

**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CABINET  
TUESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2017**

Held At 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford

**PRESENT:**

Councillors R L Butler, J N Clarke, D J Mason, S J Robinson, R G Upton

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors R M Jones, A MacInnes and G R Mallender attended as observers.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:**

A Graham Chief Executive  
P Linfield Executive Manager - Finance and Corporate Services  
A Poole Constitutional Services Team Leader

**APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE:**

Councillor J E Cottee

**40. Declarations of Interest**

There were none declared.

**41. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 January 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**42. 2017/18 Budget and Financial Strategy**

Councillor Clarke informed Cabinet that a proposed change to the budget papers would be proposed. These would reflect the recent press release issued and that information regarding the detail would be circulated during the discussion.

Councillor Robinson presented the report on the 2017/18 Budget and Financial Strategy which detailed the 2017/18 budget, the 5 year Medium Term Financial Strategy from 2017/18 to 2021/22 which included the revenue budget, the proposed capital programme, the Transformation Strategy and Programme, and the Treasury Management Strategy. He highlighted that there was a change to the special expenses data and new information was circulated to Cabinet.

Councillor Robinson explained that it was important to consider the background in the way the budget was prepared as there were many factors involved. Councillors were informed that the Revenue Support Grant had reduced by in excess of £3million during 2013-2020; that the localisation of 100% business rates created volatility, along with the risk posed by Ratcliffe

on Soar Power Station who were appealing their business rates; and of the potential impact of the central government policy changes to the formula for the New Homes Bonus which would have an adverse impact on Rushcliffe (and Councils generally) particularly as it was a significant area of targeted growth.

Councillors were informed that government policy changes resulted in a diversion of resources to those local authorities who carry the responsibility for adult social care and that funding therefore would be diverted away from district councils. He added that the Brexit negotiations, due to commence imminently, could potentially have significant impact on budgets and that there was now an additional pension liability of £600,000 which the Council had to bear.

The budget workshop held recently analysed the data and made all aware of the risks in preparing budgets. Councillor Robinson explained the proposal to increase the council tax by £4.95 per year, represented a 4% increase at 9p per week. He highlighted that Rushcliffe Borough Council remained the lowest district for council tax in Nottinghamshire and remained in the lowest quartile in the country.

Councillor Robinson explained that the Band D charge for each of the special expense areas - West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth – had reduced as tax bases had increased, although the overall costs were similar. He informed Cabinet that the business rates had increased by £0.5million and highlighted again the risk posed by Ratcliffe on Soar Power station which formed a significant part of the budget.

The pensions liability of £600,000 was a late change and was a result of the triennial revaluation impacting upon all the Nottinghamshire authorities to ensure future pension fund liabilities are met.

Regarding the Revenue Budget, Councillors were informed that a £1million variance to 2020 was identified and that it was proposed that the borough council would move forward in this financial year with that variance. Councillor Robinson explained that the situation placed a great deal of pressure on the Council's Transformation Strategy and that to address this, a combination of increasing revenue and decreasing costs would be deployed. He concluded that it would be challenging to balance the budget as 2020 approached.

Councillors were informed that a new car parking charges structure would be introduced for car parks in West Bridgford. Councillor Clarke explained that these changes were brought about following feedback from the traders and members of the public, who had highlighted that people had experienced difficulty in paying the recently revised fees and that the traders had noticed a reduction in customer numbers. Details of the revised charging schedule were circulated to Cabinet members which showed that the fee would be 50p per 30 minutes up to a maximum of three hours, with a more prohibitive charge thereafter. He explained that the Council had listened to the views of residents and businesses in bringing about the revised charging schedule. The changes are expected to be cost neutral and to be more acceptable to customers and to support an increase in visitor footfall. Additionally, the changes brought

about a universal charging regime across all car parks in West Bridgford in place from April.

Councillor Robinson reflected on the comments made and added that the impact of the New Homes Bonus would result in a reduction in revenue of £0.5million. He highlighted that representations had been made to government and that, as the funding was not used for revenue expenditure, the impact for the Borough Council would be to the capital programme. However, he recognised the potential impact on local authorities who used the Bonus to support revenue spending. Regarding adult social care, Councillor Robinson reflected on the difficulties shown in the media, and highlighted the Borough Council's support for maintaining service delivery.

Regarding future capital ambitions of the Council, Councillor Robinson explained that these were detailed on Page 25 (paragraph 9.2) of the draft budget setting report and included the Cotgrave Regeneration, Land North of Bingham, support for Registered Housing Providers and Disabled Facilities Grants. Councillors were reminded of the impact of the New Homes Bonus on the capital schemes detailed.

Regarding reserves (detailed on page 18 of the draft budget setting report), Councillors were informed that these reflected the large capital expenditure over the last 2 years, including the Arena, Cotgrave Regeneration and Bridgford Hall redevelopment, which had resulted in a reduction in reserves estimated to be at £4.6million this year.

Councillors recognised and thanked the Chief Executive and his team and in particular the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services, his team and other officers and councillors in producing this draft budget strategy.

Councillor Robinson concluded that the pressures experienced by the Borough Council were unprecedented and highlighted that he expected the balanced budget to deliver the growth and ambitions detailed in the Strategy.

Councillor Clarke recognised the difficulties of other local authorities and stated that the changes to the New Homes Bonus represented a significant reduction in additional income for the Borough Council. He added that it was a bonus to support and reward extra housing growth, that strenuous representation had been made, and would continue to be made, to government; and that whilst the difficulties with the cost of adult social care services were recognised, he believed that this should be funded from elsewhere.

Councillor Upton added that he was mindful that public finances were generally still fragile. He recognised that the report presented an imaginative and balanced budget prepared in difficult economic circumstances and acknowledged the balancing act of reducing costs and increasing income. He stated that he believed that the public were prepared to pay more for quality services and highlighted the green bins scheme, which had increased in charges from £30 to £35 per year, although it was unknown how people would react. He added that assets needed to be maintained and cited Edwalton Golf Course as an example, adding that the Borough Council should demonstrate to the public that it maintained its assets.

Councillor Mason highlighted the 5 year capital programme and stated that it was good that it was still planned to deliver this. She outlined that, regarding the Arena, there were plans to extend the parking provision as the build had been such a success.

Councillor Butler echoed the comments made, stating that these were unprecedented times and that the investments in capital work in the borough were for the long term future of the borough and residents. He cited the Cotgrave Regeneration as an example, where the visible work had started in the town centre this week.

Councillor Clarke concluded by commenting on the ambitious investment strategy, with planned investment of over £10million in the business sector to support the securing of wealth, health and wellbeing of the community.

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council:

- a) adopts the budget setting report and associated financial strategies 2017/18 to 2021/22 (attached **Annex**) including the Transformation Strategy and Efficiency Statement (**Appendix 3**) to deliver efficiencies over the five year period;
- b) adopts the Capital Programme as set out in **Appendix 4**;
- c) adopts the Treasury Management Strategy at **Appendix 5**;
- d) sets Rushcliffe's 2017/18 Council Tax for a Band D property at £127.89 (increase from 2016/17 of £4.95 or 4.03%); and
- e) sets the Special Expenses for West Bridgford, Ruddington and Keyworth, **Appendix 1**, resulting in the following Band D Council tax levels for the Special Expense Areas:
  - i) West Bridgford £52.35 (£52.92 in 2016/17)
  - ii) Keyworth £1.46 (£1.48 in 2016/17)
  - iii) Ruddington £3.46 (£3.53 in 2016/17).

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

CHAIRMAN