

A RECORD OF ACTION

A PROMISE OF MORE

The Conservative Manifesto for the Newark & Sherwood District Council Elections on 2nd May 2019



YOU TOLD US WHAT MATTERS WE HAVE DELIVERED!



Newark and Sherwood District Council delivers a range of public services—some being statutory, others being services that are deemed necessary locally and can be delivered within our legal powers. It is important to us that we do not mislead people by suggesting that we can make changes across the full gamut of public services i.e. hospitals, ambulances, GP surgeries, schools and colleges, roads, policing (where directly the responsibility of the Police & Crime Commissioner), social services and principal highways.

However, we are the *most* local principal authority and so we see it as our role to ensure that we are ‘place-shapers’ and, in so doing, it is vital that we represent residents to all other public service providers and lobby hard for spend and improvements to our District. We are positive in our agenda and a willing partner—we invest where it ensures that we would not otherwise see improvements in services here.

So what services are we directly responsible for?

Housing - we have our own stock of affordable and social housing, some specifically designed for supported living

Leisure - we operate several leisure and sports and fitness centres, a series of public spaces designed for sports activities, parks, open spaces, play areas and some sites of nature conservation.

Waste - we are responsible for collecting waste that the County Council then disposes of. Albeit this can limit what we can collect for recycling, we have introduced a green waste collection service and are improving a series of other recycling services. We are also a provider of a commercial waste collection service in a competitive environment.

Street Cleaning— we provide street bins and routine street cleaning. We work with Parish Councils on providing dog bins. We work closely with the County Council to clear gullies and ditches. We are also responsible for clearing fly-tipping and so we provide a bulky waste collection service too.

Economic Development - we don’t own many commercial premises in town centres, shops are generally owned by private landlords. We provide serviced workspaces to encourage ‘start-up’ businesses, promote the District to tourists and potential employers, and intervene where training and employment skills are needed.

Planning - we are responsible for receiving and determining planning applications (except for minerals and waste), overseeing Conservation Areas & Listed Buildings, and taking enforcement against illegal or improper development.

Community Safety - we work closely with the Police and have invested in CCTV, enforcement officers (civil penalties), Safer Neighbourhood Groups, and tackling anti-social behaviour.

Cultural Services - we directly provide some museum services and maintain a collection of artefacts specific to our District and its history. We operate the Palace Theatre and use grants to support arts and culture activities across the area. We also have responsibility, unlike most Councils, for a castle!

Revenues and Benefits - we are made responsible for the collection of Council Tax for all Councils, the Police and Fire Authority and for collecting Business Rates even though we do not set the charges for many of these. We also administer benefits payments.

Health and Wellbeing - we operate inspection regimes for public health including food standards, animal welfare and health & safety. We also work with partners to promote healthy living, reduce energy poverty and enable people with disabilities or limiting illnesses to live independently in their homes.

OUR OBJECTIVES FOR NEWARK & SHERWOOD 2019-2023

- ⇒ **Improving the cleanliness and appearance of our communities and public spaces**
 - ⇒ **Reducing anti-social behaviour and crime, increasing community safety**
 - ⇒ **Protecting our heritage and natural environment**
 - ⇒ **Maintaining high levels of employment, increasing skills and rates of pay. Reducing deprivation and improving social mobility**
 - ⇒ **Increasing the supply of affordable and social homes for all age groups and tenures**
 - ⇒ **Investing in Town Centres to sustain their vitality and realise their potential for the future**
 - ⇒ **Promoting the District to visitors to increase spend and support jobs**
 - ⇒ **Improving transport infrastructure to reduce congestion**
 - ⇒ **Increasing participation in sports, leisure and healthy lifestyles**
 - ⇒ **Running efficient services and generate additional income to keep Council Tax as low as possible**
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IMPROVING THE CLEANLINESS & APPEARANCE OF OUR PUBLIC SPACES

What have we been doing?

