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Our reference: LRJ
Your reference:
Date: 15 June 2011

To all Members of the Council

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL will be held on Thursday 23 June 2011 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford to consider the following items of business.

Yours sincerely

Head of Corporate Services

AGENDA

Opening Prayer

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes

To receive as a correct record the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 19 May 2011 (pages 1 - 5).

4. Mayor's Announcements
5. Leader's Announcements
6. Chief Executive's Announcements
7. Appointment to Unallocated Positions on Committees

The report of the Head of Corporate Services will be tabled at the meeting.

8. Officer Employment Procedure Rules – Referral from Cabinet

The report of the Head of Corporate Services is attached (pages 6 - 13).

9. Scrutiny Annual Report

The report of the Head of Corporate Services is attached (pages 14 - 35).

10. To answer questions under Standing Order 11(2)

11. Notice of Motion

- (a) The following Notice of Motion will be proposed by Councillor R M Jones and seconded by Councillor K A Khan:

Council recommends that a West Bridgford Member Group be established to examine the specific local issues facing West Bridgford from the imminent Sharphill development, to hear the views of residents and community groups and partners of the Council and to comment to Cabinet accordingly.

- (b) The following Notice of Motion will be proposed by Councillor S J Boote and seconded by Councillor R M Jones

Council regrets the considerably reduced standard of grass-cutting and the increased number of complaints following the decision by the County Council to withdraw from the bilateral agreement for cutting County grass and Borough trees. Council resolves to continue to press the County Council to return the standard and frequency of grass-cutting and tree-cutting to their former state.

- (c) The following Notice of Motion will be proposed by Councillor G R Mallender and seconded by Councillor S J Boote

Council regrets the decision to charge for the use of the new public toilets in Bridgford Park and recommends that no entry charge is made for these or any new public toilets.

- (d) The following Notice of Motion will be proposed by Councillor J N Clarke and seconded by Councillor J A Cranswick

This Council recognises and welcomes the Government's continued investment and support in developing the national infrastructure, but believes the Government should halt any further investment in the High Speed (HS2) project at this time, and re-consider its national infrastructure priorities and where it focuses its funding allocations.

This Council believes that the funding allocated to HS2 should be re-directed to assist areas around the country by supporting and funding infrastructure improvements to help re-vitalise local economies.

To help regeneration of the East Midlands, and in particular Nottinghamshire and Rushcliffe, this Council calls on funding by Central Government to be used, for example, to:

- a) Improve the existing rail facilities to ensure increased reliability
- b) Bring forward the electrification of the Midland Mainline
- c) Accelerate the upgrading and dualling of the A453 urgently and without delay
- d) Increase the speed and scale of investment in high speed broadband countrywide, to assist in supporting both urban and rural economies

- e) Improve access links to East Midlands Airport

Consequently, this Council will continue to work with other local authorities and businesses to campaign and lobby, as appropriate, to achieve these aims.

Meeting Room Guidance

Fire Alarm - Evacuation - in the event of an alarm sounding you should evacuate the building using the nearest fire exit, normally through the Council Chamber. You should assemble in the Nottingham Forest car park adjacent to the main gates.

Toilets - Facilities, including those for the disabled, are located opposite Committee Room 2.

Mobile Phones – For the benefit of other users please ensure that your mobile phone is switched off whilst you are in the meeting.

Microphones - When you are invited to speak please press the button on your microphone, a red light will appear on the stem. Please ensure that you switch this off after you have spoken.

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

Summary

This report sets out the revised Officer Employment Procedure Rules considered by Cabinet in May 2011 and recommended to Council for approval.

Recommendation

That Council:-

- (i) Approves the revised Officer Employment Procedure Rules set out at appendix A of the report, and
- (ii) Authorises the Head of Corporate Services to make the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution to reflect this.

Detail

1. At its meeting on 8 February 2011 Cabinet considered a report setting out amended Officer Employment Procedures Rules, as contained within Part 4 of the Council's Constitution. These amended rules were recommended for approval by Council at its meeting in March. During Council's consideration of the matter further clarification was sought regarding paragraph two of the Officer Employment Procedures Rules that relate to recruitment to the posts of Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executives.
2. Council resolved that the amended rules be referred back to Cabinet for further consideration and clarification. Subsequently Cabinet reconsidered the rules at its May meeting taking into account Council's comments in relation to paragraph two. Cabinet also considered the levels of flexibility required in relation to the process for the recruitment to the posts of Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executives, particularly whether the current arrangements should be retained or an alternative recommendation be put to Council. Consequently Cabinet determined that paragraph two of the rules should be amended, as set out below, and this should be recommended to Council for approval:

2. Recruitment of Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executives

Where the Council proposes to appoint a Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive it should determine the scope of intended applicants, and whether the stated post(s) should be advertised internally, externally or both.

In all cases, the Council will:

- (a) *draw up a statement specifying:*

- (i) *the duties of the officer concerned; and*
 - (ii) *any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;*
- (b) *make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it; and*
 - (c) *make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in paragraph (a) to be sent to any person on request.*
3. In considering the matter Cabinet recognised that whilst external recruitment advertising for the posts of Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executives could widen the scope for candidates, it would carry a likely financial implication. Therefore it was important to retain flexibility, giving Council the option to determine if the posts should be advertised internally, externally or if both methods should be used.
 4. In making its recommendation Cabinet also recognised that providing flexibility for such recruitment mirrored the Authority's Managing Change Policy which states "we wish to appoint the best person for the job but retain flexibility to deviate in certain circumstances or financial constraints".

