

2025 / 2026



POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

SERVING PEOPLE, IMPROVING LIVES



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Our Residents (2021 Census):

A resident population of **122,956** made up of **50.8% female** and **49.2% male**. Newark and Sherwood is the largest district in Nottinghamshire with an area of 251 square miles (or 651 Sq. kilometres).

Newark and Sherwood has an ageing population. **6.2%** of the district's population are between 70 and 74. This is **1.2% higher** than the English average.

In 2011, **19.2%** of the district's population was over 65. This has risen by **3.4%** and in 2021, with **22.6%** of the district's population being over 65. This is predicted to rise further, with **27.7%** of the district's population set to be 65 or above by 2040.

17.1% of the district's population are schoolchildren and full-time students. There are **53,331** dwellings, of which around 10% are owned by the District Council (social housing).

Our services

For every £1 a resident pays in Council Tax, 7.4p is allocated to NSDC, with the remaining funds going to Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue and Parish/Town Councils.

We deliver a wide range of services for our residents, and the diagram below summarises these.



We are also a landlord to over 5,500 Council homes and in this role we conduct all housing management functions such as allocating tenancies, undertaking repairs and maintenance, maintaining housing estates and collecting rent.

FOREWORD

I am delighted to share this report, which outlines the efforts of the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee. Within this report, you'll find details about the work carried out by Councillors throughout the last year, along with an emphasis on the outcomes those actions have achieved.

Over the past year, the Committee has worked in close collaboration with officers to facilitate the Council's business. Initiatives such as the introduction of Council Tax Support for Terminally Ill Residents and Simpler Recycling have highlighted the Committee's commitment to addressing key issues. The Committee has provided constructive input aimed at improving outcomes for residents, while consistently offering valuable challenges and recommendations to the Cabinet.

The impact of Local Government Reform (LGR) is increasingly evident in the reports and presentations received by the Committee, as well as in the questions directed to officers and portfolio holders. This will remain a significant aspect of the Committee's work in the year ahead.

The Committee continues to prioritise the enhancement of tenants' quality of life. Efforts include boosting tenant engagement and implementing policies designed to strengthen compliance and safety within our tenants' homes, including two gas safety policies and a new policy for passenger lifts, stair lifts, and hoists.

I would also like to thank the Councillors who took part in the working groups, especially the 'Life Chances for Girls' group. Their input generated strong recommendations that officers will take forward over the coming year.

I sincerely thank the officers who support this Committee for their ongoing energy and enthusiasm. I also want to acknowledge my Vice Chair, Cllr Neil Ross, for his support throughout the past year, along with all the officers and partners who have made presentations to the Committee.

I look forward to another year on this Committee, working to achieve better results for all customers, residents, and businesses in Newark and Sherwood.



Cllr Mike Pringle
Chair of the Policy & Performance
Improvement Committee



Cllr Neil Ross
Vice-Chair of the Policy & Performance
Improvement Committee

OVERVIEW OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE (PPIC)

Our Policy and Performance Improvement Committee (PPIC) fulfils the 'scrutiny' function required in the Cabinet model, as well as serving as an integral role in improving the work of the Council. All meetings are streamed live and are 'open meetings,' meaning public and press can attend. The Committee meets at least six times a year.

PPIC itself is not a decision-making body, it offers recommendations to the relevant Portfolio Holder's. These recommendations help improve policies, services, and their implementation. PPIC also contributes to policy and strategy development and oversees partnership work with regular input from the Nottinghamshire Police Authority, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

PPIC may also choose to look at a specific issue, decision, or topic by adding a review to the work programme. For example, they may review a service pilot, scrutinise progress of a key project or review an area where performance is not as expected. This can be done after a decision has been made or they may choose to feed into the decision making by reviewing the topic to ensure a decision is well made.

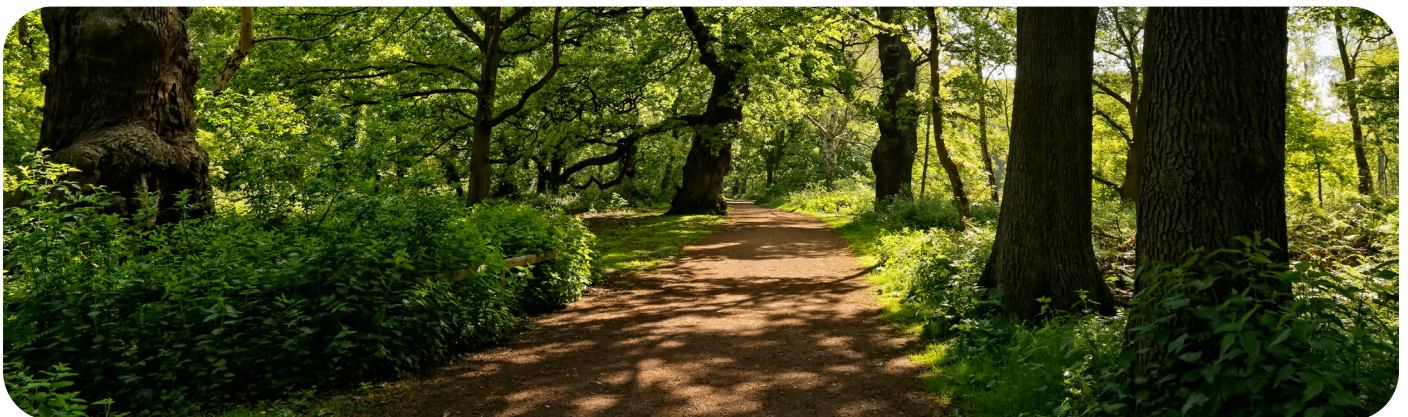
Where more detailed work is required, such as the development of a policy or the detailed review of a service area, a working group is set-up to undertake this work. Working Groups meet 3 to 5 times, listen to evidence, and examine data, then develop recommendations which are forwarded for a relevant decision.

PPIC also has statutory powers to scrutinise decisions that Cabinet is planning to take and those that have already been taken. In practice much of their work is a form of scrutiny, including inviting Portfolio Holders to present at PPIC.

Composition of membership

PPIC consists of 15 Councillors, including a chair and vice chair, who are appointed by full Council, which reflect the political balance of the Council. The Committee has had a busy year examining a broad range of issues affecting the Council, its services, and Local people. PPIC has also had a watching brief of all items going to Cabinet for decision, raising queries as appropriate and providing comments. This has led to a variety of topics being reviewed, both in Committee and by working groups. Any Councillors can submit a topic to be examined, and apart from Cabinet members, any Councillor can request to join a working group.

A work programme is developed for the year but has suitable capacity to ensure issues can be considered as they arise.



2025/26 in numbers

Committee Member - 15



Substitute Members - 7



Meetings - 9



Reports/presentations - 68



Working groups - 3



Councillors attended PPIC or Working Groups - 33 out of 39 Councillors



REVIEW OF WORK

PPIC have been involved in developing and shaping Council policies and strategies, questioning the Council's performance, and driving improvement to services. During the year PPIC received information in the form of presentations, updates, and reports. Reported below is a snapshot of the work PPIC have been doing in the last 12 months, separated into the 4 key areas that demonstrate PPIC's responsibilities:

1. Working groups
2. Shaping policy and strategy
3. Driving service improvement
4. Scrutinising and questioning performance.



