



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to: Annual Meeting of the Full Council - 19 May 2026

Relevant Committee: Councillor Rhona Holloway - Governance, General Purposes
Chair & LGR

Lead Officer: Francesca Whyley – Monitoring Officer

| Report Summary | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Report Title | Updates to the Council's Constitution |
| Purpose of Report | <p>To obtain Council approval following recommendation from the Governance, General Purpose & LGR Committee of the following amendments to the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Social Media Protocol for Membersii) Protocol for Member/Officer relationsiii) Local Code on Corporate Governanceiv) Tenant Engagement Board |
| Recommendations | <p>That Council approves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) the amended Social Protocol for Members at Appendix 1;b) the amended Protocol for Member/Officer relations at Appendix 2;c) the amended Local Code of Corporate Governance at Appendix 3;d) the amendments to the Tenant Engagement Board and associated terms of reference at Appendix 4;e) that the Monitoring Officer make the necessary changes to the Constitution to give effect to Council's decision; andf) that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to update the Local Code of Corporate Governance between annual reviews to give effect to any in year changes to governance arrangements. |
| Reason for Recommendation | <p>To ensure that the Council's Constitution remains up to date, reflects the recommendations following review of the above protocols by the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee and to support good governance.</p> |

1.0 Background

- 1.1 As part of the work programme for 2025/26, the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee (“the Committee”) have considered a number of changes to parts of the Council’s Constitution. This report provides a summary of the work undertaken on each proposed change to the Constitution.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Committee in November 2025, it was agreed that a Working Group would be established to review the following:
 - a) Arrangements for dealing with code of Conduct Complaints
 - b) Social Media Protocol for Members
 - c) Protocol for Member/Officer relations
 - d) Member Development Plan
- 1.3 The Working Group comprising of Councillor Linda Dales (Chair), Councillor Penny Rainbow, Councillor Andy Freeman, Councillor Paul Peacock, Councillor Kay Smith and Councillor Jean Hall met in person in January 2026 to review documents a), b) and d) above. Document c) was circulated separately by email and considered by the working group outside a formal meeting.
- 1.4 At its meeting in February 2026, the Committee approved the amended Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints and the Member Development Plan Document. The Committee also considered the proposed changes to the Social Media Protocol for Members and after some proposed changes, recommended the document for Council adoption as it forms part of the Constitution.
- 1.5 At its meeting in April 2026, the Committee considered the final document considered by the Working Group which was the Protocol for Member/Officer relations, this document was recommended to Council for adoption.
- 1.6 Also at the April meeting, the Committee considered an update to the Council’s Local Code of Corporate Governance and proposed changes to the current Tenant Engagement Board. Having discussed both items and making some recommendations to further amend, the Committee recommended both Constitutional changes be approved by Council.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered

2.1 Social Media Protocol for Members

The current Social Media Protocol for Members forms part of the Council’s Constitution (section F). Work to review this document began earlier in the Autumn in consultation with the Communications team. The Protocol has been essentially re-written and has been prepared having regard to the Local Government Association’s Social Media Guidance which is written in a clear and concise way, providing guidance and support for frequent and non-frequent users of social media.

The updated Social Media Protocol promotes the use of social media by Councillors as well as providing guidance on how to use social media safely, including advice on privacy settings and disclosure of personal information. The Protocol also covers the responsibilities of Councillors using social media and the higher level of scrutiny that such posts come under. The Protocol is clear that Councillors are responsible for content posted on their accounts and stresses the importance of accuracy in posting. The Protocol also references which sections of the Code of Conduct may be relevant when considering social media posts. The updated Protocol is at **Appendix 1** and has been developed with significant input from the Working Group and the Committee. It is proposed that the updated document is agreed by Council.

2.2 Protocol for Member/Officer Relations

The Member/Officer Protocol has been significantly altered from the current version contained within the constitution (Part F). The changes have been made having regard to the Local Government Association Guidance on Member/Officer protocols and provides clear guidance on the distinction between the role of officers and the role of members and some practical examples of the dos and don'ts of member/officer relationships. The updated protocol is at **Appendix 2**.

The protocol has been developed having regard to member and officer Code's of Conduct and provides a clear explanation as to the importance of good member/officer relations and the significance of good relations in ensuring strong governance. The Working group and Committee were supportive of the changes made and it is proposed that the updated document is approved by Council.

2.3 Local Code of Corporate Governance

The Local Code of Corporate Governance should set out the governance structures the Council has in place to demonstrate how it complies with the Core principles and sub-principles of good governance as provided by CIPFA/SOLACE guidance. The code is a 'living document' in that it must be periodically reviewed and amended to ensure that it satisfies the changing financial and corporate environment. The Local Code should be comprehensive and provide evidence of the Council's alignment with good governance principles. It supports the Annual Governance Statement which provides assurance based on the core arrangements listed in the local code.