Risk and uncertainties

5. It is also important to emphasise that on each occasion it will be for Council to determine the scope of the appointment process.
6. In the present financial climate it is important to retain flexibility for recruitment to the posts identified in order to minimise costs. However it is also important to ensure that the scope of such a recruitment process is wide enough to attract suitably experienced, skilled and qualified candidates.

Financial Comments

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report however undertaking external advertising for the posts identified in this report carries a significant costs dependant on its extent and the methods used.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act

There are no direct implications from this report.

Diversity

There are no direct equality and diversity implications arising from this report. However in order for the Council to effectively fulfil its obligations and expectations with regard to diversity and equality it is essential it has in place clear Officer Employment Procedure Rules compliant with the rules set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Background Papers Available for Inspection:

Rushcliffe Borough Council Constitution Review of the terms of reference for the Employment Appeals Committee and the Officer Employment Procedure Rules – Cabinet report 8 February 2011 – Council report 3 March 2011

PROCEDURE RULES***OFFICER EMPLOYMENT***

These procedure rules incorporate (in paragraphs 5 to 10) the provisions which authorities are required to include in their Standing Orders relating to staff under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 and shall be interpreted in accordance with those Regulations.

1. Recruitment and Appointment**(a) Declarations**

- (i) The Council will draw up a statement requiring any candidate for appointment as an officer to state in writing whether they are related to an existing Councillor or senior officer of the Council; or of the partner of such persons.
- (ii) No candidate so related to a Councillor or a senior officer will be appointed without the authority of the Chief Executive or a Deputy Chief Executive or an officer nominated by him/her.

(b) Seeking support for appointment

- (i) Subject to (iii), the Council will disqualify any applicant who directly or indirectly seeks the support of any Councillor for any appointment with the Council. The content of this paragraph will be included in any recruitment information.
- (ii) Subject to paragraph (iii), no Councillor will seek support for any person for any appointment with the Council.
- (iii) This would not preclude a Councillor from providing an official reference for an applicant, provided the Councillor did not participate or seek to influence in any other way in the appointment.

2. **Recruitment of Head of Paid Service and Deputy Chief Executives**

Where the Council proposes to appoint a Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive it should determine the scope of intended applicants, and whether the stated post(s) should be advertised internally, externally or both.

In all cases, the Council will:

- (a) draw up a statement specifying:
 - (iii) the duties of the officer concerned; and
 - (iv) any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed;
- (b) make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it; and
- (c) make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in paragraph (a) to be sent to any person on request.

3. **Appointment of Head of Paid Service, Monitoring officer and Section 151 officer**

The full Council or a committee appointed by the Council for this purpose will approve the appointment of the head of paid service, and appointment to the roles of Monitoring officer and the Section 151 officer.

4. **Appointment of Deputy Chief Executives**

A committee of the Council will appoint Deputy Chief Executives.

5. **Appointment and Dismissal of Head of Paid Service**

Where a committee, sub-committee or officer is discharging on behalf of the Council the function of the appointment or dismissal of the Head of Paid Service, the Council must approve the appointment before an offer of appointment is made to him/her or, as the case may be, must approve the dismissal before notice of dismissal is given to him/her.

6. Notification Procedures – Appointments

- (1) In this paragraph, “appointor” means, in relation to the appointment of a person as an officer of the authority, the Council, where a committee, sub-committee or officer is discharging the function of appointment on behalf of the Council, that committee, sub-committee or officer, as the case may be.
- (2) An offer of an appointment as an officer referred to in Appendix 1 must not be made by the appointor until–
 - (a) the appointor has notified the proper officer of the name of the person to whom the appointor wishes to make the offer and any other particulars which the appointor considers are relevant to the appointment;
 - (b) The proper officer has notified every Member of the Cabinet of–
 - (i) the name of the person to whom the appointor wishes to make the offer;
 - (ii) any other particulars relevant to the appointment which the appointor has notified to the proper officer; and
 - (iii) the period within which any objection to the making of the offer is to be made by the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to the proper officer; and
 - (c) either–
 - (i) the Leader has, within the period specified in the notice under sub-paragraph (b) (iii), notified the appointor that neither he nor any other Member of the Cabinet has any objection to the making of the offer;
 - (ii) the proper officer has notified the appointor that no objection was received by him within that period from the Leader; or
 - (iii) the appointor is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader within that period is not material or is not well-founded.

7. Notification Procedures – Dismissals

- (a) In this paragraph, “dismissor” means, in relation to the dismissal of an officer of the authority, the authority or, where a committee, sub-committee or another officer is discharging the function of dismissal on behalf of the Council, that committee, sub-committee or other officer, as the case may be.
- (b) Notice of the dismissal of an officer referred to in Appendix 1 must not be given by the dismissor until-
 - i. the dismissor has notified the proper officer of the name of the person who the dismissor wishes to dismiss and any other particulars which the dismissor considers are relevant to the dismissal;
 - ii. the proper officer has notified every Member of the Cabinet of-
 - A. the name of the person who the dismissor wishes to dismiss;
 - B. any other particulars relevant to the dismissal which the dismissor has notified to the proper officer; and
 - C. the period within which any objection to the dismissal is to be made by the Leader on behalf of the Cabinet to the proper officer; and
 - iii. either-
 - A. the Leader has, within the period specified in the notice under sub-paragraph (b) (iii), notified the dismissor that neither he nor any other Member of the Cabinet has any objection to the dismissal;
 - B. the proper officer has notified the dismissor that no objection was received by him within that period from the Leader; or
 - C. the dismissor is satisfied that any objection received from the Leader within that period is not material or is not well-founded.