1. Working groups

Working groups are set up to conduct detailed pieces of work, such as a piece of development or a review, outside of the main Committee agenda. So that this can happen, any working group must have a clear aim as part of its setup. The aims must:

- Improve the quality of life of residents, or
- Enable value for money of local services.

The topic of a working group can be proposed by the Committee or by any of our 39 Councillors completing a 'Topic Request Form.' This form will be considered by officers who will add further information as required before being considered by PPIC.

Working groups consist of up to nine Councillors (excluding Cabinet Members) who volunteer, with the final membership agreed by the Chair of PPIC. Each working group will be chaired by a member of the Committee. Working groups can be put in place to develop a policy or strategy, undertake a piece of development work such as shaping a bid, or undertake a review of an area experiencing poor performance.

Three working groups were completed in **2025-26**.

Out of remit activities (Dec 2025)

The Out of Remit Activities Working Group was established following a topic request submitted in January 2025, driven by concerns regarding increasing pressure on Council resources, staff workload, and findings from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.

The review was guided by the approved Review Initiation Document and sought to define and identify activities delivered beyond the expected remit of a District Council, focusing on mapping non-statutory services and testing the principle of "if we didn't provide this service, who would?"

The objectives of the working group were to:

- Define what is 'out of our remit'.
- Map all activities/commitments within the Community plan (and wider where applicable).
- Scrutinise all commitments that fall within this category.

Across a series of sessions, the group reviewed the Community Plan and undertook detailed "deep dives" into flood resilience and public health, exploring both the Council's statutory responsibilities and the extent of its wider discretionary and community leadership role, including the financial and operational implications of these activities.

The working group, informed by the key findings across all four sessions, made four key recommendations:

- 1. The Leader of the Council to formally write to the Mayor of the East Midlands Combined County Authority regarding flooding.**
- 2. Invite the Environment Agency to attend PPIC to clarify priorities and partnership working.**
- 3. Ensure continuity of public health services by appointing the Senior Health Improvement Officer to the LGR implementation group.**
- 4. Invite Planning Infrastructure colleagues to present to PPIC on areas where activity extends beyond typical district council responsibilities.**

Life Chances for Girls (Jan 2026)

In February 2025, PPIC received a topic request form concerning 'Life Chances for Girls'. A report by the charity Plan International highlighted that Newark and Sherwood was among the bottom 20% of places in the UK to be a girl. The statistics found that women and girls in the district spend 10 fewer years in good health, 25% of girls leave school without achieving good GCSE results, one in three live in poverty, and women earn 23% less than men.

The objectives of the working group were to:

- Collate data from Plan International and other sources to understand the extent of the issue for Newark and Sherwood, including any specific challenges or disadvantages.
- Complete a scoping exercise to understand the extent of the activities currently being provided by the Council and partners, including signposting and promotion.
- Explore if and how there can be changes, or work in this area that can be done differently to intervene, improve, and advocate the life chances for girls and young women in the district by the Council and by our partners.

The working group convened on five occasions between April and September 2025 drawing together insight and expertise from officers across the Council and external partners. The variety of attendees allowed the group to gain perspective and a deeper understanding of the district, recognising that the strength of local support networks and access to services can directly affect quality of life and determine whether individuals can fully realise their rights. The developed recommendations are organised under four main themes:

- 1. Feelings of safety**
- 2. Health and wellbeing**
- 3. Empowerment and future prospects**
- 4. Communication and Engagement**

PPIC endorsed the recommendations in January 2026 and forwarded it to Cabinet. In January 2026, Cabinet endorsed the recommendation from the working group.

Since the recommendations were endorsed, work has continued to maintain momentum and drive delivery. This has included partner meetings to support action owners and the development of website and intranet materials to make progress visible and accessible.

Regular contact with partners has supported more qualitative performance reporting and exploration of funding opportunities. Work is also under way with local schools to share materials and build future collaboration. A follow-up report on progress against the recommendations will be presented to PPIC in October 2026.



Estate Walkabouts (Apr 2026)

In June 2025, PPIC received a formal topic request form concerning a review of the 'Estate Walkabouts'. 'Estate Walkabouts' offer an excellent opportunity for Tenants to support NSDC's efforts in keeping our communities clean, well-maintained, and free from issues. During these walkabouts, Tenants have the chance to connect with fellow Tenants, staff, and representatives from agencies dedicated to upholding high standards in our neighbourhoods.

Estate Walkabouts are designed to foster a strong sense of community, ensure transparency in the Council's processes, and involve residents in the decisions that affect their living environment.

The objectives of the working group were to:

- Review the existing walkabout process.
- Identify key issues and areas to improve the current approach.
- Develop and agree a consistent, standardised process.

The working group convened on three occasions between January and March 2026, incorporating input from Councillors, tenant champions, and relevant officers from different teams across the Council. The key areas of discussion influencing the recommendations included delivery and documentation, resident and organisation engagement, accountability, and action tracking/feedback.

The collective contribution of the working group enabled the endorsement of the following recommendations and agreed the start of the new walkabout cycle with the revised approach.

- Endorse and agree with the re-naming of the estate walkabouts, to 'Community Walkabouts.'
- Endorse the reduction of the walkabout schedule.
- Review and endorse the newly developed supporting documentation.
- Endorse the introduction of a refined assurance pathway.
- Endorse the agreed timeline.

These recommendations were endorsed by PPIC in April 2026.

Following PPIC's approval of the Community Walkabouts in April 2026, staff have been trained on the new process and quality standards. Two pilot walkabouts have been completed successfully, and a full programme of 12 walkabouts has now been scheduled and communicated. Two Community Walkabouts have been completed in Clipstone and Hawtonville. Feedback has been positive, with the revised approach improving flexibility, targeting, partnership working, and local engagement.

The next stage will trial a new app to improve delivery, data capture, and overall service efficiency.



2. Shaping Policies and Strategies

Corporate Annual Budget Strategy for 2026/27 (June 2025)

The Committee reviewed a report from the Business Manager for Financial Services which detailed the proposed General Fund, Capital, and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Strategy for 2026/27. The report informed Councillors ahead of the detailed budgeting process. It outlined that this process would determine both the Council Tax and HRA rent levels for the year.

The strategy incorporated existing financial policies and budget principles, which had been reviewed and updated as needed. It also referenced the current Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), approved in March 2025, including a projected Council Tax increase of 1.94% for Band D properties.

Additionally, the report summarised the key assumptions underpinning the draft 2026/27 budget, such as staff costs, employer pension contributions, inflation, fees and charges, and interest rates.

Outcome

Councillors agreed to recommend Cabinet to approve the overall General Fund, Capital & HRA Budget Strategy for 2026/27, they also noted:

- The consultation process with elected Councillors.
- That Budget Officers continue to work on the assessment of various budget proposals affecting services for consideration in setting the Council's budget.
- That Budget Managers work with Finance Officers in identifying further efficiency savings, increasing income from fees and charges and in identifying new sources of income.
- Recommend to Cabinet that the policies and principles on Budgeting, Council Tax, Reserves & Provisions, Charging, Value for Money be reviewed with any recommendations being forwarded to Council for consideration.

Cabinet approved the overall General Fund on 8 July 2025 and agreed the recommendations made by PPIC.

Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy Consultation (June 2025)

The Committee reviewed the report from the Business Manager for Planning Policy & Infrastructure and the Ecology & Biodiversity Lead Officer, regarding the creation and consultation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) by Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC).