- Employing a new team of Community Enforcement Officers specifically to combat anti-social behaviour and litter/nuisance offences
- Increasing the number of bins and dog bins across the District
- Cleaning more streets, more often, and tackling 'grot spots' with multi-agency 'days of action'
- Prosecuting litter, fly-tipping, dog-fouling and graffiti/vandalism penalties against law-breakers
- Running campaigns in schools and communities to generate pride and awareness
- Supporting communities to run litter-picking and 'keep Britain tidy' activities
- Improving the ways that people can report problems to us and responding quickly
- Applying Public Space Protection Orders to public parks to limit anti-social behaviour and dog-fouling.

What are you telling us?

- Fly-tipping is an increasing problem, especially in rural areas
- People should know that penalties are enforced, it will be a deterrent
- Bye-laws could be more strict, especially for dog-fouling
- More needs to be done in schools to change people's mindsets going forward
- More bins are needed
- The verges on main roads are full of litter and send a poor message before even getting here
- Graffiti and late-night anti-social behaviour are deterring you from certain areas

What more will we do?

- ⇒ Increase the number of enforcement officers working in communities and increase the use (and publicity) of penalty notices
- ⇒ Extend mobile CCTV to catch the perpetrators of fly-tipping
- ⇒ Improve recycling rates, collect green waste and review options for collecting glass and/or food waste
- ⇒ Better promote bulky waste collections to safeguard residents from 'cowboy' waste collectors
- ⇒ Increase the number of bins in problem areas and increase opportunities to dispose of dog waste
- ⇒ Review bye-laws to prosecute dog-owners found to repeatedly not carry 'poo bags'
- ⇒ Work with Highways England and the County Council to more regularly target litter and waste on A-roads
- ⇒ Work with the Police Cadets and Youth/Probation Services to engage young people in the removal of graffiti and to better understand the activities/provision that would encourage community engagement
- ⇒ Deliver a school engagement programme in all schools to promote neighbourhood pride
- ⇒ Say 'thank you' to people who maintain their front gardens and curtilage and/or engage in community

REDUCING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND CRIME

What have we been doing?

- Providing increased CCTV coverage to improve public safety
- Working with the Police and Neighbourhood Watch to reduce burglaries, shop-lifting, anti-social behaviour, speeding, unsafe parking outside schools, vandalism and graffiti.
- Working with communities on 'SpeedWatch', 'Report It' and Neighbourhood Alert
- Recruiting dedicated Community Enforcement Officers to specifically focus on enforcing 'civil' penalties for litter, dog-fouling and anti-social behaviour and 'fly-grazing'.
- Supporting Safer Neighbourhood Groups to develop community-led activities and campaigns for example Operation Jericho to prosecute and crush many off-road motorbikes
- Inspecting licensed premises to ensure public safety and to regulate the night-time economy.
- Working with troubled families, victims of domestic violence and 'at risk' groups to provide essential support and rehabilitation.

What are you telling us?

- You are feeling unsafe in specific areas and at specific times of day
- Acquisitive crimes, vehicle damage and burglaries are affecting specific areas
- Rural crimes and theft from churches and village halls is a concern
- Prosecutions need to increase to act as a deterrent - a small minority are ruining it for everyone
- Speeding vehicles and illegal parking are putting people at risk, especially outside schools
- You need to feel confident to report crime and incidents without using '999'

What more will we do?