8. Cabinet Member on Committees

Where a committee or sub-committee is discharging, on behalf of the Council, the function of the appointment or dismissal of any officer referred to in Appendix 1, at least one Member of the Cabinet must be a Member of the committee or sub-committee.

9. Member Involvement

- (a) Save as provided for in sub-paragraphs (b) and (c) below, the function of the appointment and dismissal of, and taking disciplinary action against, a member of staff must be discharged, on behalf of the Council, by the head of paid service or by an officer nominated by him.
- (b) The above requirement shall not apply to the appointment or dismissal of, or disciplinary action against an officer referred to in Appendix 1.
- (c) Sub-paragraph (a) above shall not prevent any Member from serving as a Member of the Employment Appeals Committee.

10. Disciplinary Action – Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer

- (a) No disciplinary action in respect of the head of paid service, the Monitoring officer or the Chief Finance officer (Section 151 officer), except action described in sub-paragraph (b) below, may be taken by the Council, or by a committee, a sub-committee, a joint committee on which the Council is represented or any other person acting on behalf of the Council, other than in accordance with a recommendation in a report made by a designated independent person under regulation 7 of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001.
- (b) The action referred to in sub-paragraph (a) above is suspension of the officer for the purposes of investigating the alleged misconduct occasioning the action; and any such suspension must be on full pay and terminate no later than the expiry of two months beginning on the day on which the suspension takes effect.

APPENDIX 1

The posts listed in paragraph 3 of Part II of Schedule 1 to the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) regulations 2001, namely:

- (a) The head of paid service (Chief Executive)
- (b) Statutory chief officer (Section 151 officer)
- (c) Non-statutory chief officer (Deputy Chief Executives)
- (d) Deputy chief officer (Heads of Service)
- (e) Assistant for a political group

Note: the above posts are defined more specifically in the Regulations and the Strategic Human Resources Manager will be able to advise which posts on the establishment fall within the definitions.

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE

The Scrutiny annual report provides a review of the work undertaken by the Council's four scrutiny groups during 2010/11. Over the year, the following subjects have been scrutinised and monitored

Partnership Delivery Group

- Effectiveness of designated public places orders in Rushcliffe
- Domestic violence support work
- The wide range of partnerships
- Working with Sure Start
- Annual review of the Rushcliffe Sustainable Community Strategy
- Annual review of partnership with Spirita
- Annual review of leisure centre contract with Parkwood Leisure
- Annual review of First Lets and future options
- Update on the partnership with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club
- Update on West Bridgford Fire Station
- Progress Report on the Rushcliffe Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plans

Community Development Group

- Community priorities and proposed solutions
- Engaging and identifying needs of key groups
- Building relationships to ensure that policies empower communities
- Reputation management gained via communications and promotion
- Town and Parish Councils shared working (identifying opportunities whilst establishing priorities)

Performance Management Board

- The new Council website project
- Call-in of improvements to the public toilets in Bridgford Park
- Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011
- Review of the Council's constitution
- Fuel Poverty – National Indicator 187
- Children and young people
- Ombudsman's annual letter
- Review of customer feedback system
- Edwalton Golf Courses – annual report of the contract by Glendale Golf
- Review of the Rushcliffe Play Strategy
- Call-in of the establishment of a Non Profit Distributing Arrangement for the leisure management contract with Parkwood Leisure

- Performance monitoring - update on the national picture
- East Leake Leisure Centre – annual report
- Update on the climate change action plan
- Civil Parking Enforcement Contract update

Corporate Governance Group

- Statement of Accounts:
- To examine the outturn and statement of accounts, making comments and recommendations to Council.
- Report on the Annual Governance Statement
- Annual Treasury Management Activity report:
- Fraud and Irregularities:
- Capital and Revenue budget monitoring:
- Periodic reports on the findings of Internal Audit/due diligence/controls over the key risk areas
- Certification of Claims and Returns – Annual Report
- Joint Working Protocol – Financial Statements Audit
- 2010/11 Audit Plan

Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Council endorses the work undertaken by the four scrutiny groups.