The report detailed NCC's appointment as the Responsible Authority by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, with NSDC and other local bodies acting as supporting authorities. The key requirements for the LNRS of being evidence-based, locally led, and collaborative, were outlined, along with the process for drafting and adopting the strategy.

Outcome

During a positive discussion, Councillors raised several points, including suggestions to expand mapped areas at Lowfield Lane's southern buffer zone, with assessments planned for potential inclusion of a grassland site. Further questions were posed about safeguards for maintaining mapped areas, especially those under private ownership and it was clarified that while landowners could request removal from mapping, protected and wildlife sites would remain safeguarded locally. The possibility of the Council purchasing land to enhance biodiversity was

also considered, with a review of current landholdings to follow.

The Chair requested ongoing updates to the Committee on the consultation's progress and the strategy's formal adoption.

Councillors agreed to recommend to Cabinet to approve the strategy as the Council's consultation response.

The strategy went to Cabinet on 14 October where they raised no objection to the proposed Nottinghamshire & Nottingham LNRS being published and that officers prepare any guidance necessary regarding usage of the LNRS in relation to planning development and the preparation of biodiversity net gain assessments.

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Review and Revised Strategy (Jan 2026)

The Committee received an update on the review and revision of the Council's Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EEDI) Strategy. The revised Strategy was presented by the Business Manager for Transformation & Service Improvement.

The review was prompted by the need to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and to demonstrate the Council's ongoing commitment to fairness and inclusion. An audit indicated that, while statutory requirements were being met, some documentation in policies and procedures needed improvement.

A targeted action plan was developed and all actions within this plan have now been completed.

Outcome

During discussions, it was clarified that all Council buildings are accessible, some of the older properties had required retrofitting, such as the Palace Theatre, which now has lift access. In addition, signage for toilet facilities across the estate is now compliant with the latest Supreme Court ruling.

Councillors noted the changes made to the Council's EEDI approach and that the revised Strategy be endorsed and recommended to Cabinet for approval.

In February 2026, Cabinet approved the EEDI Strategy.



Newark Town Centre Masterplan and Design Code Update (Feb 2026)

The Committee reviewed a report, jointly presented by the Town Centre & Visitor Economy Manager and the Senior Planner, to update Councillors on the Newark Town Centre Masterplan and Design Code.

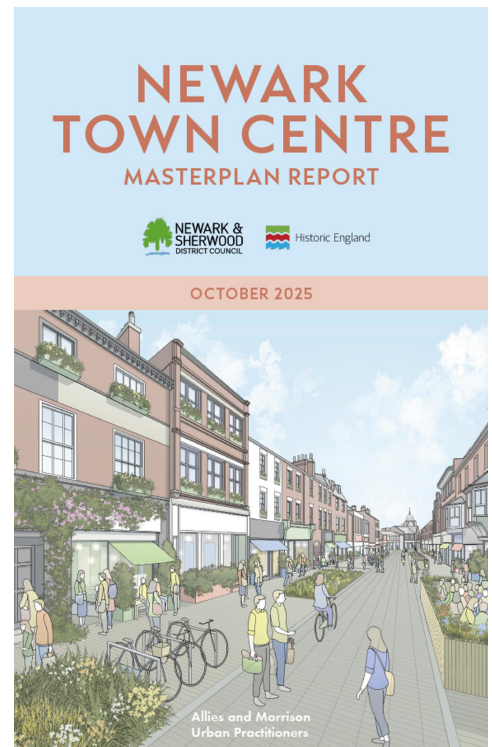
In Autumn 2023, NSDC partnered with Historic England to develop the Masterplan and Design Code, with Allies & Morrison, delivering the programme and overseeing public consultation. Having the same team develop both documents together provided consistency and efficiency.

The Masterplan is organised around six key themes:

- 1. Revitalising the Market Place to create a safe and flexible space.**
- 2. Supporting a strong economy and promoting town centre living.**
- 3. Encouraging education, skills training, and creative industries.**
- 4. Enhancing riverside leisure and improving flood resilience.**
- 5. Improving walking, cycling, and public transport connections.**
- 6. Celebrating Newark's history and cultural assets through interpretation and events.**

Outcome

Councillors recommended to Cabinet to adopt the Newark Town Centre Masterplan and Design Code (the latter through a revision to the Newark Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan). This was approved by Cabinet in February 2026.



Biodiversity Strategy & Biodiversity Report (March 2026)

The Committee reviewed a report from the Business Manager for Planning Policy & Infrastructure, which outlined a proposed Biodiversity Strategy and presented the legally required Biodiversity Report for 2026-2027, correcting an earlier reference to 2024-2025.

The Cabinet had previously approved the publication of the Biodiversity Report in June 2024, with a commitment that the final agreed actions would be submitted for Cabinet approval within three months of the report's publication.

The Council is legally required to publish a Biodiversity Report, with the first reporting period ending no later than 1 January 2026, and all reports must be published within 12 weeks following the end of each reporting period.

Outcome

Councillors endorsed the amended Council's Biodiversity Strategy and the publication of the proposed Biodiversity Report 2024-2025 and that future Biodiversity Reports will be published annually.

Customer Experience Strategy 2023/2027 Progress Report (Apr 2026)

The Committee received an update from the Business Manager for Customer Services on the progress of embedding the Customer Experience Strategy within the Council.

The report outlined the Strategy's integration into the Council's Community Plan, which allows performance monitoring of customer interactions. Key achievements included:

- Embedding the Strategy across Council operations and culture.
- Revitalising the Residents' Panel to better reflect community demographics for improved services.
- Expanding accessible online services, while maintaining phone and in-person options.
- Enhancing customer satisfaction measures through regular surveys.

NSDC's Performance Management Framework supports these efforts by tracking awareness, engagement, service delivery, and resolution to inform improvements. Upcoming actions involve further customer service training, setting service standards for different business units, and greater promotion of the Customer Promise.

Outcome

Councillors noted the ongoing work and the progress made of the delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy 2023/2027.



Heating & Gas Servicing Policy (April 2026)

The Gas Meter Make Safe Policy (April 2026)

Passenger Lifts, Stair Lifts & Hoists Policy (April 2026)

The Committee reviewed three reports from the Business Manager for Building Safety & Asset Management, who provided an update on the development of the Heating & Gas Servicing Policy, The Gas Meter Make Safe Policy and the Passenger Lifts, Stair Lifts & Hoists Policy.

These policies form part of a broader suite of compliance measures aimed at ensuring that NSDC adopts a robust approach to both regulatory compliance and customer safety. These Policies would align to current legislation, regulation, and industry best practice to ensure that services delivered were in line with the Policy and were both effective and efficient.

Outcome

During discussions, Councillors asked a number of questions including the circumstances under which it would be necessary to mechanically seal a gas meter. The Business Manager responded that any gas meter which had not received a service within the required timescale would be considered unsafe, and this would be treated as an emergency by the Council.

Councillors sought assurances that, should such a course of action be necessary, every effort would be made to consider the practicalities of leaving a property without a gas supply. In response, Councillors were advised that a very detailed assessment would be undertaken before such action was taken and that often the threat of the meter being capped was sufficient for the situation to be resolved.

Councillors noted and endorsed all three policies to ensure legal compliance and improve service delivery in line with legislation, regulation, and industry best practice and that it is recommended to Cabinet for approval.



3. Driving Service Improvement

Review of the Executive Forward Plan

It is a standard item that the Committee reviews the Council's Executive Forward Plan and the minutes from Cabinet. This enables the Committee to see what decisions are being made across the Council. To review and comment on progress & performance and to request more information and updates from officers as required.

Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleeper Strategy and Delivery Plan (2024-2029) Annual Update Year one (June 2025).

The Committee reviewed a report on the first year's progress of the Council's Homelessness Prevention & Rough Sleepers Strategy 2024-2029 by the Business Manager for Regeneration & Housing Strategy and a Homeless Strategy Officer.

The report highlighted the statutory requirement for a homelessness review and strategy and the creation of a multi-agency delivery plan.

It set out the key activities completed so far:

- **Leading the Rough Sleeper Initiative.**
- **Working with the Safeguarding Adults Board.**
- **Piloting a homeless women's census.**
- **Developing a Prison Release Protocol.**
- **Hosting an event on homelessness prevention.**
- **Commissioning a supported housing needs assessment.**

Outcome

During discussion, Councillors enquired about the launch date for the Prison Release Protocol, the inclusion of timelines for outstanding actions, and opportunities for accelerating additional items in the plan.

Officers responded that timelines could be included in future updates and that further priorities would be considered as funding allowed. The Committee also discussed the distinct experiences of homelessness among women and noted that National rollout of a women's census initiative was forthcoming. The Chair of the Committee requested regular updates on delivery plan actions.

Councillors noted the progress against the delivery plan.

Simpler Recycling, National Policy Changes (Sept 2025)

The Committee reviewed a report from the Waste & Recycling Manager outlining NSDC's progress towards the new National recycling requirements and their anticipated impact. The report presented key elements of the 'Government's Simpler Recycling Strategy,' detailing phased implementation over two and a half years, with food waste collections delayed by an additional 18 months due to contractual reasons. The timelines and future changes for both commercial and domestic waste collection were summarised, as well as the financial implications.

Outcome

Councillors discussed the opportunity for cost savings and efficiencies, suggesting that food waste collections could be managed as a county-wide scheme, particularly given the forthcoming local government reorganisation. The Waste & Recycling Manager explained that the new collections would be implemented prior to reorganisation but confirmed that further efficiencies might be realised afterwards.

Councillors raised some concerns about safe disposal of batteries and vapes, with a request for clearer public guidance. NSDC collects batteries if they are left on the bin lids in carrier bags for safe disposal at the Veolia plant, but there is currently no provision for vape collection, which has led to incidents of fires in collection vehicles.

The Committee agreed that recycling processes should be made as simple as possible for residents. Queries about bin sizes for new properties highlighted ongoing challenges, including storage issues, and the Waste & Recycling Manager noted the need for a future review of waste composition.

In closing the debate, the Chair welcomed the report and requested that continued updates be provided to the Committee. Councillors noted the current status of the project and that further update reports be provided to the Committee.

Since the report went to the Committee, the introduction of simplified recycling has been effective, with notable increases in commercial recycling and a significant reduction in domestic recycling contamination rates. Efforts are ongoing to standardise food waste collection across the county, and discussions about implementing a vape drop-off point are in progress, although a decision is yet to be reached.



UK Shared Prosperity Fund & Rural England Prosperity Fund Update (Oct 2025)

The Committee received a presentation from the Business Manager for Economic Growth & Visitor Economy, the Economic Development Grants & Programmes Manager and the Economic Growth Officer. They outlined the progress, delivery, and future of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF).

The update covered a variety of projects supported across the District, including grant funding and business assistance, with a focus on ensuring long-term sustainability after the initial funding period.

It was noted that the UKSPF and REPF programme is scheduled to conclude in March 2026. Any remaining functions and funds will be transferred to EMCCA. Councillors were receptive to the report and specifically requested information about green and eco projects that had received support.

Outcome

Councillors noted the updates and achievements to date, highlighting the opportunities linked to potential future UKSPF/REPF investment, while acknowledging the ongoing uncertainty around programme funding beyond March 2026, as outlined in this report.



Affordable Housing Delivery Report 2024/25

The Committee received an update from the Business Manager for Healthy Places and the Senior Housing Strategy & Development Officer who outlined the affordable housing delivery across the district for the 2024/25 financial year and progress on the five-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Development Programme was detailed.

Key points included the collaborative design of affordable housing with Planning Officers to ensure developments are both acceptable and desirable for future residents. An Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is being prepared to guide future design and planning decisions. The Council now retains 100% of receipts from these developments.

Outcome

The Committee discussed the Section 106 (S106) agreement process. While the process can be challenging, particularly regarding scheme viability, Councillors recognised the substantial community benefits these agreements can deliver.

Councillors noted the affordable housing delivery report and the progress with the Council's five-year HRA development Programme.

Annual Outturn, Health Improvement & Community Development Teams (Oct 2025)

The Senior Health Improvement Officer and the Senior Community Relations Officer presented an overview of the Health Improvement & Community Development Teams' delivery for 2024-25. Key activities included running grant schemes, responding to the cost of living crisis, engaging under-represented groups, and organising events such as the Newark and Sherwood Community and Sports Awards and Volunteer Thank You week.

All primary schools in the District were invited to participate in the school uniform scheme, with 37 schools applying. Volunteer Thank You week was widely promoted, and Councillors were encouraged to provide further details for inclusion; the event timetable is typically set for June. The Committee showed strong support for initiatives benefiting veterans.

The Council is currently mapping defibrillator machines across the District to optimise their placement and ensure rational coverage.

Outcome

Councillors noted the report and presentation.

Council Tax Support for Terminally Ill Residents (Dec 2025)

The Committee reviewed a report from the Transactional Finance Manager and the Business Manager for Revenues & Benefits, outlining options to support terminally ill residents with discretionary council tax relief. The Council had previously endorsed developing a policy for council tax exemption for terminally ill residents and their household members under the local tax reduction scheme.

Four options were presented, with Option 3 recommended as the best fit. Option 3 is to develop a scheme to provide 100% council tax relief to all households who are in receipt of relief through the local council tax relief scheme (LCTR) within the Newark & Sherwood district impacted by having a relative living in the household who has been diagnosed as receiving end-of-life care.

Additionally, a letter was sent to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government, urging consideration of a national policy for such exemptions.

Outcome

Councillors agreed to prioritise starting the scheme quickly, aiming for future expansion. The Transactional Finance Manager confirmed it could begin on 1 April 2026, pending Cabinet approval, with discussions with other organisations to follow.

Regarding Council Tax Relief (CTR), Councillors asked about the processing speed for terminally ill applicants. The Transactional Finance Manager explained that the SRI form, used to fast-track benefits for people expected to live less than 12 months, would be submitted by the NHS to both the DWP and Council, with expedited measures for these claims.

Councillors agreed to endorse and recommend to Cabinet that approval be given to the preferred Option 3 as detailed in the report and that Officers be instructed to develop a Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme to support households facing the hardship of living with a terminally ill family member. Councillors also recommended that Officers be authorised to approach Nottinghamshire County Council, the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Nottinghamshire & City of Nottingham Fire Authority in relation to expanding Option 3 – the Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme.

In January 2026 Cabinet approved Option 3 and approved the Discretionary Council Tax Relief Scheme to support households facing the hardship of living with a terminally ill family member.

The Policy came into effect in April 2026, as of May 2026 three households have received support via a top up to their Council Tax support, effectively reducing their 2026/27 liability to zero. The total support provided across the three households is £2,959.