- ⇒ Upgrade and increase CCTV coverage in areas of repeated crime, night-time activities and public safety
- ⇒ Support the extension of Neighbourhood Watch and Safer Neighbourhood Groups to seek to achieve universal coverage
- ⇒ Increase the number of enforcement officers to extend the hours, extent and impact of the service
- ⇒ Increase the use of civil penalty notices to prosecute repeat offenders and deter others and prosecute fly-tippers
- ⇒ Acquire more mobile CCTV cameras to be able to respond to localised incidences of temporary crime and anti-social behaviour
- ⇒ Extend the use of community speedwatch in residential areas
- ⇒ Work with the Police to jointly deploy resources and share intelligence
- ⇒ Develop a robust approach to unauthorised and illegal encampments in residential areas
- ⇒ Ensure that licensing conditions are enforced and repeat offenders are excluded, including developing night-time economy strategies where necessary
- ⇒ Review the use of bye-laws and Public Space Orders to improve the likelihood of enforcement
- ⇒ Work with the County Council to review speed limits and signage
- ⇒ Publicise all means of reporting crime and incidents to improve community safety and intelligence.

PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

What have we been doing?

- Reviewing Conservation Areas and Buildings at Risk, and taking enforcement where necessary
- Gaining 'Green Flag' accreditation for the quality and accessibility of our public parks
- Supporting communities to compete in East Midlands in Bloom (Newark won Gold)
- Working with schools and community groups to plant trees and wildlife areas
- Safeguarding trees subject to preservation orders and reviewing our Green Spaces Strategy
- Increasing the number of public charging points for electric and hybrid vehicles
- Increasing, and improving, walking and cycling routes to connect natural spaces with residents
- Investing over £250,000 to secure Environment Agency flood protection schemes, specifically in Southwell and Gunthorpe.
- Holding heritage open days and re-enactment events

What are you telling us?

- Green spaces need protecting and/or developing in urban areas in addition to protecting 'street trees'
- All communities need access to open space, specifically play areas for children and young people
- Schools need to be engaged in wildlife and environmental schemes
- Some public parks are 'tired' in appearance and do not feel safe at certain times of the day
- New developments and existing estates need more 'greening'
- Sort out the former Robin Hood Hotel!

What more will we do?

- ⇒ Develop a strategy, and supporting statutory planning document, to protect and extend tree, hedgerow and wildlife provision.
- ⇒ Invest in all our parks and open spaces and support parishes/villages with a grant pot of £200,000 each year to do the same
- ⇒ Take forward a £4million scheme to restore the Gatehouse and make the interiors of Newark Castle accessible (this will not limit free access to the Castle grounds)
- ⇒ Secure a development to replace the Robin Hood Hotel at no additional cost to the taxpayer which provides for a hotel and retains the protected frontages of the cottages.
- ⇒ Ensure that a sustainable future is found for Ollerton Hall having carried out protective measures
- ⇒ Lobby to ensure that street trees are protected/planted in existing *and* new developments
- ⇒ Work with our international partner, the RSPB, to reinvigorate Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre and Craft Centre and to develop a wider scheme for an immersive visitor experience.
- ⇒ Maintain and develop wildlife sites
- ⇒ Look at options for a local Newark & Sherwood energy company
- ⇒ Develop an Air Quality supplementary planning document
- ⇒ Adopt a Sustainable Design supplementary planning document

DEVELOPING THE ECONOMY TO GENERATE MORE JOBS AND SKILLS

What have we been doing?

- Providing industrial and office spaces for new, growing and existing businesses
- Offering a business development loan scheme for expanding businesses with jobs-growth potential
- Working with schools, colleges and universities to hold jobs and apprenticeships events with both local employers and school-leavers
- Developing targeted support for those that are long-term unemployed or are struggling to access jobs
- Liaising with local businesses of all sizes to understand the economic climate in the District and the specific requirements that they have
- Developing town centre strategies to respond to changing economic influences and shopping habits
- Promoting Newark & Sherwood at inward investment events to encourage employers to the area
- Co-locating public sector partners to offer a 'one-stop' approach to job seekers

What are you telling us?

- There's a lack of careers advice that links employers to schools and colleges
- Skills provision and education is not linked in with the needs of the local economy and employers
- Shopping habits are changing but we still value the high-street and markets
- Councils need to understand businesses plans and facilitate the change that is needed
- Business rates, albeit set nationally, are a struggle for smaller retailers and businesses

What more will we do?

