

Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 21 April 2026
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier, Housing
 Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Housing, Health & Wellbeing
 Lead Officer: Terry Bailey - District Housing Manager

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report / Key Decision
Report Title	Newark Partnership Hub – A New Approach for Placed Based Partnership Working in Town Centre Areas
Purpose of Report	To provide a review on Chatham Court Hub, the use of the community resource considering the benefit it delivers within the locality against the financial commitment and to agree the future direction of the Council facility.
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) agree to refocus Chatham Court Hub to continue providing a base for the community but increase strategic partnership working in and around Newark Town Centre, specifically on high ASB hot spot housing and communal areas; b) agree to rename the facility “Newark Partnership Hub”; c) approve funding for 24 months as a pilot under its new remit and allow an application to the Pride of Place scheme; and d) note the continuation of HRA financial support of £11,000 per annum from existing budgets.
Alternative Options Considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing use of the facilities at Chatham Court Hub on the same basis for a further 12 months, post March 2026. • Wind-up and decommission the Hub and return to residential accommodation using capital budget of circa £40,000 from within the Investment Programme resources.
Reason for Recommendations	<p>To provide a wider focus for the community and strategic partnership working in and around Newark Town Centre.</p> <p><i>Ambition 4: Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, improving community feelings of safety</i></p>

	<i>Ambition 7: Be a top performing, modern accessible Council that gets its everyday services right for the residents and businesses it serves.</i>
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 In July 2020, Newark and Sherwood District Council received £550,000 from the Home Office’s Safer Streets fund to address crime and safety concerns in two local areas, including Chatham Court, Newark. This funding was awarded based on survey data showing that only 65% of Chatham Court residents felt safe during the day (compared to a 93% national average), dropping to just 16% after dark. Chatham Court also had the highest number of residential burglaries in the area over a three-year period.

A multi-agency project group was formed, focusing on four main objectives: community engagement, crime prevention, targeted policing, and environmental improvements. The Chatham Court Community Hub was created as part of the community engagement objective, converting a one-bedroom flat into an accessible office and community space, supported by neighbourhood capacity building.

The Hub opened in August 2021, with a total conversion cost of £24,272—partially funded by the Council’s development partner at the time. This was their social value contribution. The remainder came from Safer Streets funding, resulting in a net gain of £510,000 for the Council.

The initial three-year project ended in August 2024, with budgets secured until March 2026 (excluding decommissioning costs). The Hub’s running costs have been covered by the Housing Revenue Account.

An end of project survey was done by safer streets in the summer of 2021, which revealed positive outcomes and general feelings of increased safety following the interventions carried out during the project.

The initiative was also shortlisted for the ‘Transforming Lives’ category at the MJ Awards in June 2023.

- 1.2 Use of the Hub as a community resource has fluctuated, with several activities like ESOL classes, Inspire Education, Mind mental health group and Digital Workshop programmes coming to a natural end.

There was an intention from colleagues, both internally and externally to use the Hub for drop-in sessions as part of the Safer Streets project but this has been limited due to other pressures and commitments.

- 1.3 The Council collated data, as part of the safer street’s initiative, and continues to do so across the following themes:

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26 (To Q3)
# Visitors to the Hub	608	708	563	441	245
Satisfaction with the Hub	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Council staffing hours	167	133	222	169	139

As detailed above the numbers for 25/26 appear decreased, however the use of the Hub as a strategic touch base will encourage more staff and community partners to be present and use this as a work and meeting place. By default, joint projects and partnership working enhances the facility for agencies and the wider community as a whole. It is believed that where partners are strategically focussed on shared objectives, this facility can be the gateway for joining forces.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

2.1 Officer Preferred Option

To refocus Chatham Court Hub, providing a base for Partners and the community and increase partnership working in and around Newark Town Centre, renaming the facility “Newark Partnership Hub”

This will see a transformation into a wider Strategic base for dealing with anti-social behaviour and criminality as well as still allowing a community base to flourish in the area. The objectives of this “Partnership Gateway” would be to encourage joint working across the Police, Housing, Legal, Environmental Services and Public Protection to identify joint initiatives to tackle issues across the town centre, and in particular at key housing sites. It would be a place where Officers and Members can liaise to address items of specific concern but also one where the public could meet with agencies to give statements and share intelligence. This will not replace any other initiatives and joint working currently under way for general ASB but simply build on them and complement them where appropriate.

Looking at the figures from the profile provided by the Police, some of the criminal themes identified before the Safer Streets Initiative started are now creeping back into view. Burglary, public order and ASB are starting to show signs of increasing. This could be due in part to a lower Hub profile throughout 25-26. While still operating, the focus had shifted away from targeting specific criminal and anti-social incidents in these areas.