Gender Pay Gap Report (March 2026)

The Committee reviewed the HR Business Partner's update on NSDC's gender pay gap (GPG), based on data from 31 March 2025. The report compares average earnings for men and women across all roles, including regular pay and certain allowances, but excludes overtime, redundancy, termination payments, and staff on reduced family or sick leave pay.

A positive GPG value means men are paid more on average, a negative value means women are paid more. Councillors asked about manual apprenticeships, such as in trade teams and environmental services. The HR Business Partner noted that although these opportunities exist, more men apply, but efforts are underway to attract more female applicants.

Outcome

Councillors noted the content of the report and the positive position of our gender pay gap.

Enhancing Tenant Engagement at Newark & Sherwood (March 2026)

The Committee considered the report presented jointly by the Business Manager for Housing Services and the Tenant Engagement Officer, which set out a series of measures to build on and strengthen the role and influence of tenants in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods.

A review had taken place of the effectiveness of the current arrangements, and this has been undertaken in conjunction with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and involved tenants offering their time, lived experience and skills, to feedback and support NSDC to improve housing services.

The aim has been to strengthen tenant influence and improve service outcomes, reflecting the Council's commitment to ensuring tenant insight shapes decision-making.

Outcome

Councillors discussed this report at length and whilst some Committee members endorsed the report 'as is,' a number required further clarification on a number of sections, and it was therefore agreed that the report would return to the Committee on the 13th April 2026 for further consideration. Please see below for the Outcome from PPIC in April 2026.

Revisiting – Tenant Engagement at Newark & Sherwood (Apr 2026)

The Committee revisited the report of the Business Manager for Housing Services on strengthening tenant engagement arrangements, which was re-presented following the meeting of 16 March 2026 to provide further clarification requested by Councillors.

The report described the review of current arrangements undertaken with the aim of increasing tenant influence and improving service outcomes. During consideration of the report and accompanying Terms of Reference, Councillors sought clarification on the process for removing a Board Member, the appointment of a Vice-Chair, the timing of Board meetings, and the distinction between a Tenant Champion and a Tenant Scrutineer

Officers advised that the Vice-Chair could be any Board member, meetings would be arranged at times mutually convenient to Councillors, and that Scrutineers would be assigned specific areas to review. Councillors also discussed the proposed approach to recognition and incentivisation, with differing views expressed, officers clarified the remuneration available to involved tenants.

In response to questions on district-wide engagement, Councillors were advised that Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), were supporting recruitment and that existing community link groups would assist engagement, and that Champions and Scrutineers would be allocated areas to target and did not need to live in those areas.

The Director of Housing, Health & Wellbeing advised that it would not be possible to capture every removal scenario within the Terms of Reference and recommended that the removal provision remain, with further detail set out in a supporting document.



Outcome

The progression of tenant engagement arrangements and the clear service improvements resulting from tenant insight and involvement was noted by the Councillors and that the refresh of the current Tenant Engagement Board, in the following ways, be endorsed:

- Increase the number of tenant representatives from three to five.
- Reallocate the Chair of the Board to a tenant representative.
- Rename the current Tenant Engagement Board to Tenant Influence & Assurance Board.

Councillors also noted and endorsed:

- The Tenant Engagement Framework and proposed programme of recruitment.
- The proposed recognition and incentivisation to widen the participation and representation of tenants as Tenant Engagement Champions with five places on the Tenant Influence & Assurance Board.

The report progressed to Cabinet on 21 April 2026 for decision on the recognition of the scheme be noted, where it was approved by Cabinet.

The amended report progressed to the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee on 16 April 2026 with a recommendation for endorsement and an onward recommendation to Full Council on in May 2026 for approval of the proposed changes to the constitution be noted.



Planning & Infrastructure – Presentation (Apr 2026)

The Committee considered a report and presentation from the Director for Planning & Growth and the Business Manager for Planning Policy & Infrastructure. They updated Councillors on NSDC’s involvement in planning and infrastructure matters, including the complexity of the infrastructure landscape and examples of “out of remit” work beyond traditional district council responsibilities.

Councillors had requested this presentation, following the work of the ‘Out of Remit’ working group, which would explain what is meant by infrastructure and how the Council is involved directly and indirectly? The presentation also highlighted that England’s infrastructure system is fragmented across multiple providers and regulators, making change difficult. It was noted that without the Council’s involvement, strategic infrastructure may not be delivered.

Outcome

Councillors queried whether the creation of the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) had made lobbying more efficient and were advised by officers that EMCCA was still establishing itself as Transport Authority and that the Mayor had undertaken extensive consultation on the Transport Plan.

Councillors also raised concerns about whether sufficient resources existed to sustain out-of-remit work. Officers confirmed that NSDC had an Infrastructure Lead Officer role but noted challenges in engaging with large external organisations and that delivery of some projects would ultimately sit with external bodies. The Chair concluded that ongoing engagement with external organisations and development of a district-wide vision remained vital.

Councillors noted the report and presentation.



4. Scrutinising and Questioning Performance

Performance Reporting

It is also the role of the Committee to review how the Council is performing in three key areas:

- **Financial performance**
How the Council is performing against the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- **Service performance**
How the Council is performing against its Community Plan.
- **Customer feedback**
How the Council is performing in complaint handling.

The Committee regularly receives quarterly reports assessing the Council's performance. Each quarter, Councillors thoroughly examine these reports, ask questions, and seek additional details or updates from officers about areas that need improvement. Officers then report this information back to the Committee, allowing progress to be tracked and monitored.

Yorke Drive Development Update (June 2025).

Councillors received a report and presentation from the Business Manager for Regeneration & Housing Strategy and the Senior Regeneration Officer, outlining the project's progress and milestones, which included the neighbourhood study, accelerated construction funding in 2017, outline planning approval in 2019, procurement, and reserved matters work culminating in approval in January 2025.

Outcome

Councillors queried the impact on local school places, with officers advising that any population increase would be mitigated through Section 106 funding. Councillors also questioned the projected completion date of winter 2031, officers explained the extended timescale reflected a commitment that residents would only need to move once.

Officers confirmed confidence in meeting phased dates as permissions and funding were in place. The Chair highlighted the need to understand delivery status of capital projects in light of local government reorganisation and requested ongoing progress updates.

Councillors noted the progress of the York Drive Regeneration Scheme.



Newark & Sherwood Community Lottery annual update (July 2025)

The Committee considered a report from the Business Manager for Regeneration & Housing Strategy, which provided an annual update on the Newark and Sherwood Community Lottery Scheme.

The report set out the scheme's impact since launch, including the number of registered 'good causes' receiving financial support through ticket sales, and noted that while the number of supporters had fallen, ticket sales had increased and income rose from £34,569.00 (year 3) to £39,405.60 (year 4).

Outcome

During discussion, Councillors raised concerns about gambling and asked whether the demographic profile of supporters was measured. The Business Manager said she would report back on whether that information was available. Councillors agreed that the report be noted.

Local Government Social Care Ombudsman Annual Report (Sept 2025)

Councillors considered a report from the Business Manager for Customer Services who provided information on the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Annual Review Letter.

The report explained that the LGSCO's annual letter summarises the number, type, and outcomes of complaints for each authority. The appendix to the report showed 16 complaints and decisions relating to Council services (compared with 11 complaints and nine decisions in 2023/24).

The report also outlined the Council's complaints handling process and included a table setting out complaint categories and decision outcomes.

Outcome

Councillors noted the contents of the report be noted.



Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment (Sept 2025)

The Committee considered a report from the Business Manager for Customer Services updating Councillors on completion of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code self-assessment.