- ⇒ Promote business rate reduction schemes to ensure take-up from all that are eligible - this will mean that all retailers with a rateable value under £51,000 will get up to a 33% discount
- ⇒ Work with tenants and landlords of business premises to develop the uses for business premises and reduce unnecessary overheads
- ⇒ Support colleges and universities to develop skills packages distinct to our area and employers' requirements
- ⇒ Bring employers together to develop skills clusters and the appropriate education and investment packages that they need
- ⇒ Promote local employment opportunities to all school ages to support the local economy and raise aspirations
- ⇒ Work with the YMCA, as a strategic partner, to develop tailored programmes of activity to engage with younger people and their families and improve life chances
- ⇒ Liaise with landlords and property owners to better link new/growing businesses to premises and locations
- ⇒ Develop targeted programmes in areas of deprivation to improve social mobility
- ⇒ Supporting the improvement of broadband provision, and speeds
- ⇒ Work with partners to mitigate any adverse impact from the roll-out of Universal Credit

INCREASING AFFORDABLE, SOCIAL AND SUPPORTED HOMES

What have we been doing?

- Leading the way in building more affordable homes. 335 and counting
- Requiring all developments to include homes that are accessible and affordable
- Assessing whether to return Newark & Sherwood Homes to the Council to enable an ambitious social housing development programme and improved repairs and maintenance.
- Opened Gladstone House - supported care for older people - with plans for another unit in Boughton
- Ensuring all housing reaches the 'Decent Homes Standard', offering energy efficiency support to vulnerable residents
- Inspecting properties with multiples tenants and private rental properties where complaints are received
- Resisting inappropriate development that harms rural character, village charm, areas of nature conservation or is over-intensive.

What are you telling us?

- All areas need more housing to ensure that all generations can afford to live in their community
- Affordable housing needs to take various forms for different people on various income levels
- Private sector housing and landlords need inspection and standards
- Housing developments need to take account of protecting green spaces
- Housing needs to be developed to support existing communities and the changing needs of an ageing society

What more will we do?

- ⇒ Establishing our own Development Company to regenerate brownfield sites and bring forward housing suitable to local needs
- ⇒ Take forward a necessary and ambitious programme to regenerate the Yorke Drive estate
- ⇒ Develop our own management company to seek to challenge the modern practise on new estates of having leasehold style covenants, payments and restrictions
- ⇒ Investigate the use of a Landlord accreditation/assessment programme to drive up standards in the private rental sector
- ⇒ Return Newark & Sherwood Homes to direct control of the Council to re-invest efficiencies in repairs and developing more social housing stock.
- ⇒ Undertake a Housing Needs Assessment to fully understand the type, size and location of the housing our communities need i.e. 1/2bed, starter homes, older people's homes, supported housing, step-up affordable models
- ⇒ Enable development in rural communities where the need can be proven as part of sustaining communities and local economies
- ⇒ Tighten and improve the contributions expected from housing developers, specifically so that infrastructure is not left until the development is completed, it needs to be a rolling programme.
- ⇒ Continue our award-winning work to prevent homelessness, and intensively support anyone in need

INVESTING IN TOWN CENTRES

What have we been doing?

- Ensured that all eligible businesses, restaurants, shops and pubs have had reduced business rates
- Supporting markets, events, festivals and activities to enliven town centres and commercial areas
- Submitted a bid to Government for significant investment in Newark Town Centre with a 25-year supporting strategy
- Extended free Wi-Fi, signposts, interpretation boards and panels to disperse visitors
- Began liaising with landlords of commercial premises to assist them
- Acquired the Buttermarket/Royal Exchange in Newark to prevent a sorely underused building being sold to a distant uninterested investment fund
- Given proactive and supportive advice to the owners and tenants of listed properties in commercial areas
- Proposed a future for the former Robin Hood Hotel with a 70-bed hotel and car-parking included
- Kept car park charges frozen over several years, significantly reducing longer-stay charges, providing a 'pay as you go' App and enabling card payments

What are you telling us?

