

Report to: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee – 13 April 2026

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<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Report Title</b>	Estate Walkabouts Working Group Report
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide an update and the recommendations following a comprehensive review of the Council's Estate Walkabouts.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) endorse and agree with the re-naming of the estate walkabouts;</li> <li>b) endorse the reduction of the walkabout schedule;</li> <li>c) review and endorse the newly developed supporting documentation;</li> <li>d) endorse the introduction of a refined assurance pathway;</li> <li>e) endorse the timeline in Section 6.0; and</li> <li>f) endorse all recommendations and forward to Housing services for implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	A review of Estate Walkabouts identified low attendance, inconsistent practices, unclear accountability, outdated recording methods and limited assurance that issues raised were being progressed, reducing confidence in the process. The recommendations introduce a clearer, more community-focused approach through renaming to Community Walkabouts, a reduced and prioritised schedule and the introduction of standardised documentation and a central tracker to improve consistency, coordination, and accountability. A refined assurance pathway and agreed timeline strengthen oversight and provide Members with clearer confidence that issues identified through walkabouts are effectively monitored and addressed.

<b>1.0</b>	<b><u>Background</u></b>
1.1	In June 2025, Cllr Penny Rainbow submitted a topic request form to the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) proposing a 'Review of the Estate Walkabouts'. The rationale for establishing a working group was to highlight the impact that perceived neglect can have on tenants' pride in their homes and

	communities, alongside the recognised risk that visible signs of disorder may lead to further deterioration. Additional justification was provided by highlighting the opportunity for the PPIC to take an active role in Estate Walkabouts, while gaining a clearer understanding of the current process for addressing identified concerns.
1.2	Development of a Working Group was approved by the PPIC Chair, commenting that Estate Walkabouts are designed to foster a strong sense of community, ensure transparency in our processes and involve residents in the decisions that affect their living environment.
1.3	The following Members requested involvement in the Working Group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cllr Penny Rainbow</li> <li>2. Cllr Rhona Holloway</li> <li>3. Cllr Karen Roberts</li> <li>4. Cllr Maurice Shakeshaft</li> <li>5. Cllr Tim Wildgust</li> <li>6. Cllr Jean Hall</li> <li>7. Cllr Irene Brown</li> <li>8. Cllr Linda Tift</li> <li>9. Cllr Neil Ross</li> </ul>
1.4	Cllr Penny Rainbow was the Chair of the Estate Walkabouts Working Group and led three sessions.
<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>Working Group Sessions</u></b>
2.1	<b>Session 1: 29 January 2026</b> The first session of the Working Group reviewed the purpose, background, and current challenges of Estate Walkabouts in Newark and Sherwood, noting that the initiative aims to give tenants a forum to raise environmental and estate-related issues that are then recorded and followed up. While invitations to Walkabouts are generally sent to councillors, partner agencies, and tenants, the group identified persistent problems including low public and partner attendance, inconsistent invitation practices, disjointed formalised procedure, unclear accountability for actions, outdated recording systems, and weak feedback loops for residents and members. Members and officers highlighted that poor communication, inconsistent team working, and the absence of structured follow-up undermine confidence in the process, despite the value of Walkabouts in identifying repairs and community concerns.
2.2	<b>Session 2: 25 February 2026</b> The second session reviewed the Estate Walkabouts process and agreed the need for significant improvement due to low public attendance, inconsistent communication, weak action tracking and reliance on outdated systems. The group reviewed the newly developed Terms of Reference (see <b>appendix 1</b> ), setting out clearer aims, roles and responsibilities, a structured annual planning and review cycle, standardised templates, a central tracker, and stronger involvement from key services, alongside discussion of a priority system for allocating Walkabouts. The Tenant Champions were invited to the session to focus on attendance and communication, including whether public turnout should remain a success measure, alternative ways for residents to raise concerns, improved visibility and feedback, stronger engagement with tenant groups, parish councils and community networks, and publishing outcomes to demonstrate impact. The group supported a more holistic, compassionate and inclusive approach, with improved coordination, clearer communication and regular reporting seen as essential to restoring confidence and effectiveness in the walkabout process.