The report explained that the Code sets best practice for landlords' complaint handling and has been a statutory duty since 1 April 2024, with the Housing Ombudsman responsible for ensuring compliance.

It noted the requirement for an annual self-assessment submission and reported that the Council's self-assessment (covering nine sections) had been completed and reviewed by the Tenant Engagement Board, with the Council compliant in all but one area due to an issue with reports being submitted to the appropriate Committee, of which the Housing Ombudsman was aware.

Outcome

Councillors endorsed the completed Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code Self-Assessment and that it be recommended to the Governance, General Purposes & LGR Committee for approval and that it be published on the Council's website. This was approved by the Governance, General Purposes and LGR Committee in September 2025 and was published on the NSDC Website.

Corporate estate, annual compliance update (Sept 2025)

The Committee considered a report from the Development Manager for Corporate Property updating Councillors on compliance management across the corporate estate, including both corporate and tenanted properties, and providing a high-level overview of key compliance activity.

Councillors were advised that the 2025/26 corporate compliance budget was £291,760 to deliver statutory compliance servicing across 22 sites, covering areas such as fire, gas and electrical safety, legionella, asbestos, air conditioning, lifts and lifting equipment, and fall arrest systems, with additional information included on service improvements, tenant compliance monitoring, and future work.

Outcome

Councillors raised concerns about poor performance by an external contractor in relation to gas inspections and the protections in place. Officers advised that contractors are subject to interview and references prior to contract award. The Chair requested that future reports include further information on how the Council engages with external contractors.

Councillors noted the content of the report and the work being undertaken across the corporate estate.

Compliance Update, Housing Performance Q1 (Sep 2025)

The Committee considered a report from the Compliance Manager for Housing Maintenance & Asset Management, who set out the housing compliance performance position as of 30 June 2025 (Q1) and provided an update on service activity.

The report explained the performance rating approach recommended by external auditors and the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and included details on damp and mould cases. It identified and explained a number of compliance exceptions, including domestic gas servicing, fire safety checks and fire door inspections, asbestos, water safety, stair lifts, EICR certification, and solid fuel and oil servicing.

Outcome

Councillors commented on the report, and the Chair thanked officers for ongoing work relating to damp and mould cases. Councillors noted the exceptions to performance of the housing service compliance functions. They also noted the interim arrangements for monitoring damp and mould ahead of the introduction of Awaab's Law and the ongoing actions to improve and maintain performance.

Nottinghamshire & Nottingham Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) (Oct 2025)

The Business Manager for Planning Policy & Infrastructure, and the Ecology & Biodiversity Lead Officer attended to update Councillors on the production and consultation on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) by Nottinghamshire County Council and to endorse the District Council's proposed response at the final consultation stage prior to publication of the strategy.

Outcome

Councillors welcomed the report, noting the positive impact the team were having in the District and across the County. They approved the proposed recommendations to Cabinet and the Council's response to the final consultation prior to publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Cabinet approved the Strategy in November 2025 and asked Officers to prepare any guidance necessary regarding usage of the LNRS in relation to planning development and the preparation of biodiversity net gain assessments.

Housing Compliance Assurance Report (March 2026)

The Committee considered the Quarter 3 (as of 31 December 2025) Housing Compliance Assurance report from the Business Manager for Building Safety & Asset Investment, outlining performance against the Council's legal and regulatory landlord responsibilities across key building safety areas (including fire, gas, asbestos, electrical and water) and highlighting any exceptions outside target parameters.

Councillors were advised that the performance summary is shared with SLT, the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Tenant Engagement Board, and is reported through PPIC and quarterly to Cabinet to ensure appropriate oversight. The report noted improving compliance for solid fuel servicing (90%) and oil servicing (97.87%), with ongoing work to improve asset data.

Outcome

During discussion, Councillors raised that it appeared that two properties lacked valid hoist

certificates, as in the previous year, and requested confirmation whether these were the same two properties or just a coincidence.

Councillors noted the exceptions to performance of the housing service compliance functions and the interim arrangements for monitoring damp and mould ahead of introduction of Awaab's Law. They also noted the ongoing actions to improve and maintain performance.

Review of HRA Business Plan assumptions (Dec 2025)

The Committee considered a report from the Business Manager for Financial Services outlining the key assumptions required to produce the Council's 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.

The report explained the purpose of the HRA Business Plan and how external assumptions would be used alongside internal factors (such as rent setting, capital investment, and revenue services) to inform the plan, which would then underpin the HRA budget and rent-setting process.

Outcome

Councillors endorsed the assumptions presented and to be utilised in the update of the 30-year HRA Business Plan.



SCRUTINY ROLE

Scrutiny is a statutory requirement for local authorities which operate a Leader and Cabinet (Executive) model of decision making. PPIC does not make decisions but instead monitors, influences and makes recommendations on the work of Cabinet. The overview and scrutiny role, conducted by PPIC Councillors, is designed to support the work of the Council and its Cabinet, and ensure there is the opportunity for checks and balances. The Committee also looks to constructively scrutinise the work of our partners and how we deliver better when we deliver together.

Attendance at the Committee by Representatives of the Department for Work & Pensions (June 2025)

The Chair welcomed the Senior Partnership Manager and Partnership Manager from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) to discuss DWP services in the Ollerton area. The representatives explained their roles and responded to Councillors' questions, including clarifying that education is not within the DWP's remit and that their focus is on benefit claimants and removing barriers to employment through work coaching, employer engagement, and vocational training.

They outlined the support for deprived areas, including work coaches, escalation to national programmes after six months of unemployment, specialist support for people with disabilities, and a forthcoming voluntary initiative for economically inactive people.

Outcome

Councillors asked how DWP priorities are set and were informed that they were driven by individual needs with an element of localism. Councillors raised concerns about the removal of a Level 7 qualification and the skills "gap" between lower-level qualifications and levels 6–7. DWP agreed to raise this issue and report back if a response is received.

Councillors also discussed support for hard-to-reach families via family hub-based community work coaches and the accessibility of contact methods. DWP stated that they offer a digital/telephone Universal Credit process, a willingness to run outreach events following the closure of the Ollerton facility, and the option of video calls and home visits where needed.

The Chair welcomed partnership working and requested further information, particularly for Ollerton and asked that details be provided to Ollerton Councillors by email, especially for residents unable to access digital services.

Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood CSP progress & performance update and review of priorities (Sept 25)

The Committee received an update from the Business Manager for Public Protection and the Chief Inspector who oversees Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood (Nottinghamshire Police) on the work of the Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership, including crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) performance for January to July 2025 compared with the previous year.

Outcome

Councillors questioned detection/charge outcomes and were advised that detection rates were 34% in Newark and Sherwood (July–August 2025) compared with 26.4% countywide.

Councillors also discussed CCTV capability, the timescales covered by Domestic Homicide Reviews, whether further investment was needed given Newark and Sherwood remained the third highest in the county for ASB, despite reductions and how public perception is measured.

Councillors noted the performance information from the Community Safety Partnership.

Presentation by the Environment Agency (Dec 2025)

The Chair welcomed the Partnership & Strategic Overview Team Leader for Notts. & Tidal Trent, from the Environment Agency (EA) to present on flooding in the district.

The presentation outlined the EA's remit (flood risk on main rivers and environmental responsibilities across all watercourses), the range of organisations involved (including Nottinghamshire County Council, Severn Trent Water, and the Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board), and the key challenges such as climate change and storm impacts, alongside current maintenance activity, and future projects.

