



**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CABINET**

**TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2011**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford

**PRESENT:**

Councillors J N Clarke (Chairman), J A Cranswick, J E Fearon, Mrs D J Mason, R Hetherington and Councillor D G Bell

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors S J Boote, Mrs D Boote, C J Evans, R M Jones, A MacInnes and G R Mallender.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:**

A Graham	Chief Executive (AG)
C Bullett	Deputy Chief Executive (CB)
S Griffiths	Deputy Chief Executive (SG)
J Hicks	Strategic Human Resources Manager
P Randle	Deputy Chief Executive (PR)
N Morton	Head of Financial Services
D Swaine	Head of Corporate Services

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

There were no apologies.

**54. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mason declared a personal interest in item 6 'Cotgrave Master Plan' as a Spirita Board Member.

**55. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11 January 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**56. Financial Plans and Strategy 2011-12 to 2015-16**

Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Head of Financial Services outlining the financial plans and strategy for the period 2011/12 to 2015/16. He explained that the report set out in detail the financial challenges facing the Council and the extensive work undertaken to engage all Councillors and representative residents in identifying options for the way forward. He believed that this extensive engagement had been very useful in increasing awareness of the challenges facing the Council and determining viable ways to meet these.

Commenting further Councillor Clarke made reference to the reduced grant settlement the Council had received and the funding gap this created. By

referring to the report he outlined the approaches available to the Council to address this issue. He stated that an increase in Council Tax to bridge the gap was not a viable solution due to its negative impact on residents and also the loss of the benefits that Central Government would provide for making no increase. Furthermore any such increase could be capped through Government intervention.

Another option was to make across the board cuts to services to bridge the gap, however such an approach would not be aligned to delivery of the Council's priorities and therefore any such cuts would not protect or preserve services that mattered most. Alternatively a planned and measured approach incorporating a combination of business cost reduction, income generation and service redesign presented the best way forward. Furthermore such an approach would build upon the principles agreed by Cabinet in September last year when it considered the initial budget report.

Councillor Clarke referred to the Members' budget setting workshops and how these principles had informed the suggestions that had been made. The suggestions had then informed the development of a four-year plan of service redesign and review and also other actions to address the financial situation. Commenting further on the proposals considered by Members and residents in their respective workshops, Councillor Clarke referred to the table set out at page 30 of the report which identified potential savings forming part of the actions to address the funding gap. He added that he believed that options 1, 2c, 3, 4 5 6 and 8 within the table should be taken forward as part of the budget savings and these were supported by Cabinet.

Councillor Cranswick supported the proposal and a further paper exemplifying its impact on the budget and five year projections was circulated. He stated that the challenges facing the Council were unprecedented and made more difficult by the fact that much of the impact was felt within the first two years of the four year plan. He added that the Council was a very efficient and effective organisation that had always managed its finances very well. This had been recognised by external validation for the efficient use of its resources and the value for money it provided. Consequently as a lean and well run organisation the financial deficit heightened the challenges faced, but it did mean the Council was well placed to plan the way forward and maintain excellent service delivery. Furthermore it was important that the level of Council Tax remained as it was, in order to maintain a commitment to not increase it.

Councillor Cranswick went onto refer to the extensive engagement that had been undertaken as part of the development of the budget proposals and the financial strategy. He believed that this demonstrated a transparent process for setting a budget which was fair and proportionate given the challenges facing the Council. He added that as part of the engagement with residents they had suggested that an increase in Council Tax could help bridge the funding gap. However, such an increase would lead to capping by central Government and it was important to have a planned, rational and fair approach to meeting the challenges, not solely reliant on increased Council Tax income. On this he believed that it was imperative that there was no Council Tax increase.

Councillor Fearon concurred with these comments and added that the Members' workshops had enabled all Councillors to be actively involved in

determining the way forward. He stated that this process had ensured Councillors, as community leaders, had been able to identify and consider the best options to deal with the difficulties faced.

The Chief Executive referred to the paper circulated setting out adjustments to calculations within the report arising from some very recent changes to the final grant settlement. Councillor Clarke explained that these changes related to the financing arrangements for concessionary fares and where responsibility for delivery of the concessions fell. He added that this made some adjustments to the figures reducing the impact of the settlement in year one, however this was then offset by a greater impact in year two. Consequently some of the calculations and figures had been revised to reflect this.

Commenting further Councillor Clarke stated the success of the budget and the longer term financial strategy was dependant on meeting the savings options within the report which had been identified through the Member workshops and engagement with residents. The Deputy Chief Executive (CB) stated that annex three of the report detailed these options and the paper circulated showed the impact on revenue funding of the savings options 1, 2c, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 as set out at the table on page 30 of the report. The paper circulated also incorporated adjustments, where necessary, to the figures as consequences of the recent information provide by Government in respect of concessionary fares.