This Council has included its Local Code of Corporate Governance within the Constitution at section H9. The current version of the Code aligns with the seven core principles of good governance but does not reflect changes in governance arrangements across the organisation in recent years including following recommendations at peer review and changes to committees and governance arrangements.

The proposed changes to the Code have been prepared in consultation with Senior Leadership Team members and other Senior Managers and reflect current arrangements in place. As this is a living document, it is proposed that whilst Council agree the updated version at **Appendix 3**, that a delegation be given to the Monitoring Officer to amend the document in-year if necessary, so that any changes in governance are not left until annual review.

2.4 Tenant Engagement Board

The Tenant Engagement Board and its terms of reference are set out in the Council's Constitution in Section 3 of Part B – Public Participation (Page B6) and section 3.4 of Part B- Public Participation (Page B7). The current governance arrangements for tenant engagement have been in place since 2021 but have now been reviewed to ensure tenants continue to have a voice and influence. TPAS (leading tenant engagement specialists) in partnership with tenants, officers and tenant engagement team, have co-designed a new structure for tenant engagement.

This new structure has been considered by the Policy & Performance Improvement Committee and, as a change to the Constitution was required, the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee.

The proposal, supported by both Committees, is to replace the Tenant Engagement Board with a Tenant Influence & Assurance Board. This board has a higher membership (from 10 to 12 Members), and is made up of Councillors, tenants and officers. The proposed make up and terms of reference for the new Board (TIAB) are set out at **Appendix 4** and have been updated following input from Committee members. The role of the new TIAB has been redefined, this brings forward a commitment to a tenant chair of the board, increased tenant representation, the role of the Board to consider data and determine topics for scrutiny and, manage the agenda.

The TIAB provides a stronger influence and assurance body, explicitly linked to transparency, accountability and co-production, shifting from functional remit to strategic oversight and assurance. There are clear explanations for different roles and a move toward sustainable, respectful and inclusive governance.

It is proposed that Council support the changes to the Constitution to give effect to the new arrangements. The reference to the current Tenant Engagement Board and terms of reference will need updating in the Constitution.

It is proposed that authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to make all necessary changes to the Constitution.

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 | Yes | Equality & Diversity | Yes |
| Human Resources | Yes | Human Rights | N/A |
| Legal | Yes | Data Protection | N/A |
| Digital & Cyber Security | N/A | Safeguarding | N/A |
| Sustainability | N/A | Crime & Disorder | N/A |
| LGR | N/A | Tenant Consultation | Yes |

Financial Implications (FIN26-27/1586)

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report and the changes proposed.

Legal Implications (LEG26/27/9570)

- 3.2 Any changes to the Constitution must be agreed by Full Council. All changes proposed have been undertaken with Monitoring Officer and Legal input.

The review of the Social Media Protocol has been undertaken with input from the Communications team and with regard to data protection, data security and safeguarding requirements.

HR Implications

- 3.3 The Protocol on Member/Officer Relations has been developed in consultation with the Business Manager of HR & Training. In particular, advice was provided on other policies and requirements in relation to the Council's duty as an employer to ensure the wellbeing and health and safety of staff.

Equalities

- 3.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the revised Tenant Engagement Framework to ensure it is fair, inclusive, and accessible to all tenants, supporting legal duties and removing barriers to participation. This can be found at **Appendix 5**.
- Framework purpose and approach: The framework establishes a clearer, consistent method for tenant involvement, strengthening tenant voices and offering multiple engagement routes to accommodate varying abilities, time, and confidence levels.
 - Consideration of protected characteristics: The assessment covers impacts on tenants across all protected characteristics, including age, sex, disability, race, religion, and additional NSDC-specific groups such as carers and care leavers.
 - Identified impacts and mitigations: Positive impacts include clearer structure and multiple participation methods, while mitigations address potential exclusion from digital or written engagement, incentive imbalances favouring confident participants, and under-representation by monitoring participation and targeted outreach.

- Wider considerations and monitoring: The framework addresses socio-economic challenges through flexible, accessible engagement, supports human rights by enabling tenant influence, requires staff training for inclusivity, and includes ongoing monitoring to ensure fairness as the framework is implemented.

Tenant Consultation

- 3.5 Tenants have co-designed the revised engagement framework alongside staff and TPAS and are fully supportive of the changes to the Constitution to facilitate this improved structure.

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.

Governance General Purposes & LGR Agendas – February and April 2026
Policy & Performance Improvement Committee Report – 13.04.26