- Your shopping habits are changing but you still value the experience of visiting market towns
- Retail is increasingly part of a leisure activity, not just a necessity
- Listed Buildings and prominent landmarks need safeguarding and restoring
- Car park charges need to reflect those that are 'popping in' briefly and those that want to increase their dwell time
- You are worried at the changing face of the high street

What more will we do?

- ⇒ Our bid for the Government 'High Streets Fund' is distinct from all others and encapsulates an exciting prospectus for a town that serves the present and also forecasts for the future
- ⇒ Support all landlords and tenants to reduce their overheads, maintain attractive premises and limit their business rates liability
- ⇒ Bring more activities, events, visitors, coaches and footfall into our Town Centres
- ⇒ Keep car parking charges low, with better signposted short/long stay provision
- ⇒ Deliver the Robin Hood Hotel development at no added cost to the taxpayer
- ⇒ Increase business support advice
- ⇒ Improve the night-time economy, people's perception and feeling of safety
- ⇒ Bring forward proposals for financial support to restore and enhance shop-fronts, and bring a uniform approach to A-boards and hanging signs.
- ⇒ Increase overnight accommodation to increase visitors' spend
- ⇒ Work with all local businesses to develop the necessary proposals sustainable Town Centres.

PROMOTING NEWARK & SHERWOOD TO VISITORS AND EMPLOYERS

What have we been doing?

- Marketing Newark and Sherwood, and specific attractions, locally, regionally and nationally
- Directly liaising with coach and excursions companies to bring visitors into the area
- Supporting the development of the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre
- Providing, and supporting, tourist information across the District
- Bringing tourism operators together to coordinate publicity, activities and investment in three areas: Southwell, Sherwood and Newark
- Encouraging, and supporting, regular activities throughout the year including festivals, re-enactments, cultural events and heritage open-days
- Attending inward investment events and working with existing businesses to encourage new companies or re-locations into our area.

What are you telling us?

- Increased footfall is needed to sustain local businesses
- Newark and Sherwood has iconic brands and 'hidden gems' that people don't know about
- Residents are also 'visitors', it's not just about bringing more people in
- With such enviable transport links, we should be getting more people to visit our area

What more will we do?

- ⇒ Take forward an exciting plan to restore the gatehouse of Newark Castle and enable access to all rooms and to link the attraction to the accredited National Civil War Centre and Newark Museum.
- ⇒ Support the expansion of the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre to become a nationally renowned visitor experience
- ⇒ Increase work with coach companies and weekend trip operators to increase day visitors
- ⇒ Support the development of hotel accommodation to increase visitor spend—overnight guest spend 7 times more than a day visitor
- ⇒ Develop 'discount' and/or loyalty schemes to promote access to attractions for residents and put in place a programme of engagement with schools
- ⇒ Develop 3 distinct brands within the District, each with its own website, and disperse visitors across all three
- ⇒ Improve engagement with businesses to understand their supply-chains and growth opportunities
- ⇒ Increase access to tourist information through written media and an improved focus on web and app facilities accessible from a mobile phone
- ⇒ Produce Destination Management Plans across the District to bring all partners together around agreed strategic priorities for investment
- ⇒ Review 'gateway' locations across the District to promote key locations to visitors and ensure a positive perception is derived

IMPROVING TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE & REDUCING CONGESTION

What have we been doing?

- Working with partners across the region to lobby for improvements to the District's A-roads, specifically:
 - ⇒ Building the Southern Link Road at Newark, connecting the A46 and A1
 - ⇒ Dualling the A46 Newark Northern By-Pass
 - ⇒ Improving the A617 and A616 roundabouts
- Lobbying rail franchises for improved services - more trains, more often and on more days
- Supported the reviews of weight-limits to discourage heavy goods traffic through villages
- Encouraging the reduction of speed limits in built-up areas and around schools
- Developing a prioritised list of road and junction improvements needed in order to direct contributions from developers

What are you telling us?