It is proposed that the Hub will change, having a wider lens bringing together agencies in ‘focus groups’ to tackle specific themes within all parts of the town but concentrating on Howes Court, Queens Court, Tithe Barn, and Chatham Court as well as other streets within the town.

The aim of the focus groups, working together with the Community and both internal and external partners on specific issues; encouraging synergy to achieve the best outcomes and resolutions. A community focus will remain on:

- Burglary prevention – This will be mainly signposting and issuing security devices to prevent break ins in partnership with colleagues both internally and externally.
- Improving public safety perception – This will build on what is already happening with local beat teams but increasing estate visibility from front line housing staff and partners.
- Neighbourhood improvements – Working with our Assets Team to put forward bids to make improvements to housing areas to tackle and design out crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Tackling ASB and supporting victims – Working closer together with our ASB Teams to provide joined up approach to help tackle nuisance behaviour and provide support with devices and referrals to victim care and other support agencies.
- Target hardening by using the Police’s Designing Out Crime Officers (formally Crime prevention)
- Highlighting and spearheading locally the ‘Report it Campaign’
- Providing localised awareness campaigns for Domestic Abuse, Waste Management, Dog control, Communal Living

The Council will ensure community buy in through initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch, working with CGL (drug and alcohol support partner) and Living Well Teams to support individuals and families experiencing challenges.

From a Housing perspective this further encases our commitment to embedding the Regulators Neighbourhood and Community Standard into the provision of services. The standard highlights the need for communication with tenants about the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of areas and how these roles will be delivered. It also provides focus on the ‘placed-based approach’ favoured by residents.

This standard requires councils to ensure that shared spaces are safe by working together with those that live and work in the area. As a landlord we have several key areas within the town which require a partnership approach to address the challenges. The Standard also puts a requirement on landlords for local cooperation, to highlight how we will work together to tackle ASB and hate incidents in neighbourhoods, where social housing is present. This partnership approach at a local level will assist in ensuring joint initiatives are delivered to meet the needs of local people.

How will it work?

It is suggested that the local Housing Team will provide a ‘Duty’ Officer each day on the patch. They will work systematically from 9-5 each day. The facility will have access across the board to agencies and be available for Police Beat Teams and others around the clock if needed, being aware of proximity of residents.

Each agency will take responsibility for a theme and focus groups will be formed to deep dive into each subject – creating an action plan for approaching resolutions for each area. Other areas of the council will be approached to support initiatives and assist with funding applications to move matters forward.

The Office facility will be available for printing and internet use for agencies who want to meet to further their work themes.

The use of the building is covered by the already gained planning permission as a community hub.

The initiative will also be supported by additional CCTV which is currently being installed in Tithe Barn/Queens Court and Howes Court areas due to the amount of nuisance that has been caused in those areas which will aid both investigations and help to prevent opportunist crime and ASB.

3.0 **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.

Implications Considered			
Yes – relevant and included / NA – not applicable			
Financial	Y	Equality & Diversity	Y
Human Resources	Y	Human Rights	N
Legal	Y	Data Protection	Y
Digital & Cyber Security	Y	Safeguarding	Y
Sustainability	Y	Crime & Disorder	Y
LGR	N	Tenant Consultation	Y

3.1 **Financial Implications - FIN25-26/760**

As stated in paragraph 2.1 the recommended proposal is to change the focus of the community hub. For this there will be minimal budget impact, and any changes in costs can be managed within existing budgets. There is currently a revenue budget of £11,000 that has been approved for 2026/27 and future years and there will be a request to carry forward underspends from 2025/26 - up to £3,200 to help with any minor improvements.

There is a possibility of a claim to the Pride in Place scheme. If the bid is successful, these funds would be used to deliver small upgrades to the building and its equipment. Should the application be unsuccessful, only essential upgrades would be undertaken, funded from within existing budgets.

Should alternative options be taken forward, any resulting financial implications would be subject to further appraisal and reported accordingly.

3.2 HR Implications HR2425/3709 SL

The report indicates that existing housing staff will be 'duty officer' on a 9-5 basis, it is not clear whether the duties that would be carried out by 'duty officers' are already within the scope of their job descriptions and whether this will be applied to all staff of a certain grade on a rota basis either by day or by week.

Before implementation it is recommended job descriptions are reviewed to ensure they adequately cover the duties related to being the 'duty officer'.

As most staff in housing services work on a flexitime basis consideration will need to be given to any caring or childcare responsibilities when requiring staff to work on a fixed 9-5 basis and are given adequate notice of their rota requirements so as to enable them to make necessary arrangements.

Engaging with staff early on to identify any potential issues will support a smooth implementation should the proposal be agreed.

Any issues arising should be discussed with the HR operations team before arrangements are firmed up to ensure that our family friendly policies have been duly applied.