<p>Financial Comments</p> <p>There are no direct financial implications arising from the matters in this report</p>
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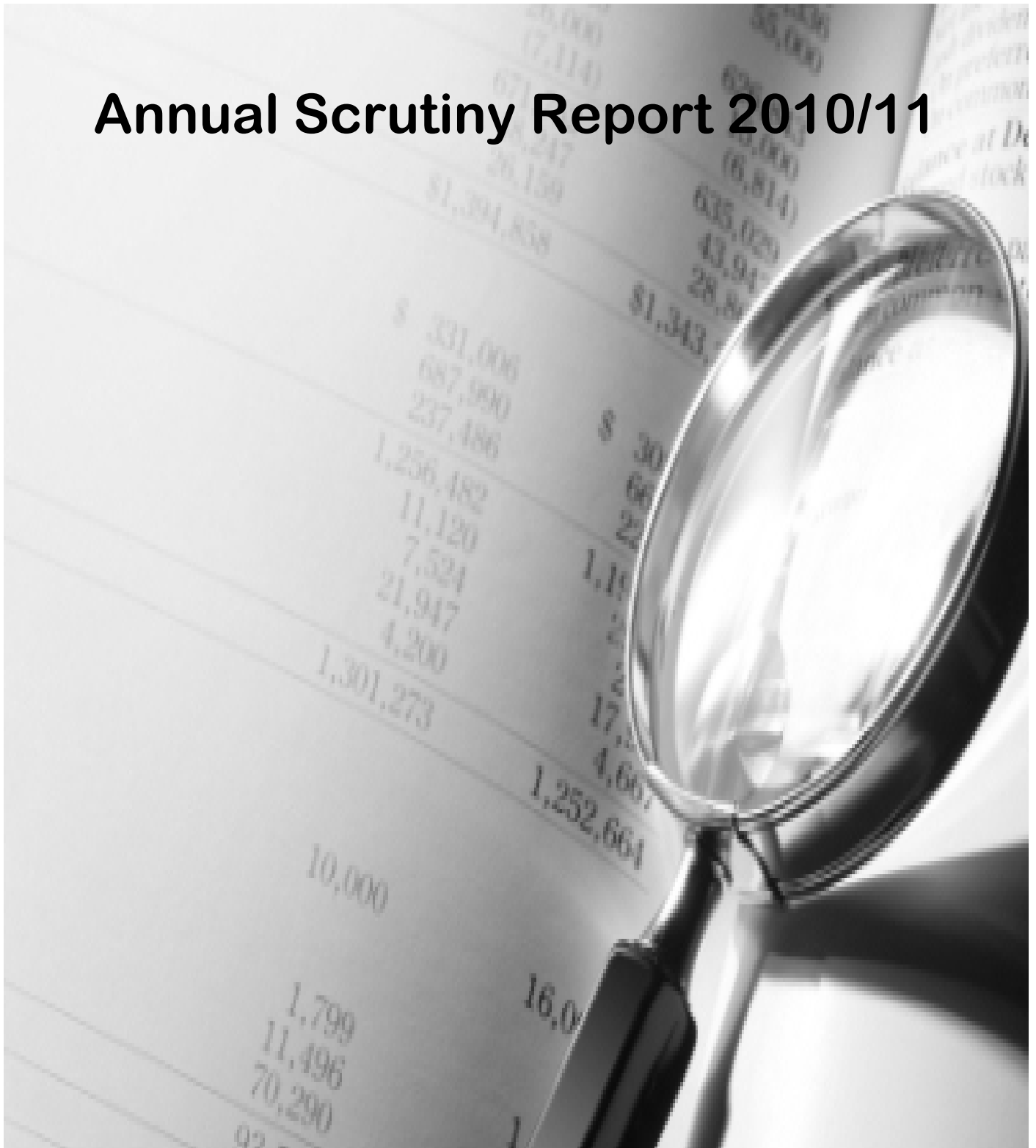
<p>Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act</p> <p>There are no direct Section 17 implications arising from the matters in this report</p>
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<p>Diversity</p> <p>There are no direct diversity implications arising from the matters in this report</p>

Background Papers Available for Inspection:

Annual reports to Individual Scrutiny Groups 2010/11

Annual Scrutiny Report 2010/11



Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11

The main role of Rushcliffe's scrutiny groups are to:

- Develop a work programme which scrutinises the Council's priority outcomes
- Ensure the Group's work helps implement the Council's plans and policies
- Review, challenge and question how the policy, plans and services are implemented and recommend to Cabinet and Council improvements to services and their performance
- Ensure the work contributes towards value for money, continuous improvement and best practice.

This annual report summaries the main work of the Council Scrutiny Groups which were lead by the following Chairmen and Vice Chairmen

Partnership Delivery Group



Councillor
N C Lawrence
Chairman



Councillor
B G Dale
Vice Chairman

Performance Management Board



Councillor
S Bennett
Chairman



Councillor
D G Wheeler
Vice Chairman

Community Development Group



Councillor
Mrs J A Smith
Chairman



Councillor
M G Hemsley
Vice Chairman

Corporate Governance Group



Councillor
G Davidson
Chairman



Councillor
F A Purdue-Horan
Vice Chairman

Partnership Delivery Group

Our work this year

The main thrust of the work continued to be monitoring services, helping develop policy and consultation prior to Cabinet.

During the year the Group considered many services and issues, particularly:

- Effectiveness of designated public places orders in Rushcliffe
- Domestic violence support work
- The wide range of partnerships
- Working with Sure Start
- Annual review of the Rushcliffe Sustainable Community Strategy
- Annual review of partnership with Spirita
- Annual review of leisure centre contract with Parkwood Leisure
- Annual review of First Lets and future options
- Update on the partnership with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club
- Update on West Bridgford Fire Station
- Progress Report on the Rushcliffe Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plans

Designated public places orders

In June 2010, the Group discussed the use and implementation of the designated public places orders in Cotgrave, West Bridgford and Radcliffe on Trent. These orders represent one way the Council and the Police work together to curb anti-social behaviour and underage drinking. The Group concluded that the orders had led to a general decrease in crime, had proved popular with residents and are an effective multi-agency approach. Combined with other initiatives such as Positive Futures in Cotgrave to engage young people likely to be on the verge of a life of crime, partners felt these orders were having a positive impact on keeping Rushcliffe as the safest place in Nottinghamshire. West Bridgford differs from Cotgrave in that it has a vibrant night-time economy which brings the risk of a different sort of anti-social behaviour, for example, street drinking and drug use. However, partners are working with bars and City colleagues and the Trent Bridge Week of Action in December 2010 allowed for a more targeted approach to continue.

Domestic violence support

The Scrutiny Group was updated in June about the excellent work carried out by the Council's domestic violence coordinator and partners, plus the comprehensive support mechanisms in place which are highly appreciated by clients. The Group learnt about work in schools to increase 'respect' and reduce bullying and sexual abuse, as well as about the Freedom Programme, the Sanctuary scheme and time-specific campaigns such as those run around Christmas. Some future plans were explained, namely to expand rural access points, hold another community theatre event and to have thought provoking street theatre at the youth event Bridgfest. The Group was made aware that Cotgrave had a high level of reporting of incidents due to a focus of services located there eg Sure Start and Trent Bridge had a high level of repeat incidents, perhaps due to the lively night-time economy.