Outcome

In discussion, Councillors raised ward-specific issues including improving communication between flood groups and the EA. With the EA noting that surface water flooding sits outside the EA's remit, but information sharing would support a coordinated response, the adequacy of EA's input at the housing development stage, with an emphasis on pre-application engagement and constraints of the National planning policy, flooding factors at Middlebeck, concerns about potentially outdated flood mapping and reliance on anecdotal evidence and partnership working with Severn Trent Water.

Councillors received clarification on responsibilities for ditch maintenance, which is generally Nottinghamshire County Council unless privately owned and noted residents can carry out some repairs and it was noted that development can take place in Flood Zone 1.

The Chair thanked the representative from the EA and the Committee welcomed and noted the presentation.



Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood CSP progress and performance update and review of priorities (Mar 2026)

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager for Public Protection and the District Commander for Newark and Sherwood to provide an update on the work undertaken by the Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership. Councillors were provided with a 6 monthly update, including:

- The current status for Performance, of the Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood CSP Action Plan 26-27.
- DAHA.
- Domestic Homicide Reviews and Community Safety Activities.
- Situational Crime Funding.
- Hotspot Funding Patrols.
- Enforcement Activities.
- ASB Panel.
- CCTV and Diversionary Activities/Education Programmes.

Outcome

Councillors noted the Community Safety Partnership performance information.

Presentations by Portfolio Holders

To enable the Cabinet Portfolio Holders to brief the Committee on their remit, present actions and offer an opportunity to ask focused questions. Committee members requested that Portfolio Holders be invited to PPIC meetings.

The Portfolio Holders attended between June 2025 and April 2026 in the following order:

Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance (June 2025)

The Committee considered the update from the Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance covering the progress on the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and updates on three capital projects:

1. 32 Stodman Street, setting out the rationale, funding to date, the delays, and the need for extra grant
2. Ollerton & Clipstone regeneration, including the Levelling Up Fund 2 funding, the delays, and changes since being prioritised)
3. Newark Town Centre Masterplan and design code, including the long-term vision guiding what will be supported and resisted, identifying opportunity areas, informing investors and potential future bids.

Councillors asked a number of questions and the Chair requested ongoing updates on Stodman Street retail units and anticipated support relating to local government reorganisation.

Cabinet Member without Portfolio, Leader of the Opposition (June 2025)

The Leader of the Opposition attended the Committee to explain their role, emphasising the need for constructive challenge to Council policies and the development of alternatives.

Their aim is to be fair, whilst challenging Cabinet, stating that challenges are not always accepted, citing the Kidney Stones decision as example. They raised concerns that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) could reduce Councillors influence over the capital programme, though he felt officers and Cabinet were preparing as well as possible, and linked this to why he supported separating the Audit & Governance Committee.

They also suggested scrutiny could be stronger, specifically Councillors need more autonomy, and the role of the opposition on Committees. The Chair thanked the Councillor for his candid contribution.

Portfolio Holder for Public Protection & Community Relations (Sept 2025)

The Portfolio Holder for Public Protection & Community Relations briefed the Committee in response to four questions, focusing mainly on tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB).

They highlighted the multi-agency enforcement work including how ASB and Community Protection Officers (CPO) teams' triage and signpost complaints, safeguarding work, and reported that the 'Safer Streets' initiative delivered a 40% reduction in recorded ASB.

Key challenges are the volume and complexity of cases, often linked to issues such as mental health, and stressed the importance of strong partnership working with Police, including early intervention through schools.

They noted Sherwood area incidents are handled the same way as elsewhere, while acknowledging Newark's additional funding is based on crime data. He advised a budget bid would be submitted for more diversionary work and potentially for domestic homicide review investigations (currently funded from reserves). Councillors also raised the delayed mobilisation of a new contractor for Fixed Penalty Notices.

On protests and flags on lighting columns, they reported that there has been no significant local impact on ASB figures and warned that flags can be unsafe. The Police added that protests may reduce into autumn and that community cohesion is a challenge. Knife crime was described as rare locally, with Police continuing schools-based education.

The Chair asked to be kept informed of relevant events.

Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment (Oct 2025)

The Portfolio Holder for Climate & the Environment updated the Committee answering six pre-submitted questions.

They outlined progress against the Climate Change Action Plan including solar panels, air-source heat pumps at Blidworth Leisure Centre and electric vehicles/equipment.

Next year's priorities are around bin collections and green spaces/play areas, with funding sought including £10k for environmental education and a Cabinet report on biodiverse greening at community entrances. Councillors noted stronger than expected income from kerbside glass collection and high uptake of garden waste. On food waste collections, he said works at Brunel Drive are on time and in budget and a pilot with and without biodegradable liners is planned.

On biodiversity, he reported 20,000+ trees had been planted since 2020/21, there is a drought impact review underway with potential to add five communities per year for biodiverse entrance planting. On carbon reduction, the Council has achieved about a quarter of the Carbon Trust ten year target, with future progress potentially for the new authority post LGR (2028).

They suggested LGR could streamline responsibilities and help coordinated public transport but would need local sub-structures. They raised concerns about the Open Space Strategy not always being implemented and said the budget process should focus on what resident's value most, including seeking income to offset costs.

There were a number of questions put to the Portfolio Holder where they agreed to provide a written replies to the Committee.



Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development (Jan 2026)

The Committee considered the report and verbal responses from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Economic Development, addressing six pre-submitted questions

NSDC has aligned its growth strategy with the East Midlands Combined County Authority, securing £4.25 million in funding from two successful bids. The Council's approach to town centres is evolving, moving away from a retail-only focus to incorporate leisure, community, residential, and hospitality uses, addressing issues brought by the cost-of-living crisis and Covid. Support for town centres includes free planning advice, rate relief, capital investment, promotions, grants for historic shopfronts, business forums, and improved footfall tracking.

Tourism initiatives are robust, featuring projects like the Rebel Rangers Tour, enhancements to green spaces, the Castle Gatehouse Project, and the 'Happy Families' campaign, all backed by the Tourism Action Group. The Shopper's Gift Card has also seen success. Efforts to help residents with health issues into work or training are largely delivered through partners, with NSDC supporting and funding these activities, including the Future First Expo for connecting young people to employers.

Planning reforms and housing delivery have increased digitisation and prompted a review of the Council's internal processes. The current local plan, submitted two years ago, remains unapproved, leading to the start of a new 36-month plan and the likelihood of speculative housing applications due to the absence of an approved plan and five-year housing strategy. The Council faces difficulties in influencing developers to release homes to the market.

Ensuring residents' voices are heard in planning remains challenging, especially post-reorganisation. Suggestions include encouraging parishes to develop neighbourhood plans and creating community advocate roles for planning applications. Councillors queried the Shopper's Gift Card's performance, tourism promotion, and the availability of non-digital visitor information. The Portfolio Holder confirmed a district-wide remit, ongoing discussions about balancing print and digital information, limited funding allocations, and officer capacity for supporting parish neighbourhood plans, with negotiations underway with external organisations.

The Chair thanked them for attending and requested that tourism updates be brought to future meetings.



Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing & Leisure (Feb 2026)

The Committee considered the report presented by the Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing & Leisure. The Portfolio Holder had been invited to attend Committee to respond verbally to three specific questions.