Councillor Mason stated that the financial strategy presented a balanced approach enabling the Council to meet the challenges it faced. She believed that both Members and officers had worked hard to identify the best way forward with Members from across all parties working well together to determine sensible and clear options that were in the best interests of the Borough and its residents. Councillor Hetherington agreed with this stating that he believed the strategy provided a fair and sensible way forward.

The Chief Executive emphasised that it was important to be clear that the financial strategy set out a sensible and planned approach to meeting the challenges. He added that the diagram at page 40 of the report highlighted the importance of the principles of business cost reduction, income generation and service redesign as agreed by Cabinet in September last year when it had considered the initial budget report. He went on to state that service redesign would be an integral part of meeting the challenges, however, there was no predetermination with respect to how services would be financed, configured or delivered. Where necessary Member engagement would form part of the process for determining how services could be redesigned evidencing a fair and transparent approach.

In conclusion Councillor Clarke thanked Members and officers for the hard work undertaken in the development of the financial strategy and the plans for the next four years. He added that by delivering the plan the Council would be able to maintain its excellent status by providing quality, cost effective services and meeting the needs of residents.

RESOLVED that Cabinet supports and proposes to Council for approval:-

- i. the capital programme as set out in **Annex 1**, and that officers be authorised to take the necessary steps to implement the first two years of that programme;
- ii. the prudential indicators as set out in **Annex 2**;
- iii. delegation to the Section 151 Officer the authority to effect movements between the separately agreed authorised and operational limits for external debt in respect of external borrowing and other long term liabilities, in accordance with optional appraisal and best value for money for the authority;
- iv. The revenue estimates for 2011/12, including the savings options 1,2c,3,4,5,6 and 8 and including the contingency provision, proposed at £80,000 based on the financial strategy as set out in **Annex 3 updated by the attached projection and budget requirement**;
- v. A nil increase in the level of Council Tax for general Borough purposes, leaving the Band D rate at £113.22, with the consequent use of revenue balances;
- vi. The medium term financial strategy as set out in **Annex 3**;
- vii. The four year plan as set out at **Appendix 1** within **Annex 3**;
- viii. The treasury management strategy as set out in **Annex 4**;

#### 57. **Electoral Review Opportunity**

Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Chief Executive indicating that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had recently requested the Council's view on the issue of electoral reviews. Consequently Cabinet's views were sort on recommending to Council the submission of a formal request for an electoral review for the Borough of Rushcliffe.

The report indicated that the LGBCE was the body responsible for electoral arrangements in England and it was reviewing its practices and procedures with regards to electoral reviews. In its recent communication with the Council the Commission had indicated that it intended to stream-line its review process so more reviews could be done. By way of a table the report set out the ratio of electorate per Councillor for authorities across the Nottinghamshire area, indicating that Rushcliffe had one councillor for every 1,727 electors. The report also set out the stages of the review process and the anticipated timescale. It also highlighted the potential financial implications of a potential reduction in the number of Councillors stating that any such impact would not come into place until 2015 at the earliest.

Councillor Clarke stated that it was important for Cabinet to recognise that failure to ensure electoral representation that was fair and equitable, restricted the Council's ability to deliver services reflective of local need. Councillor Cranswick stated that he agreed with these comments and in view of the wider

fundamental challenges facing local authorities it was timely to request an electoral review.

RESOLVED to recommend to Council that a request be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to undertake a future electoral review of the Borough of Rushcliffe.

#### 58. **Cotgrave Masterplan**

Councillor Cranswick presented the report of the Chief Executive detailing the required leadership from the Council and its partners, to champion and support the community in delivering the regeneration of Cotgrave Town Centre.

By way of a presentation the Chief Executive provided Cabinet with further details regarding the masterplanning process. He stated that the process for masterplanning in the Town Centre had commenced in July 2009 following a successful funding bid. It was important that the centre was linked to future developments at the colliery site, which had recently been granted planning approval. The Chief Executive added that the masterplan intended to regenerate the Town Centre providing economic benefits to different parts of the community. The process had been taken forward through engaging with the local community in order to develop proposals that would regenerate and revitalise the area whilst retaining its character and heritage.

The presentation included a map outlining the two preferred masterplan proposals and the Chief Executive summarised the impact of these on the geographical make up of the area particularly the high street, green spaces and houses on Scotland Bank. He also identified the differences between the two preferred plans and the rationale for these. The maps also highlighted the proposal to include a joint public services facility bringing together facilities required by the local community particularly library provision and health services.

A further map detailed public and private land ownership within the masterplan. The Chief Executive explained that a large amount of the land was owned publicly either by the Borough or County Council. He added that bringing the shopping centre into public ownership would facilitate the implementation of the scheme. He confirmed a further report would be presented to Cabinet detailing proposals for this acquisition.

