegated authority for any necessary amendments being delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development in consultation with the Chair of Planning Committee and Director – Planning & Growth; and
- d) note the update provided in relation to the Newark Town Centre Design Code and endorse its adoption as guidance as part of an updated Newark Conservation Area Management Plan the publication of which is already delegated to the Council’s Director of Planning & Growth.

Reasons for Decision:

It is important that the Newark Town Centre Masterplan is carried forward in order to provide a clear, framework for shaping growth, investment (by the Council and others), and regeneration in line with community priorities. Adoption ensures that future development can be influenced. This directly supports the ambitions of the Newark & Sherwood Community Plan 2023–2027 by breaking down barriers to opportunity, improving health and wellbeing through active travel and green spaces, reducing crime through better-designed public realm, celebrating culture and heritage, and advancing climate resilience and net-zero objectives.

Incorporating relevant elements of the Design Code into an updated Newark Conservation Area Management Plan also provides an effective approach to support its integration into the Development Management process.

Options Considered:

The option to discontinue work and not finalise the Newark Town Centre Masterplan has been ruled out. Establishing a clear, deliverable strategy for the nature of future development and design that will be supported is considered essential.

Taking the Design Code forward as a Supplementary Planning Document has been impacted upon by changes to the plan-making system and is therefore discounted. The alternative option of taking the Code forward as part of the Newark Conservation Area Management Plan is a sensible alternative that will ensure that the document has planning weight and can inform decision-making.

361 LOCAL REGENERATION FUND AND NEWARK CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Director - Planning & Growth presented a report which gave a detailed update to Cabinet on the delivery of the Local Regeneration Fund and Newark capital projects. The report gave updates on the Fund and the specific Newark capital projects making recommendations where required, noting that there was an exempt version of the report and recommendations in relation to the Newark Castle Gatehouse project, as this project was subject to commercial confidentiality.

AGREED (with 5 votes for and 1 abstention) that Cabinet:

- a) note the project and funding updates as detailed throughout this report;
- b)
- c)
- d)

(Recommendations b, c and d are commercially sensitive and appear only in the exempt minute)

Newark Cultural Heart Market Place (Local Regeneration Fund)

- e) agree to delegate the approval of the Newark Cultural Heart Market Place Improvement Scheme Full Business Case (FBC) to the Council's Section 151 Officer, in consultation with Newark Town Council, as noted in 2.9 of the report;
- f) note that the agreed Newark Cultural Heart Market Place Improvement Scheme capital budget of £3.61m will be available upon approval of the FBC and financed in full by UK Government Local Regeneration Fund grant;

20 Minute Cycle Town (Local Regeneration Fund)

- g) note the completion of the 20-minute cycle town project and agree to de-commit remaining Section 106 match contributions, with future reallocation to be dealt with via the Council's Developer Contributions Group, as set out in 2.12 of the report;

Ollerton Regeneration Scheme (Local Regeneration Fund)

- h) agree to accelerate £200,000 of capital funding (fully funded by LRF grant monies) within the approved programme and add this to the proposed capital budget for 2026/27, to progress essential works associated with the Ollerton regeneration scheme ahead of completion of legal agreements and confirmation of planning consent, as set out in section 2.15 of the report;

- i) delegate authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), up to the value of £750,000 to unlock additional investment towards the Ollerton project, as noted in 2.16 of the report;
- j) approve the addition of £750,000 within the Council's Capital Programme to facilitate recommendation i) above, fully funded by EMCCA grant monies;

Yorke Drive

- k) delegate authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), up to the value of £1,000,000 to unlock additional investment towards the Yorke Drive project, as noted in 2.17 of the report;
- l) approve the addition of £1,000,000 within the Council's Capital Programme to facilitate recommendation k) above, fully funded by EMCCA grant monies;

St Marks Place

- m) note the completion of the related feasibility and due diligence work for St Marks Place, acknowledge the options and associated costs and risks as noted in 2.19 of the report and agree to pause any further feasibility activity at this stage, with future progression contingent upon securing external funding or a material change in market conditions; and

Fund Governance

- n) delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer to approve any future amendments to the Newark Town Board's Local Assurance Framework, as may be required to reflect updated guidance and policy changes set by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.

Reasons for Decision:

Through access to vital grant funding and participation in the Local Regeneration Fund programme, the council is presented the opportunity to deliver a number of the priority projects identified within the Community Plan, supporting transformational change for communities, residents and businesses.

Options Considered:

There remains an option not to proceed with the delivery of selected projects within the Local Regeneration Fund or wider capital programme referenced in this report, however it would be considered a missed opportunity to deliver transformational and long-awaited change within Newark and Sherwood. Similarly, with a requirement for

Local Regeneration Fund grant to be spent by 31 March 2028, there remains an elevated risk that withdrawal of any project at this stage within the programme, may result in the loss of investment funds.

362 NEW NEWARK & SHERWOOD LOCAL PLAN (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - Planning Policy & Infrastructure presented a report which set out for Cabinet the proposed regulations and guidance in relation to the new Local Plan making system. The report set out the impact on the production of the new Local Plan timetable and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's). It was reported that developing and consulting on the SPD's would impact on the preparation of the new Local Plan. In order to accommodate both work streams the report proposed a timetabled approach as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- a) the contents of the report are noted;
- b) the proposed timetable at paragraph 3.5 to the report is adopted;
- c) delegated authority be given to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development to amend the adopted timetable to reflect any regulatory requirements which emerge from the publication of plan making regulations;
- d) in line with the timetable the notice of intention to commence plan making is undertaken in March 2026; and
- e) Supplementary Planning Documents in relation to Affordable Housing and Developer Contributions & Planning Obligations are prepared before the 30 June 2026.

Reasons for Decision:

To approve the New Local Plan Timetable and agree the proposal to begin plan making.

Options Considered:

None, the Council is required to have a Local Plan timetable and has already agreed to prepare a plan as soon as possible.

363 PLANNING REFORMS (KEY DECISION)

The Business Manager - Planning Policy & Infrastructure presented a report which provided the Cabinet with an update on the latest reforms to the planning system and sought approval for a District Council response to the draft National Planning Policy (NPPF) consultation.

The report set out the key elements of the changes to the planning system which aimed to speed up and modernise the system to meet the challenges of delivering new housing and economic growth. The changes included reforming the role of statutory consultees. In addition, the report proposed a draft response to the government consultation on the most significant rewrite of the NPPF which separated out policies for plan-making and decision-making. The implications of the proposals and the District Council response were detailed in full.

AGREED (unanimously) that Cabinet:

- a) note the contents of the report; and
- b) approve the proposed consultation response to the National Planning Policy Framework as set out in Appendix B to the report.

Reasons for Decision:

To allow Cabinet to approve the District Council's consultation response.

Options Considered:

Not responding to the consultation response would mean that the District Council would not have an opportunity to put forward the Council's position.

364 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

AGREED (unanimously) that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

365 CAPITAL PROGRAMME BUDGET 2029/27 TO 2029/30 (KEY DECISION)

The Cabinet considered the exempt version of the report in relation to the 2026/27 to 2029/30 Capital Programme Budget.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

366 LOCAL REGENERATION FUND AND NEWARK CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE (KEY DECISION)

The Cabinet considered the exempt version of the report in relation to the Local Regeneration Fund and Newark Capital Projects Update.

(Summary provided in accordance with Section 100C(2) of the Local Government Act 1972).

Meeting closed at 7.57 pm

Chair