Partnerships

The group discussed an up to date list of Council partnerships - ie who the Council worked with, on what projects and the costs involved. In summary, the Scrutiny Group concluded that there were a wide range of partnerships in operation which would need close scrutiny given the current uncertain economic position.

Working with Sure Start

The Group found out more about the Council's involvement with Sure Start which is run by Nottinghamshire County Council and aims to provide early support for parents and carers to ensure children are safe, well looked after, eat properly, develop and achieve their potential at school. The service helps to reduce teenage pregnancies, reduce childhood obesity, help children in workless houses, helps eliminate deprivation and the success is very much dependent on a multi-agency approach. The Group was told that the future of the service was unclear in difficult economic times. Sure Start had been helped by the work of the Council's housing options team, as well as specific help from the domestic violence coordinator. The Group endorsed the work being undertaken by the Borough Council in relation to Sure Start.

Annual review of partnership with Spirita



Every year the Group reviews partnership arrangements with Spirita to ensure the relationship remains productive and that residents are getting good value for money. The Group learnt that since 2003, 250 affordable homes had been built in the Borough and this far exceeded the target of 150. This level of achievement was particularly praiseworthy in a subdued house-building market. Members learnt that Spirita was on target to ensure all its homes were of a 'decent' standard by the end of 2010.

At the previous annual review the Group was concerned that the responsive repair service was not meeting tenant's expectations. However, one year on this problem had been addressed as evidenced by a significant fall in complaints and by working with another repairs contractor. Spirita also addressed other areas of previous concern, reporting that estate inspections were now regular and well publicised with residents becoming involved. The number of voids was now improving with a new incentive to encourage tenants to leave properties in a good state of repair by offering a financial incentive. Spirita updated the group on sheltered homes, highlighting people's changing tastes and expectations about retirement living, pointing out that some stock was now over 30 years old and not suitable for elderly people. However, this Notts-wide issue was being addressed by a new group led by the Council's strategic housing manager.

Members learnt about incentives to encourage people in family housing to downsize if homes were too big for their needs and this would also be addressed via the new choice based letting scheme. Improvements to customer service had resulted from Council staff who had been trained to offer a walk-in advice service for Spirita

customers, plus there was also a dedicated phone line at the Civic Centre to report repairs and a tenant-led panel scrutinised complaints.

The Group considered whether the partnership represented good value for money, debating the indicators such as whether a scheme received Homes and Communities Agency grant funding, how many homes had been built, funding arrangement and many more issues. The Group felt that the partnership continued to provide very good value for money in terms of providing affordable housing, albeit that this did not preclude the Council from working with other agencies in the future and considering other options.

Annual review of leisure centre contract with Parkwood Leisure

The Council's partnership with Parkwood Leisure was the subject of scrutiny at November's meeting when it reviewed the past year's operation. The Group concluded that the partnership was working well. This third review provided some highlights and a few areas for improvement including:



- A high level of governance was in place and contract compliance was being achieved.
- Increase in visitor and Expression member numbers, refurbishment of gyms, successful Investors in People accreditation, introduction of free swimming for the over 60s (funding from the Government has since been withdrawn) and free swimming lessons were all successes.
- Implementing the Aiming High project to bring leisure to people with disabilities widened access to leisure.
- The apprenticeship scheme is working well. An advanced scheme will be developed and a graduate training scheme will be introduced.
- Customers have complained at some sites about poor standards of cleanliness and this could be addressed by recruiting extra staff where necessary
- An online booking system will be developed.
- Parkwood demonstrated its commitment to improving energy efficiency/reducing its carbon footprint eg via obtaining ISO 14001, raising staff awareness etc
- The GP referral scheme was working well
- Budget gyms opening up in Nottingham would pose a real competitive threat
- Joint use sites presented several issues in terms of litter, vandalism and cleanliness, but there were good relationships with schools
- The phone system at Rushcliffe will be replaced
- Family night at Rushcliffe is being re-pacakaged to attract more attendance. Junior pump session for teenagers was working well and the triathlon was proving popular, as was teenage gym sessions.

Annual review of First Lets and future options

The Group scrutinised the First Lets web-based service which is run with Broxtowe and Gedling Borough Councils and helps marry good tenants with good landlords, create a buoyant rented sector and help prevent homelessness.



There had only been 39 tenancy lets in Rushcliffe and performance was not as high as expected. The Council was committed to the scheme until March 2011, but as the other two partners wanted to merge First Lets with the Choice Based Lettings scheme, Members recommended that this course of action should be followed after thorough questioning, but yet still consider retaining the Good Tenants Scheme.

Review of the South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership

At January's meeting, the Group learnt about changes to the Partnership which was now aligned with the police division and could share resources and expertise over the three boroughs.

Members were pleased to learn that crime in Rushcliffe had dropped by over 10% (April to December 2010 compared with previous year), however anti-social behaviour had increased. Yet Rushcliffe still had the lowest crime figures of the three boroughs.

One of the highlights was the success of the Integrated Offender Management project which helped prevent re-offending by giving help with employment, drugs and family issues. The community safety officers had been pivotal in the success of this project where 70% of criminals involved had not re-offended. The police outlined how the Nottinghamshire Police was to be organised in future and reiterated that the partnership would still concentrate on a geographical basis and would target specific community problems. Another highlight for the coming year would be the development of the Rushcliffe Community Contact Centre which would be a good one-stop-shop for both organisations.

