

January 2026 NSDC update by Cllr Karen Roberts & Cllr Peter Harris

December is another month with only one meeting of the Council and Planning Committee. The next Council meeting will be held later this month. In January there will be a meeting of the Policy and Performance Improvement Committee on which Karen Roberts sits. It will have a presentation from Cllr Claire Penny on her view of sustainable economic development in the District. At the time of writing, no specific questions for her have been published, but an up to date summary can be had at <https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/documents/s25002/12.01.26%20-%20PPIC%20Attendance%20by%20Cllr.%20Claire%20Penny.pdf>

At the same meeting there will be a debate on a report with recommendations on life chances for girls. Again, the full report is found at <https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/documents/s25003/12.01.26%20-%20Life%20Chances%20for%20Girls%20Report.pdf>

Any questions or queries about this should be directed to Karen.

Following Peter's question in September relating to the allocation of Government funds to support bus service infrastructure in Southwell and the villages, there still has not been a full response from the Leader of the Council - who has a key role on the East Midlands Mayor's scrutiny. At the December meeting Peter asked about how the Mayor is challenging the Government's decision to end electrification of the Midlands Main Line from Nottingham to London after major expenditure on the bridges to allow it has already taken place. Having faster electric trains will significantly improve choice for residents here - and its very recent decision to 'suspend' the improvements of the line to Birmingham in the Midlands Hub that is now entirely focussed on west of Birmingham do not bode well for the Government's interest in the East Midlands transport system. No full response was made but a written answer is expected.

The Council agreed to fly the Union Flag outside Castle House every day except when other occasions that warrant flying a different flag - such as flying the Nottinghamshire flag

The ending of the District and County Councils in 2028 has taken a huge amount of officer time and energy. Despite being opposed by the majority of residents, the Government insisted that a scheme was put forward last month. The new Councils will be decided by the Government from a range of options but most of which split the county into two halves, north and south. Southwell and the village's representation and voice will be made by one or possibly two councillors with a large number of villages and the town to support. At present there are four. Again, this will be decided by the Government and election to this post[s] will be in 2027. Karen and Peter have challenged the huge costs of this - and the likelihood of a deterioration in service as a consequence too.

The Government seems keen to increase centralisation with decisions taken in Whitehall and by the East Midlands Mayor rather than allowing decisions that affect residents at the closest to the people in the villages and towns.

Peter Harris and Karen Roberts