3.3 Digital & Cyber Security

The recommendations outlined in this report do not present any additional digital or cyber security concerns. Although this is not referenced in the report, discussions with the lead officer included plans for the provision of Wi-Fi connectivity and the potential introduction of equipment for resident use as part of these proposals. The intended upgrade of broadband connectivity and Wi-Fi was planned to be included as part of the Digital Community Centres project and supports consistent, reliable internet access for staff members working remotely, enabling them to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

While the introduction of public-use equipment and internet access could, in future, support the Council's wider digital inclusion ambitions — for example by providing additional opportunities to engage tenants, access support and self-serve services, and facilitate digital skills training or supported drop-in activity delivered by, or with, partners — no provision for this has been established as part of the current proposal.

The location of Chatham Court presents a strong opportunity, as it is situated in an area experiencing multiple deprivation factors, which is a key consideration when identifying locations for enhanced, targeted digital inclusion activity.

Any consideration of public-use connectivity or equipment would require separate approval and additional resource investment from ICT & Digital and Information Governance to ensure an effective, secure and safe solution for residents. ICT & Digital already have agreed Digital Inclusion workstreams for 2026/27 onwards, including the potential refresh and redeployment of public-use devices, and any deployment of this nature at new or existing sites would need to align with those agreed programmes and timelines.

Where Wi-Fi is extended for public use, agreement to and adherence with the Council's Privacy Policy and Acceptable Use Policy would be required, alongside appropriate technical and cyber security measures. These requirements are mandatory for any public-use provision and would introduce additional cost and governance considerations, which would need to be addressed as part of any future proposal.

ICT & Digital, alongside IG, can provide advice on suitable approaches for connectivity and equipment; however, installation, ongoing maintenance and day-to-day support would not necessarily be provided by ICT, and clear ownership arrangements would need to be agreed should any public-use equipment be introduced.

3.4 Sustainability

Re-using the existing Hub avoids the carbon and resource impacts of decommissioning the unit or sourcing a new site, keeping the environmental footprint low. The proposal supports climate-conscious asset use by maximising the value of an existing facility.

3.5 Crime & Disorder

The Community Safety Team has been engaged with the Chatham Court Hub since its creation and has seen the benefits that the Hub has had to the area. The original creation of the Hub through Safer Streets Funding and the work it achieved, now requires a realignment of its provision moving forward. The proposals set out provides a resource for local residents and will build on improvements made to date and we are supportive of the proposals.

Comments from Inspector Ellam, District Commander Newark & Sherwood

As District Commander for Newark & Sherwood my focus remains on dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour not only through reactive policing activity, but also with a wider proactive problem-solving approach to promote feelings of safety and security within the community.

A resource such as the hub, in its new intended format, will support this endeavour by supporting and enhancing multi-agency collaboration, and ensuring services are readily accessible for the local community. The impact of the hub following its creation was significant for Chatham Court, and with the proposal including the intention to seek a wider audience by including Tithe Barn Court, Queens Court, and Howes Court, there is a potential for a significant impact on crime and ASB in some of our high-volume areas. I therefore support this proposal.

3.6 Tenant Implications / Engagement Update

At the most recent tenant meeting, the District Housing Manager presented the Chatham Court Hub report and provided further clarity on the proposed change in use—from a traditional community facility to a multi-agency partnership hub focused on addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB) and wider town-centre issues. Following this additional context, tenants revised their previous position. While they continue to feel that the hub is not ideally suited for general community use due to its size and configuration, they expressed support for trialling the revised multi-agency model. Tenants endorsed a time-limited trial of the hub in its new role, with the clear expectation that its impact and effectiveness—particularly in relation to ASB and local outcomes. Tenants asked for the performance to be reviewed after 12 months.

3.7 Data Protection Implications

The recommendations in this report don't appear to present any new data protection considerations. I recommend that the DPIA conducted prior to the launch of the hub is updated to reflect any change in processing activities.

3.8 Equality & Diversity Implications

The Chatham Court Hub serves a diverse community, with local demographics reflecting a mix of age groups, ethnic backgrounds, and varying socio-economic circumstances. Consideration has been given to ensuring the building is accessible to all users, including step-free access, accessible toilets, and clear signage throughout the premises. Maintaining the Hub as an inclusive space will help address potential barriers for those with disabilities or from underrepresented groups, supporting the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity and fostering greater community cohesion.

Legal Implications - LEG2627/5971

- 3.9 The Localism Act 2011 under section 1 gives the Council the "power to do anything that individuals generally may do", and may do it "for, or otherwise than for, the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area". These powers give the Council the power to provide funding to deliver projects such as the 'Newark Partnership Hub' as outlined within this report.

Any legal issues arising from co-occupation or co-use of the premise can be dealt with and formalised by way of legal agreements prepared by Legal Services as required. Similarly, any services procured to deliver the outcomes outlined within this report will be procured using the appropriate route to market and after seeking legal advice as and when required.

Background Papers and Published Documents

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