



Newark TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

SUNDAY 12TH MAY 2024

7th May 2024

Dear Councillor

You are summonsed to attend the Annual Town Council meeting on Sunday 12th May 2024, which will be held in the Ballroom at the Town Hall.

Please be seated by **11.45 am** - the meeting will commence at 12 noon.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Gleadell
TOWN CLERK



Newark TOWN COUNCIL

A G E N D A

Item No.	Agenda Item Description	Report Attached Y/N	Page Number
1	To elect a Chairman/Town Mayor for the ensuing Civic Year 2024/2025.	No	
2	To elect a Deputy Chairman/Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing Civic Year 2024/2025.	No	
3	To determine the interpretation of 'Leading Group' referenced in Standing Order 5	Yes	Page 5
4	Subject to the outcome of item 3 above, in accordance with Standing Order 5, to announce the Council Leader and Opposition Spokespersons of the Council.	Yes	Page 7
5	To determine the composition of the Committees of the Town Council and to appoint the membership thereof for the Civic Year 2024/2025.	Yes	Page 9
6	To appoint the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Committees/Sub Committee of the Town Council from the membership appointed as a consequence of Agenda item 5.	No	
7	The Town Council will be advised by the Group Leaders of their choice of Spokesperson on each of the Committees/Sub Committees.	No	
8	The Town Council will determine the ongoing exercise of the use of the General Power of Competence in accordance with the Localism Act 2011	Yes	Page 15

ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

SUBJECT:	Interpretation of Standing Order 5
REPORT BY:	Matthew Gleadell

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That members determine their interpretation of the words 'Leading Group' as set out in Standing Order number 5.

2. Background

- 2.1 Standing Order number 5 states:

Leader of Council/Opposition Spokesperson

At the Annual Meeting the selection of the Leader of the Council shall be announced by the Leading Group on the Town Council and the Opposition Spokesperson(s) by the minority group(s) provided that any changes in those nominations may be made at any time during the Civic Year at a meeting of the Town Council.

- 2.2 Agenda item 4 for the meeting of the Annual Town Council Meeting indicates that there will be an announcement of who is to be the Council Leader by the 'Leading Group'.
- 2.3 In 2023 at last year's Annual Town Council meeting the Independents for Newark and District held a numerical majority of the total number of Councillors on Newark Town Council (10 out of 18). As such they were quite clearly the 'Leading Group' .
- 2.4 Since the last Annual Town Council Meeting, political changes in the make up of the Council are such that the Independents for Newark and District (IFN&D) no longer hold a numerical majority of the total number of Councillors (now 8 out of 18). Despite that they remain the largest group in terms of numbers albeit without an overall majority.
- 2.5 Standing Orders are silent as to interpretation of 'Leading Group'. In recent history where the Council has had no overall majority from a single group or political party there has been no Leader appointed.
- 2.6 If members are content that 'Leading Group' is the group with the most numbers but not a numerical majority then Agenda Item 4 can proceed with the IFN&D confirming their appointed Leader of the Council.
- 2.7 During the course of the last Civic Year the Council has devolved certain powers to the role of Leader including 'Towns Fund Board' representative, recruitment activities and certain procurement decisions. It is expected that these appointments continue after the Annual Town Council Meeting.
- 2.8 There has been a more general expectation that there would continue to be an appointed Leader of the Council following the Annual Town Council meeting.

- 2.9 If members are unable to resolve to accept that Standing Order 5 allows for the Leading Group to be deemed to be the IFN&D as the group with most members, the whole question of firstly having a Leader at all and secondly the process for appointment of a Leader would require review and as such a deferral of any appointment would be recommended to allow for Standing Orders to be re-written on the issue of the appointment of a Leader. A general review of Standing Orders is scheduled in the early part of the new Civic Year.
- 2.10 The role of Leader is one that is uncommon amongst Town and Parish Councils. The role has no specified authority or power greater than any other Councillor attached to it. The success of the role is down to the individual undertaking such role. Generally, although not formally documented the role involves the following:
- To act as a regular liaison with the Town Clerk with a view to then disseminating relevant information in appropriate circumstances to other members of ***all groups and parties***.
 - To provide occasional press quotes that reflect the resolved position of the Council.
 - To provide a report as part of the Agenda for Town Council meetings.
 - To undertake any roles specifically devolved to the Leader.
 - To be an advocate and spokesperson for the Council as a whole (not the group they represent).
 - To help to galvanise the Council in delivering effective governance.
 - To help to co-ordinate Council wide governance activity with the Chairman of relevant Committees, Sub Committees and Working Groups.
 - To be a general sounding board for the Clerk, Senior Officers and other members.
- 2.11 The Clerk has found the role of Leader helpful and useful in the last 12 months. During what has and continues to be a challenging period for local government including Newark Town Council, the often-daily support and input of the Leader has been a valuable resource.

3.0 Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues

- 3.1 Contained in the report.

Background Papers:	Working papers
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

SUBJECT:	Announcement of the Council Leader appointment and Opposition Spokespersons
REPORT BY:	Matthew Gleadell

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the respective Groups/Political parties declare their appointments to the following positions:
1. Leader of the Council – Independents for Newark and District (this is dependent on the outcome of Agenda Item 3).
 2. Opposition Spokesperson – Labour
 3. Opposition Spokesperson – Conservative

2. Background

- 2.1 Standing Order 5 refers to Opposition Spokespersons. In recent years however these roles have also been known and referred to as ‘Group Leaders’ .