The first question was whether Active4Today would adopt the Life Chances for Girls working group's recommendations and what the next steps are. Active4Today has included these recommendations in its 2026–2029 Business Plan, now under review. The Sport and Active Lifestyles team is researching district needs to make evidence-based decisions for women and girls. Next steps include using diverse local images, sharing programme success stories, and improving reporting on female participation.

The second question focused on whether there is a budget for maintaining closed cemeteries and if it is adequate. NSDC is legally obligated to care for closed cemeteries transferred from churches, which involves tasks like mowing grass, maintaining pathways, attending to trees, and checking headstone safety. At present, eight cemeteries fall under the Council's management, however the yearly budget of £5,000 does not cover long-term maintenance needs. Even with limited funds, NSDC must continue this responsibility and is required to secure additional resources should significant health or safety concerns arise.

The final question addressed the utilisation of data in understanding health inequalities and determining project focus areas. NSDC relies on local data sources, including the Index of Multiple Deprivation and anonymised GP practice records, to inform decision-making and prioritisation related to health disparities. Through this data-driven approach, NSDC identifies communities and population groups most impacted by poor health outcomes and disadvantage. Consequently, resources and interventions are strategically directed towards neighbourhoods with the greatest need, targeting specific health concerns such as chronic illness, mental health, obesity, smoking prevalence, and low vaccination uptake.

In closing the debate, the Chair thanks them for their attendance and detailed responses to the queries raised.



Portfolio Holder for Housing (March 2026)

The Committee considered the report presented by the Portfolio Holder for Housing. The Portfolio Holder had been invited to attend Committee to respond verbally to three questions.

NSDC is preparing for a forthcoming Regulator of Social Housing inspection, gathering documents to prove compliance with consumer standards. The inspection will centre on quality, safety, transparency, accountability, and tenant focus. The regulator will examine governance and evidence of tenant and councillor involvement. NSDC will showcase initiatives like the TPAS reengineering project, which boosts tenant participation, and the increased number of tenant board members, underscoring its commitment to inclusive engagement.

NSDC has been recognised for its tenant engagement efforts in the Yorke Drive regeneration, maintaining strong communication and focusing on key service areas such as repairs, complaints, and anti-social behaviour. Supported by the Foundation Five campaign and a new Housing Management System, NSDC is making improvements in service delivery and transparency. This period of external scrutiny is helping drive further enhancements and reinforces a customer-centred approach.

In preparation for LGR, NSDC is working with neighbouring authorities to safeguard housing services and ensure safe, compliant operations. The focus is on aligning services, sharing resources, and improving strategies, such as the Supported Housing Strategy and new competency standards. NSDC is also considering cross-district tenant engagement, maintaining essential services throughout the transition, and learning from other LGR experiences. Initiatives like the PPIC working group on Estate Walkabouts, demonstrate a continued commitment to placing tenants at the heart of decision making.

They noted that while housing repairs and empty property turnaround times are still below target, recent restructuring and increased resources, including new management and a dedicated Damp & Mould team, are already yielding positive changes. Improved performance is expected in the next financial year, despite some short-term setbacks as empty homes are addressed and relet.

They described NSDC's approach to improving housing services, highlighting the Strategic Improvement Plan, which is closely monitored with transparent, ambitious but realistic targets. Property surveys show council homes are in good condition, and EPCs are completed when homes are empty. The meeting also discussed how Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are set, with a written update to follow. Concerns about increasing tenant arrears, mainly due to universal credit, were noted, with more information promised from officers.



Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture & the Arts (Oct 2024)

The Committee considered the report and verbal presentation given by the Portfolio Holder for Heritage, Culture & the Arts. The Portfolio Holder had been invited to attend Committee to respond to three questions.

They explained that the new Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (2025–2029) is being implemented through an Equalities Steering Group and the introduction of equalities advisors in key departments, helping embed inclusion into day-to-day decision-making and improve consistency in equality-related decisions.

The Castle Gatehouse project has prioritised accessibility and inclusive engagement during the build phase, ensuring residents and visitors can participate. Measures include accessible facilities, audio and visual aids, information in braille, and sensory-friendly options, all aimed at making the new visitor offer welcoming and usable for everyone once opened.

The Heritage & Culture Business Unit (H&CBU) is well positioned for future development, especially with LGR on the horizon. They highlighted that the formation of a unitary authority could enable the creation of a network of cultural hubs with neighbouring districts, leveraging substantial Arts Council England funding. This reorganisation presents opportunities for a unified cultural strategy, aiming to strengthen local identity, health, wellbeing, and community resilience. Ongoing efforts include raising NSDCs national profile and advocating for better transport links to improve access to heritage and cultural sites across the expanded authority area.

Councillors commended the team involved in the Castle Gatehouse project for their enthusiasm and expertise, noting this positive attitude extended to both Council officers and contractors, such as the stonemasons. The discussion highlighted the health and wellbeing benefits of heritage and cultural activities, with outreach efforts being tailored to groups in need and links established with GP surgeries. Praise was given for the Hard Hat Tour of the Castle, and there was support for future collaboration among the county's heritage and cultural assets, including the idea of a single ticket granting access to all venues.

In closing the debate, the Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for her presentation and the ongoing work within the Heritage & Culture Business Unit.



Future Work

Officers and Councillors collaborate with Committee members to create a work programme for 2025–26.

However, we know for certain that over the next 12 months PPIC will continue to:

- Review and challenge the performance of the Council.
- Hold Cabinet to account as a critical friend.
- Consider topics raised by Councillors.
- Scrutinise the budget and review performance.
- Undertake reviews and develop strategies and policies.
- Scrutinise large-scale projects such as the Newark Town Investment Plan.

PPIC will also continue to work alongside its key public sector partners and key stakeholders within the Council.



Appendix One: Policy & Performance Improvement Committee Members

Councillor Mike Pringle (Chair)	Ward: Ollerton
Councillor Neil Ross (Vice-Chair)	Ward: Devon
Councillor Alice Brazier	Ward: Ollerton
Councillor Celia Brooks	Ward: Edwinstowe & Clipstone
Councillor Andy Freeman	Ward: Edwinstowe & Clipstone
Councillor Jean Hall	Ward: Balderton South
Councillor Simon Haynes	Ward: Farndon & Fernwood
Councillor Rhona Holloway	Ward: Bilsthorpe
Councillor Roger Jackson	Ward: Dover Beck
Councillor David Moore	Ward: Beacon
Councillor Penny Rainbow	Ward: Southwell
Councillor Karen Roberts	Ward: Southwell
Councillor Kay Smith	Ward: Balderton North & Coddington
Councillor Tina Thompson	Ward: Rainworth South & Blidworth
Councillor Tim Wendels	Ward: Lowdham

Amendments to membership

Councillor Matthew Spoor Ward: Devon

Substitutes

Councillor Neil Allen	Ward: Farndon & Fernwood
Councillor Debbie Darby	Ward: Bridge
Councillor Peter Harris	Ward: Southwell
Councillor Michelle Home	Ward: Castle
Councillor Sylvia Michael	Ward: Sutton-on-Trent
Councillor Emma Oldham	Ward: Balderton North & Coddington
Councillor Maurice Shakeshaft	Ward: Farnsfield
Councillor Linda Tift	Ward: Rainworth North & Rufford

Officer Support

Deborah Johnson – Director of Customer Services & Organisational Development
Carl Burns – Business Manager – Transformation and Service Improvement
Helen Brandham – Democratic Services Officer
Mark Randle – Transformation & Service Improvement Officer

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