One area of concern given current budgetary pressures was working with young children to deter them from a life of crime, but there would probably not be enough funding for future diversionary tactics. The Group were informed that the South Nottinghamshire Community Safety Partnership was highly regarded and used as an example nationally.

Update on the partnership with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club

The Group were updated on the community benefits package and the Cotgrave Positive Futures project. Highlights over the past year included:

- Supporting the 34 club mark accredited clubs in the Borough
- Working with six schools in the Borough to provide coaching and links to clubs
- Encouraging children by making them match day mascots, donating tickets and bats to raise money for groups, schools and charities
- Ensuring that young people were included in the Academy and Emerging Players programmes
- Focussing on women and girls' cricket
- Progress with Positive Futures included a jewellery-making activity which had evolved into a social enterprise, there had been improved behaviour at school, a dance group set up and a huge reduction in anti-social behaviour.

Priorities for this coming year included more opportunities for young people aged 16 to 19 and expanding the apprenticeship scheme. The Group concluded that this partnership represented excellent value for money.

Update on West Bridgford Fire Station

The Group received a presentation in respect of the Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service and how it links into the South Notts Community Safety Partnership. The Group learnt how improved performance monitoring and the information generated had been used to undertake a Fire Cover Review to ensure that resources are deployed appropriately. The Group was informed that 85% of the incidents dealt with by the West Bridgford Fire Station were outside this area, mainly in the City. Following this analysis it was proposed to leave only one fire engine in West Bridgford. The Group questioned this and were informed that the Fire Cover Review was a document of evidence for the Fire Authority, who would make the decision. The Group queried the future of the Bingham and East Leake stations and were informed that if these stations were not included in the Fire Cover Review then there would be no change.

Progress Report on the Rushcliffe Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plans

The Head of Community Shaping presented an update on the Rushcliffe Sustainable Community Strategy action plans. The Group reviewed progress over the last year which included the projects supported by the partnership and the events held. The Group also considered the removal of Local Area Agreements, refreshing the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the County Council engagement in partnership working, the role of GP consortia/Principia and the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. Overall, the Group concluded that there had been a significant improvement over the past year and hoped that this would continue.

The year ahead

The Group will continue to scrutinise the Council's work with partners, along with key service areas as outlined in the annual work programme. This work programme will be confirmed at the first meeting of the municipal year.

Community Development Scrutiny Group

The Community Development Scrutiny Group's remit is to scrutinise:

- Community priorities and proposed solutions
- Engaging and identifying needs of key groups
- Building relationships to ensure that policies empower communities
- Reputation management gained via communications and promotion
- Town and Parish Councils shared working (identifying opportunities whilst establishing priorities)

A major element of the Group's role is to understand the key issues for residents, and encourage them to give their views about how services are delivered and how decisions are made. The Group is also charged with ensuring the Council maintains its excellent reputation via responsive and effective communications.

Our work this year

Monitoring services, helping develop policy and consultation before Cabinet

During the municipal year the Group considered a wide range of service areas and issues within its scrutiny role, particularly:

- *Community-led planning*
- *Glass recycling*
- *Work with partners to develop opportunities for children and young people*
- *Climate Change Action Plan*
- *Affordable housing in rural areas*
- *Small environmental improvement programme*
- *Homelessness review*
- *Leisure strategy review*
- *Nature Conservation*

At the Group's first meeting in July, Members learned more about RCAN's vital work ensuring vibrant rural communities, particularly in areas such as parish planning. Parish plans had led to many exciting new developments – new play areas, new community facilities and community shops, as well as more affordable housing. Cropwell Bishop was hailed as an exemplar of where parish planning had delivered great results with community engagement leading to the acquisition of the old school building for use as a community hall, formation of new groups such as a youth club and a new skate park Parish planning had inspired action, which led to more social activities and a renewed vitality in the community. RCAN explained that over £800,000 had been brought into Rushcliffe through obtaining external funding.

The Group also received its final update on glass recycling hearing about three new bring sites which had been made possible via working with Parishes and the County Council. The Group was pleased to learn that, despite not being able to implement a kerbside recycling scheme for glass, this had not resulted in lots of glass being put into grey bins. The Group was informed about progress against the Council's strategic task to work with other organisations to develop opportunities for young people. Officers felt that the Council should develop its own action plan and, after much discussion, the Group agreed that one should be developed following the review of the County Council's Strategic Plan. Officers were commended for their

progress against this strategic task. The revised re-prioritised Climate Change Action Plan was discussed. Members were pleased to learn how residents are kept up to date on grants and specials deal and the work done in partnership with energy companies. Members of the Group wanted the Council's work to help tackle fuel poverty to be given a higher priority. Members endorsed the revised action plan and noted it was a working document which would be regularly updated and, in future, monitored annually by PMB.

At the October meeting, the Group received a presentation on the Council's future affordable housing plans for rural areas on small 'exception' sites and progress to date via the Trent Valley Partnership which had been formed to drive through the projects. To date, 12 sites had been earmarked, meaning a possible extra 82 affordable properties could be built and all small villages had been contacted to seek support. The Group was made aware of the pivotal role which parish councils played in garnering support locally, and also their possible future greater powers in housing trusts, albeit that this was still unclear. Members outlined their support for the rural housing programme, agreed it should continue without alteration, and also commended the work of the Partnership.

The Group was also updated on small environmental improvements and parish planting schemes. There were concerns expressed about the scheme – lack of marketing, the nature of some of the schemes, lack of ward member involvement and value for money. Members recognised the work that had taken place via this scheme and its valuable contribution to enhancing the environment. However, they felt that due to budgetary constraints, there was a need to consider the future of the scheme.