The Chief Executive detailed the next steps in the development of the masterplan, particularly in relation to land assembly and funding. He stated that working with partners was an essential element of a successful delivery of the plan. Therefore it was particularly important that partners were committed to the project and were clear on their responsibilities. Additionally a developer would need to be appointed to oversee the Colliery and the Town Centre element of the project ensuring that they remained linked at all times. Furthermore it would be important to establish open and transparent governance arrangements with the necessary Councillor involvement. Additionally any governance arrangements should sit alongside proper mechanisms for community engagement involving residents in the decision making process.

In conclusion the Chief Executive stated that the regeneration was a long term project and the consultation undertaken so far had indicated overall support for the masterplan's vision. He stressed that it was important as part of delivery of the plan to arrange joint working opportunities, in order to deliver services in the most economical way. It was also important to ensure programmes and interventions were meeting overall objectives and outcomes in relation to social and economic well being.

Councillor Cranswick thanked the Chief Executive for his presentation and stated that the masterplan was a very exciting project which would provide real benefits to Cotgrave and its residents. He added it was proposed that the Council's capital programme would include provision to support the project and more detailed financial modelling would be provided in the future to Cabinet regarding the potential acquisition of the shopping centre. He recognised the importance of effective governance arrangements and engagement with all partners at the formative stages of the project, particularly the Town Council and residents.

Councillor Bell stated he supported the approach being taken and he believed that the masterplan was well supported and presented sound long term proposals for the regeneration of the area. Councillor Fearon concurred with this and added that he believed the proposals would help address some of the difficulties within the area whilst retaining its character and heritage.

In conclusion Councillor Clarke stated that the masterplan presented an opportunity to regenerate and revitalise the area, whilst retaining many of the excellent buildings in Cotgrave that were integral to its unique and attractive character.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- i. Endorses the principle of Rushcliffe Borough Council working in partnership to secure an improved town centre environment for Cotgrave through regeneration of the area in conjunction with the development of the Cotgrave colliery site;
- ii. Supports the need to minimise the risk to the town centre regeneration project by Rushcliffe Borough Council working towards assembling the required site with its public sector partners;
- iii. Receives a future report detailing the feasibility and acquisition options to procure the shopping centre;
- iv. Supports the inclusion of this scheme within the Council's 2011/12-2015/16 capital programme;
- v. Supports the proposed use of the Rushcliffe Borough Council/Spirita partnership funding for housing acquisitions in the town centre area.

**59. Review of the Terms of Reference for the Employment Appeals Committee and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules**

Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Head of Corporate Services outlining the findings of the review of the terms of reference for the Employment Appeals Committee and the Council's Officer and Employment Procedure rules. The report indicated that at its meeting on the 18 January 2011, the Corporate Governance Group had considered these revisions and

they were now before Cabinet for consideration prior to submission to Council for approval.

The report set out the present terms of reference for the Employment Appeals Committee indicating that these were too far reaching and beyond its originally intended purpose. Subsequently it set out revised terms of reference at paragraph eight explaining that these changes were proposed to ensure consistency with the Council's scheme of delegation and the committee's true role and purpose.

Appendix A of the report set out revised Officer Employment Procedure rules with minor changes being made to bring them up-to-date with the Council's structure and ensure compliance with the regulations within the Local Government and Housing Act.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:-

- i. Endorses the revised terms of reference for the Council's Employment Appeals committee as set out in paragraph 7 of the report;
- ii. Endorses the amended Officer Employment Procedure Rules at Appendix A.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends the revisions to Council.

**60. Capital Budget Monitoring December 2010 – Period 9**

Councillor Cranswick presented the report of the Head of Financial Services detailing the capital budget monitoring at period 9. The report indicated that after nine months of the financial year the difference between the gross Capital budget and the anticipated final spend for the year equated to £519,636. The detailed capital monitoring position had been reviewed by the Corporate Governance Group at its meeting on 18 January 2011 and was now before Cabinet for consideration.

Councillor Cranswick referred to the table within the report highlighting the schemes where significant areas of variance were anticipated at year end. Subsequently the report sought adjustment to the capital programme relating to the Community Contact Centre Spokes, Decent Homes Funding, West Bridgford Environmental Improvements and Vehicle replacement.

RESOLVED that the capital programme be adjusted for the amendments to the Capital Programme, relating to the Community Contact Centre Spokes, Decent Homes Funding, West Bridgford Environmental Improvements and Vehicle Replacement.

**61. Revenue Budget Monitoring – December 2010 Period 9**

Councillor Cranswick presented the report of the Head of Financial Services detailing the revenue budget monitoring which showed an overall under spend at the end of December of £506,046. This included interest income which was showing a favourable variance of £46,484 and a current under spend on services of £459,598. The report indicated that the detailed revenue budget monitoring position had been considered by the Corporate Governance Group

at its meeting on the 18 January 2011 and was now before Cabinet for consideration.

RESOLVED that Cabinet endorse the action being taken in relation to the Revenue budget monitoring position at period 9

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

CHAIRMAN