- Traffic levels are becoming a deterrent on specific days at specific times
- Existing roads and streets need improving to cope with the impact of new development
- Road safety is an increasing issue
- Roads need to be built alongside new development, not afterwards

What more will we do?

- Continue working with partners to push for the investment in roads needed in the District. We have been successful in getting the dualling of the A46, and upgrading of junctions, into the national roads investment programme and we will continue to press for its commencement.
 - Close the funding gap on the Southern Link Road to make this a reality
 - Fund and build the A1 overbridge at Fernwood
 - Lobby for certainty on improvements along the A616 and A617
 - Support improvements to the 'Ollerton Roundabout'
 - Influence any and all future rail franchise discussions with Network Rail
 - Support communities with SpeedWatch schemes, local speed reduction campaigns and reviews of weight-limits
 - Continue to support all measures to reduce dangerous parking around primary schools
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INCREASING ACCESS TO SPORTS AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

What have we been doing?

- Built the new Sports and Fitness Centre in Newark
- Reviewing the Playing Pitches Strategy across the District
- Assessing options for swimming provision in Ollerton/Boughton
- Working with partners to improve the leisure centre in Southwell
- Supporting the transformational YMCA led project to develop sports and community provision in Newark and Sherwood
- Working with local sports teams and clubs to support their sustainability and growth potential
- Introducing pricing strategies to encourage participation and membership of fitness schemes
- Working with health and social care providers to target funding and programmes to those in most need
- Lobbying for increased services at Newark Hospital and improved rural health services and transport

What are you telling us?

- Sports and fitness are an increasing requirement across all ages and abilities
- People need to be encouraged to engage in healthier lifestyles
- Local clubs and groups need support to access funding opportunities
- Too little is known about the range of services available at Newark Hospital and GP surgeries and how to ask for them

What more will we do?

- Expanding Southwell Leisure Centre, increasing the fitness suite and equipment
 - Investing in improvements to the Ollerton/Boughton Leisure Centre
 - Adding facilities to the Blidworth Leisure complex
 - Supporting the YMCA to complete the community and sports facilities complex
 - Upgrade specific facilities in line with the Playing Pitches Strategy
 - Review play facilities and support villages/parishes to install and upgrade theirs
 - Exploring 'social prescribing' to support vulnerable people and low-income households to access facilities and programmes
 - Working with partners to increase awareness of services available from health providers, specifically Newark Hospital
 - Lobbying to sustain and enhance access to health services in rural communities
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RUNNING EFFICIENT SERVICES AND KEEPING TAXES DOWN

What have we been doing?

- Keeping Council Tax increases below inflation
- Developing a leisure company to run our leisure centres - making savings in excess of £0.5million each year and improving services at the same time
- Assessing bringing Newark and Sherwood homes 'back in house' to realise efficiencies of over £0.75million to invest in social housing
- Relocating to Castle House, saving nearly £0.5million in running costs and making access to services easier - including a range of public sector partners
- Setting up a Development Company to build homes and deliver a financial return to the Council
- Driving efficiencies through all services without impacting on frontline delivery, yielding in excess of £1million savings

What are you telling us?

- You don't want to see the quality of services being reduced
- Council Tax needs to be kept to a minimum
- The Council needs to publish more information on how it performs
- Communities need to be involved in setting priorities

What more will we do?

- Make a further £0.5million in efficiencies
 - Increase commercial activity to produce an income for the Council to reduce the call on Council Tax
 - Regularly publish performance information and improve community engagement to both increase accountability and to ensure council priorities reflect public priorities
 - Keep Council Tax at or below inflation each year - never increasing it unless necessary
 - Increase community engagement and consultation
 - Improve access to services - both physical access across the District and digitally
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