Homelessness was reviewed at January's meeting. The action plan (2008-13) was discussed, with Members being made aware of the Council's extraordinary achievements in this area which had prevented homelessness. Members heard about future challenges including changes to funding and benefits, the recession and other pertinent factors, all of which could cause an increase in the number of people being made homeless. The Group heard how staff work in partnership with others, raise awareness of the service and how the team's focus was placed on prevention. Future areas of work were covered including using the Homeless Prevention Grant funding to strengthen the Sanctuary Domestic Violence Project and part-funding the Citizens' Advice Bureau, plus working with the Probation Service to help people with complex needs. Following a visit from the CLG, recommendations for improvement were being implemented including extra staff training and improved case notes. Members concluded that the current approach represented good value for money.

At its April meeting the Group received a presentation on the Council's approach to nature conservation and its partnership with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. The Group considered how the strategy for nature conservation in the Borough had been developed and learnt that to achieve the targets set out in the Strategy the Borough Council had a service level agreement with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. The Group was informed that for nature conservation there were 360 hectares of land, which included 8 sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and 211 sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs). The Group also considered the action plan for the next five years. Overall, the Group agreed that the work that had been undertaken to support nature conservation was successful, offered value for money and the approach should be supported in the future.

The year ahead

The Group is keen to help shape policy and ensure improvements are implemented in the coming year. This will be done by developing a challenging work programme linked to the Council's four year plan for delivering a balanced budget by 2015.

Performance Management Board

What we are responsible for:

The Performance Management Board's remit is to scrutinise performance, including:–

- Decision-making (call-in)
- Monitoring the Council's overall performance
- Monitoring performance of specific services and ensuring the Council uses resources effectively
- Complaints

Work this year

Monitoring services, helping develop policy and consultation before Cabinet

During the year, the Group considered a wide range of service areas and issues within its scrutiny role, particularly:

- Update on the project to implement a new Council website
- Call-in of improvements to the public toilet in Bridgford Park
- Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011
- Monitoring of performance against the Council's key performance indicators and strategic tasks
- Review of the Council's Constitution
- Fuel Poverty – National Indicator 187
- Children and Young People
- Ombudsman's annual letter 2009/10
- Review of customer feedback 2009/10
- Edwalton Golf Courses – annual report of the contract by Glendale Golf
- Review of the Rushcliffe Play Strategy
- Call-in – establishing a Non Profit Distributing Arrangement for the leisure management contract with Parkwood Leisure Ltd
- Performance Monitoring - update on the national picture
- East Leake Leisure Centre – annual report
- Update on climate change action plan
- Civil Parking Enforcement Contract update

An important aspect of the Board's work is to monitor the Council's performance against its key performance indicators and strategic tasks. As part of the Council's performance management framework, the Board scrutinises performance every quarter. Exceptions and highlights are identified and the Board ensures that appropriate corrective action is taken to bring under-performing tasks and indicators back on track.

Some of the issues arising from performance reports discussed this year include:

- Whilst monitoring the final quarter's performance for 2009/10 the Board identified that there are a relatively high number of winter deaths within Rushcliffe. The Board was concerned and agreed that fuel poverty should be investigated and presented to a future meeting.
- The time taken to deal with planning applications. The Head of Planning and Place Shaping explained that officers had been in discussion with developers

on several large planning applications which had either been received or were expected to be submitted in the near future.

- Concerns about a rise in staff sickness levels at the end of 2009/10 which continued into 2010/11, but the Group was assured that everything possible was being done to address these issues.
- Information provided by Covalent. The Board acknowledged that the information was very useful but felt that there should be a standard format used for presentation. It was agreed to look at the level of detail provided and consider changing the format.

Update on the project to implement a new Council website

The Group was updated on progress with procuring a new website in partnership with Gedling and Newark and Sherwood Borough Councils and the benefits which would ensue including better functionality, improved accessibility, a better customer experience and better value for money as more transactions were put online. The partnership had received funding of £120,000 from the Nottinghamshire Improvement and Efficiency Group. Members were also told about a secure extranet for Members, as part of the new procurement process.

Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement 2008 - 2011

The Group were informed about the progress made on the eleven areas which Rushcliffe was contributing to as part of the Local Area Agreement. In six indicators Rushcliffe was performing at a higher level than the County overall, in three performance was lower and no data was available for the remaining two indicators. Members were also informed of recent changes to the amount of the Local Area Agreement grant and that there was an uncertainty on future funding for 2010/11. The Board recognised the excellent contribution Rushcliffe was making to the Nottinghamshire Local Area Agreement.

Fuel Poverty – National Indicator 187

The Council had not met the target for 2009/10, so a report was discussed which detailed how the indicator was set and measured and what the Council was doing to reduce fuel poverty. Rushcliffe had a high number of single occupancy homes and hard to insulate homes and the best method to tackle fuel poverty is via increasing energy efficiency. The complexities of measuring the indicator, plus the reliability of it from the way information was gathered, were discussed in some depth. The Board heard of the many initiatives undertaken including information provided on grants, advice on ways to reduce energy use, external cladding and work with other organisations to reduce winter deaths. Members supported the work undertaken, but felt the grant schemes should be widened to everyone, especially those with solid walls, and not just be available for those on benefits. The Board endorsed sending a letter to the Government to this effect.

Children and young people

The Board considered the Council's work on the strategic task where we need to work with partners to get the best for young people. Members learnt that Rushcliffe took a key role in the LSP which produced an action plan for children, as well as being involved in the Nottinghamshire Children's Trust. The Board learnt of the Council's work in this area including sporting activities, projects to improve health and protect vulnerable people, as well as the fact that the Council is providing

apprenticeships. The Board supported the proposal to develop Rushcliffe's own action plan for young people by the Community Development Group.