3.0 Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues

- 3.1 Contained in the report.

Background Papers:	Working papers
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

SUBJECT:	Composition of and Appointment to Committees
REPORT BY:	Matthew Gleadell

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the members confirm the appointments to the Committees as set out in this report.

2. Background

- 2.1 Standing Order 24 provides that the Council will, at its Annual Meeting, appoint such Committees as they are required to appoint under Standing Order 27.

The current standing committees required to be appointed are:

Finance and General Purposes***Planning******Personnel Sub Committee***

- 2.2 The Council is under no obligation to continue with the same composition of the membership of the Committees and Sub Committees as has been in place in the preceding Civic Year. The current appointments are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The Council has in recent years sought to provide that the Planning Committee and Personnel Sub Committee are proportionately represented by each group, with the number of members on each reflective of the overall political / group make-up of the entire Council. There is no legal obligation to do this however the attached Appendix 2 sets out the current proportionate representation numbers and suggested composition that as close as possible meets the proportional representation figures.
- 2.4 Members will be aware that there is an evolving narrative that looks at some significant changes to the Committee structure that will be subject to further analysis, review and potentially a resolution to change the structure and so changes to the appointments made in response to this report may be subject to further change at a later date.
- 3.0 Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues**
- 3.1 Contained in the report.

Background Papers:	Working papers
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – 2023/2024 Appointments

Finance and General Purposes Committee

- All Town Councillors

Planning Committee

- 9 Town Councillors

No.	Name	Group / Party
1.	Cllr. Lisa Geary (Chairman)	Labour
2.	Cllr. Esther Cropper (Deputy Chairman)	IFND
3.	Cllr. Neil Ross	IFND
4.	Cllr. Susan Crosby	IFND
5.	Cllr. Dawn Campbell	IFND
6.	Cllr. Tom Collier	IFND
7.	Cllr. Barbara Corrigan	IFND
8.	Cllr. Matthew Skinner	Conservative
9.	Cllr. Lynn Roulstone	Labour

Personnel Sub Committee

- 5 Town Councillors

No.	Name	Group / Party
1.	Cllr. Paul Taylor	Labour
2.	Cllr. Diane Ledger	Independent
3.	Cllr. Glenis Rix	Independent
4.	Cllr. Susan Crosby	IFND
5.	Cllr. Matthew Skinner	Conservative

Appendix 2 – Proportional Representation

The overall composition of the Council is as follows:

Group / Party	No. of Councillors	Percentage of Seats
IFND	8	44.4%
Labour	5	27.7%
Unaligned Independents	3	16.6%
Conservative	2	11%

Planning Committee

Assuming a committee of 9.

44.4% of 9 is 3.5

27.7% of 9 is 2.4

16.6% of 9 is 1.5

11% of 9 is 0.99

Based on the above the suggested make-up of the Committee to be as close as possible to being proportionate would be :

IFND 4

Labour 2

Unaligned Independents 2

Conservative 1

If the committee is increased to 10 members, the committee could be :

IFND 4

Labour 3

Unaligned Independents 2

Conservative 1

In the last Civic Year, the unaligned Independents did not take a seat and that seat was therefore filled by an IFND.

Personnel Sub Committee

Assuming a sub committee of 5 members.

IFND 2

Labour 1

Unaligned Independents 1

Conservative 1

It is suggested that if all members currently involved are willing to continue and the wider membership approves, that for consistency, on what is often a confidential and sensitive subcommittee that has ongoing HR matters being handled that it would be sensible to maintain the current membership.

ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

SUBJECT:	GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE ('GPC')
REPORT BY:	MATTHEW GLEADELL (TOWN CLERK)

1. Recommendations

That the Council resolves to declare that it continues to meet the conditions of eligibility for exercise of the General Power of Competence (created by the Localism Act 2011) and as prescribed by the The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012

2. Background**What is General Power of Competence?**

It is a legal provision that gives power to Town and Parish Councils to do anything that an individual can legally do.

When introduced by the Localism Act 2011 it expanded the legal powers already available to Town and Parish Councils.

The ability to use General Power of Competence is subject to the Council meeting certain criteria (see below).

Newark Town Council and GPC

The ability to use GPC by Newark Town Council was first introduced in 2022 following the appointment of the current Town Clerk. The appointment resulted in the Council having a Clerk with a relevant qualification that meets the criteria for use of GPC. Prior to that point Newark Town Council did not meet the criteria to use GPC.

The Criteria

1. That the Clerk holds one of the prescribed qualifications.
2. That at least two thirds of the members are elected Councillors (if too many Councillors are co-opted Councillors the criteria is not met).

Annual Declaration of Eligibility

The legislation requires that there must be an annual declaration from the Council by resolution at its annual meeting that the criteria continues to be met.

3. **Financial, Legal, Equality, Environmental & Risk Issues**
Contained in the report.

Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Matthew Gleadell Tel: 01636 684801 Email: matthew.gleadell@newark.gov.uk