2.3	<p><b>Session 3: 25 March 2026</b></p> <p>The third and final session focused on reviewing the developed documentation: Terms of Reference (see appendix 1), Overview and Checklist (see appendix 1), and live Central Tracker (see <b>appendix 2</b>). To provide a greater understanding of how key service areas are involved in the Estate Walkabouts process, the Street Scene Manager and Housing Maintenance Manager attended the session to provide an overview of their area and how the new process will support them in actioning issues raised during the Walkabouts. The remainder of the session focused on agreeing recommendations and the timeline of the Working Group.</p>
3.0	<p><b><u>Proposed Name Change</u></b></p>
	<p>From the first session, it was clear that walkabouts are fundamentally a community function. This was reinforced during early discussions, leading the Working Group to endorse a name change. The term '<b>Community Walkabouts</b>' was agreed as a more accurate reflection of the scope and aims of the activity.</p>
4.0	<p><b><u>Supporting Documentation</u></b></p> <p>Throughout the working group, Transformation worked closely with Housing colleagues to review the documentation used for Estate Walkabouts. This highlighted a requirement to develop formal documentation.</p> <p>Meetings were held with the District Housing Manager, resulting in the development of the Terms of Reference (please see section 8.0, appendix 1) which clearly set out the purpose of Walkabouts, their intended outcomes, and how they support the community.</p> <p>Further research into approaches used by other organisations informed the development of the Overview and Checklist (please see section 8.0, appendix 1). This was shared with Tenancy Officers and Assistants, who expressed strong support and highlighted how it would simplify and strengthen the walkabout process.</p> <p>To improve efficiency and accountability, a live Central Tracker (please see section 8.0, appendix 2) was developed to store all issues in a single location. The tracker is structured in two phases providing a clear handover of responsibility from Housing to service areas. The sections below present the key functions of each document within the procedure package.</p>
4.1	<p><b>Terms of Reference</b></p> <p>The Terms of Reference was developed at an early stage of the Working Group in response to the need for greater clarity. Ongoing discussions highlighted inconsistencies in understanding the scope of the function, as well as unclear lines of responsibility and management arrangements, reinforcing the importance of a clearly defined and agreed framework.</p> <p>This document contains 7 sections.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Document overview</li> <li>2. Remit of Community Walkabouts</li> </ol>

3. Key officers
4. Reporting and accountability
5. Key responsibilities
6. Review and amendments of Terms of Reference
7. Appendices (containing Overview and Checklist and Management Structure)

This document contains all the necessary information for understanding what a Community Walkabout is and how they are conducted, from planning to reporting.

#### 4.2 **Overview and Checklist**

Discussions with colleagues highlighted that walkabouts were being conducted in a variety of ways, including inconsistencies in how issues were recorded and stored. As a result, it was important to understand how walkabouts are delivered by other organisations and community groups, providing a strong foundation on which to develop a more consistent approach.

The Overview document was developed to provide a high-level summary of each walkabout undertaken. The content of the Checklist was informed by colleagues' input on the information typically recorded during a walkabout and was shaped by research into approaches used by other organisations. This work led to the development of a standardised template. Tenancy Assistants were actively involved in developing this document, recognising their central role in delivering the walkabout process and ensuring the format and content were practical and fit for purpose.

The use of a standardised form establishes a formal process, promoting consistency across teams and ensuring that key information is captured at every walkabout.

#### 4.3 **Central Tracker**

Understanding how information from walkabouts was recorded following each activity was critical to progressing the work of the Working Group. Housing colleagues shared extensive insight, which clearly demonstrated the need for a single, central location to store all walkabout information. Discussions also identified reduced communication and collaboration between teams undertaking walkabouts and those responsible for actioning works, resulting in delays and uncertainty.

In response, a live Central Tracker was developed in partnership with colleagues across multiple service areas involved in the walkabout process. The tracker operates as a single document but is structured into two distinct phases.

**Phase 1** is the responsibility of the Tenancy Assistant undertaking the walkabout. The information captured mirrors the content of the Checklist and incorporates supporting evidence. Once the 'Service Area Reported To' field is completed, responsibility is formally transferred to the relevant service area to progress actions through Phase 2.

**Phase 2** is owned by the service area responsible for delivering the required works. Throughout the walkabout cycle, service areas are required to monitor and update the Central Tracker, providing progress updates and briefing their service area leads in advance of check-in sessions with the District Housing Manager.

The Central Tracker contains four tabs accessible to officers involved in walkabouts:

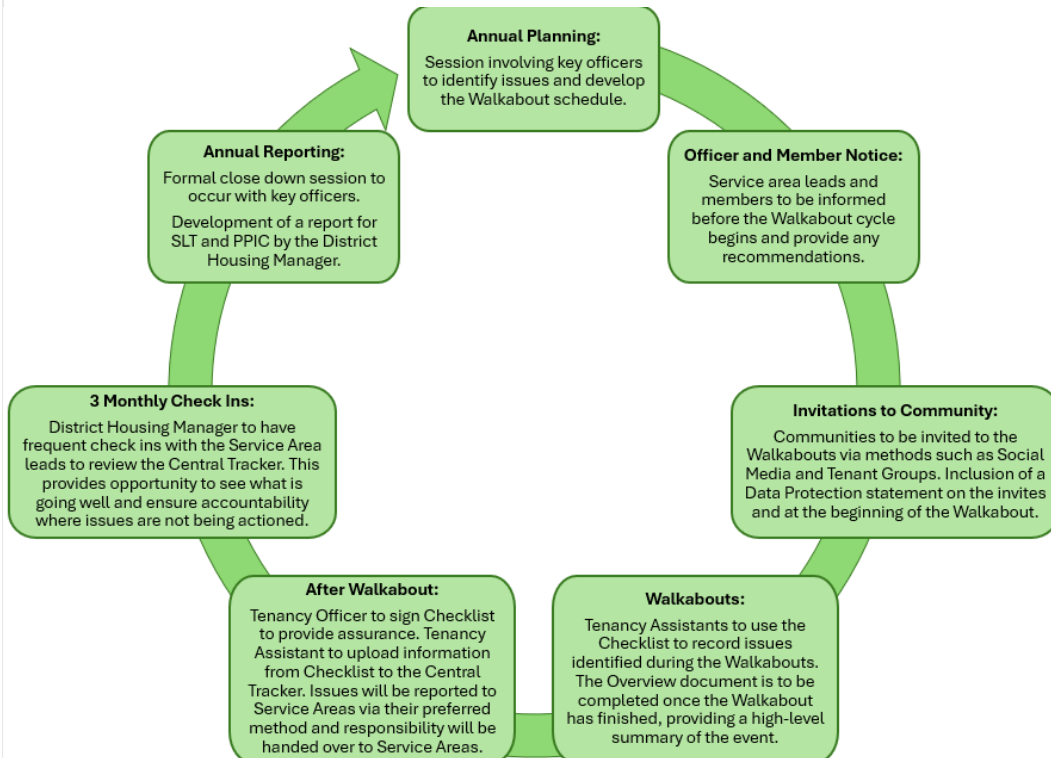
1. **Master** – where both Phase 1 and Phase 2 information is recorded
2. **Photo Register** – a central repository for photographs captured during walkabouts
3. **Reporting** – detailing preferred reporting methods for each service area, including direct reporting links
4. **Tracker Instructions** – guidance on linking images from the Photo Register to the Master tab

Maintaining a live document improves visibility, strengthens collaboration across teams, and promotes clear ownership of actions. Regular review of the tracker through scheduled check-ins supports accountability and ensures timely progression of issues identified during walkabouts.

**5.0 Revised Walkabout Process**

Reduced coordination across the walkabout process meant there was limited assurance, with inconsistency from planning through to delivery across teams. Introducing a coordinated approach was strongly supported by service areas, as it would provide greater clarity, consistency and confidence in how walkabouts are delivered. The diagram below illustrates the full cycle and how it supports a more effective and accountable approach.

**5.1**



**5.2** Developing a comprehensive annual walkabout schedule supports in strengthening oversight, improving coordination between teams, and ensuring issues are identified, progressed and reviewed in a more timely and structured way.

6.0	<p><b><u>Timeline and Next Steps</u></b></p> <p>To support the effective implementation of the revised walkabout approach, the following timeline is proposed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>13 April 2026</b> – Presentation of the Estate Walkabouts Working Group report to PPIC.</li> <li>• <b>1 June 2026</b> – Verbal update to PPIC following the commencement of Community Walkabouts and the implementation of the new process and supporting documentation.</li> <li>• <b>July 2026</b> – Commencement of three-monthly check-in sessions involving the District Housing Manager and relevant service area leads.</li> </ul>
7.0	<p><b><u>District Housing Manager Comments</u></b></p> <p>Walkabouts have been a tool used to enhance our estates for a number of years. They have traditionally involved, tenants, Officers and Members to work together to consider and resolve issues on their areas.</p> <p>Over the past years they have declined and Members particularly have noticed that issues raised have not always been addressed as swiftly as they would like. This has been for a number of reasons.</p> <p>During this process, Members and involved tenants have worked together with Officers to examine in great detail the mechanisms involved and have tried to identify the reasons for the process not fulfilling expectations. Members comments and ideas have been invaluable to give an insight into their own experiences. The Transformation Team have been a crucial driver for this process, and have suggested improvements in conjunction with Housing Staff, involved all stakeholders and produced innovative ways in which outcomes can be improved. In particular developing a tracker device which keeps everyone focused on improving performance. This swift process has allowed us to develop the walkabout programme for 2026.</p> <p>I believe this need improved process will ensure greater partnership working, both with internal and external partners, allow for greater and swifter resolutions to problems on estates and villages, and ensure that managers can monitor performance and identify issues before they become bigger problems.</p>
8.0	<p><b><u>Proposal/Options Considered</u></b></p>
8.1	<p>PPIC are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Endorse and agree with the re naming of the estate walkabouts.</b> The group agreed on the need for a more holistic approach, rebranding as ‘Community Walkabouts’ emphasises the inclusivity of walkabouts for the wider community. The rebrand reflects the scope of the walkabouts and the issues which are identified.</li> <li>b. <b>Endorse the reduction of the walkabout schedule.</b> The group agreed to reduce the number of Walkabouts from 30 to 12 in order to improve attendance and ensure that areas with the greatest need receive a formal Walkabout with</li> </ol>

sufficient time and focus. Areas requiring a formal Walkabout will be identified through the annual planning session, informed by data such as levels of antisocial behaviour and reports of fly tipping.

While the overall number of Walkabouts will be reduced, flexibility will be retained to undertake additional Walkabouts where Members consider this necessary. Members will be provided with the contact details of the relevant Senior Housing Officer to discuss local issues and agree the most appropriate course of action. Areas not identified for a formal Walkabout will be given alternative engagement approaches, such as street surgeries, tailored to the needs of the local community.

- c. **Review and Endorse the newly developed supporting documentation.** The group supported in developing three documents, the Terms of Reference (see appendix 1), the Overview and Checklist (see appendix 1), and the live Central Tracker (see appendix 2). The Overview and Checklist, and live Central Tracker are two documents which will support the consistent, internal management of identifying, recording and reporting issues identified during the Walkabouts. This maintains accountability and provides assurance that the key service areas are actioning issues and demonstrating the effectiveness of the Walkabout process.
- d. **Endorse the introduction of a refined assurance pathway.** The group agreed that, to strengthen performance accountability and ensure the effectiveness of Walkabouts, an annual report should be produced for SLT and the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee and included within the annual work programme. This report will be drafted and presented by the District Housing Manager, incorporating performance of the Service Areas in specific relation to number of works actioned from issues identified during Walkabouts. Incorporating trend data will occur overtime once the Walkabouts commencing with the new process are underway. This report will also include the detail of all engagement methods undertaken for areas which have been identified as not requiring a formal walkabout.
- e. **Endorse the timeline in Section 6.0.** To ensure the timely and effective delivery of walkabouts, the Working Group agreed that the timeline outlined in Section 6.0 offers the most appropriate and achievable approach.
- f. **Endorse** all recommendations and forward to Housing Services for implementation.

**9.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

<b>Implications Considered</b>			
<b>Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable</b>			
Financial	<b>NA</b>	Equality & Diversity	<b>Yes</b>
Human Resources	<b>NA</b>	Human Rights	<b>NA</b>
Legal	<b>NA</b>	Data Protection	<b>Yes</b>

		Digital & Cyber Security	NA	Safeguarding	NA
		Sustainability	NA	Crime & Disorder	NA
		LGR	NA	Tenant Consultation	Yes
9.1	<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	Participation in the walkabouts is open to all residents and members of the community. The revised approach places a clear emphasis on inclusion and accessibility, ensuring that individuals are not excluded due to personal circumstances or protected characteristics. Where specific needs are identified, such as mobility issues or other accessibility concerns, the route, format or pace of the walkabout will be adjusted to enable participation. This flexible approach supports equitable involvement, helps remove barriers to engagement, and ensures that the walkabouts remain welcoming and accessible to all members of the community.			
9.2	<b>Data Protection</b>	<p>Data Protection and Information Governance colleagues recommended that although no records about residents/tenants are held after walkabouts, previous data concerns have reinforced the need for clearer confidentiality arrangements. To prevent recurrence, it is advised that a short confidentiality statement be developed and shared with walkabout participants, potentially within the invitation, to provide assurance on how information will be handled. The following statement has been developed for inclusion on all walkabout invitations and to be reinforced at the beginning of walkabouts:</p> <p><i>‘Newark and Sherwood District Council will only use the information you provide for the purpose of this Community Walkabout. Your comments will be recorded anonymously and will <b>not</b> be made public in a way that could identify you.</i></p> <p><i>Further details of how the Council will manage your personal information are contained within the Privacy Notice which can be found on the Council's website: <a href="http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/privacynotice">www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/privacynotice</a>’</i></p> <p>This statement provides assurance that comments are collected anonymously and will not be published in a way which could identify the individual.</p>			
9.3	<b>Tenant Consultation</b>	Three Tenant Champions contributed to the Working Group, attending the second session to share their perspectives on Estate Walkabouts and provide valuable insight. A Tenancy Officer also attended all Working Group sessions, providing tenant-focused expertise throughout.			
	<b>Background Papers and Published Documents</b>	Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.			
	None				