Ombudsman's annual letter

The Board was pleased to learn that the Ombudsman considered that the Council received very few complaints, that none had resulted in maladministration and three had been dealt with by local settlement.

Council's customer feedback system

The Board was given an update on the Council's new customer feedback system which records customer complaints, comments and compliments. Complaints were now investigated by a robust three-stage process, giving the Council the best chance of redress. Members were pleased to hear that the Council received around four times more compliments than complaints.

Performance Management - less indicators, but more customer focussed

Following the cancellation of the Place Survey, many indicators would now be redundant and this was an appropriate time to review the indicator set. In addition, Local Area Agreement targets have been removed as well. The national list of performance information councils should send to the Government (known as the single data list) is anticipated imminently ie was promised by April 2011. The change was prompted as it was now felt more appropriate to focus on customer-related indicators, rather than internal indicators which were not indicative of customer outcomes or satisfaction with services. The Board agreed to the changes proposed to the indicators which the Board and the Council would monitor. The Council will consider publishing performance against this new set of indicators in order to continue to be transparent.

Edwalton Golf Courses – annual report of contract by Glendale Golf

The Board learnt about the excellent performance delivered by Glendale Golf, together with very pleasing customer feedback via the annual survey. Usage had remained constant, while many other golf clubs had seen a decline, the online bookings system was working well and the Club was making good progress towards Golf Mark accreditation. There was much work being undertaken with young golfers, in particular with people with a disability. There had been complaints about cleanliness, in particular in the toilets, but this related more to the age of the facilities, rather than how well they were cleaned. The Board congratulated Glendale on continuing to deliver a successful contract.

Review of the Rushcliffe Play Strategy

The Board heard of the successes from this strategy and that the majority of the actions had progressed satisfactorily, with those not being actioned, being either aspirational or not appropriate in this financial climate. The Board decided that those few actions not yet initiated would be considered as part of the Leisure Facilities Strategy and Children and Young People's Action Plans to be produced in 2011. The Board were made aware that this was the last year for the Big Lottery revenue funding and that, following the Comprehensive Spending Review, Playbuilder funding was also being withdrawn. The Board was pleased that the Borough's play facilities

had benefited from this external funding and the quality of the schemes was reflected in the usage and popularity of the play areas.

Constitution review

The Board was informed of the outcomes of the Council's Constitution review which focused on areas such as rules about motions, questions and deadlines for submissions, the possibility of the public asking questions at Council meetings and much more. One of the changes proposed included the introduction of a public question facility with the necessary words being added to the Constitution.

East Leake Leisure Centre – annual report

The Group was updated on the contract with Carillion including governance, PFI contractual arrangements and relationships with the neighbouring school. The Board learnt that usage was up, income was up and there was a 98% customer satisfaction level, far in excess of the 75% target. The Board asked the East Leake Leisure Centre Manager questions about topics including cleanliness, complaints and staff training.

Update on Climate Change Action Plan

The Board received a presentation outlining progress with the climate change action plan. The Board learnt about support from Marches Energy Action and the successful project in Kinoulton and about advice given to 225 homeowners as part of the Rushcliffe Solar project. Additionally, the Council had plans to reduce its own energy use by 15% over the next four years. Members were informed about actions still to be completed including targeting fuel poverty effectively and implementing the carbon management plan.

Civil Parking Enforcement Contract update

At the final meeting of the year the Board received a presentation updating it on the civil enforcement contract. This is the second time the Board has scrutinised the contract which commenced in May 2008 and is run in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and each district council in the county. The financial target is to breakeven by March 2012 when the contract ends. The Board reviewed the financial position and governance arrangements of the contract. The Board noted, that while still in deficit the financial position had improved significantly over the last year and was on target to achieve breakeven.

Member Panels

The Board established one member panel this year, to review the Council's Constitution. The Board felt that a panel of nine Members would be advantageous and Councillor Bennett was appointed as the Chairman.

The Panel met on four occasions and reported back to the Board at its meeting on 24 November 2010. The Board supported the report and agreed a number of recommendations to Cabinet.

Call-Ins

Call-In of proposed improvements to the public toilets in Bridgford Park

The rationale for the Call-In was that the decision to approve the scheme should have been scrutinised before Cabinet made a decision as there were several concerns which had come to light following information received from the British Toilet Association including some opposition to unisex toilets, people feeling enclosed and concerns about charging. Other issues of concern were raised, which were not really under the remit of scrutiny, such as vandalism and the cleaning schedule. After a thorough discussion, most concerns were going to be covered via a feasibility study and Members agreed to uphold Cabinet's decision to approve the scheme.

Call-In of the establishment of a Non Profit Distributing Organisation (NPDO) for managing the leisure contract with Parkwood

The rationale for the Call-In was that Cabinet had proposed a significant change to the contract with Parkwood without adequate scrutiny. The main areas of concern were a lack of scrutiny before the decision was made and the significant effect on extending the contract on the long term leisure contract which had not been properly considered. Additionally, the proposal did not address Parkwood's commitment to improving services to match the increased funds provided by the extended contract and there was insufficient focus of the impact of the proposal on former council staff employed at leisure centres. Members discussed all these issues thoroughly including the fact that the decision would not impact on the Council's future strategy and Parkwood would be invited to a Member Panel in 2011 to provide evidence to inform the future leisure strategy. Members were reminded that a NPDO was considered an acceptable model at the time the original contract was let and the savings to be made. The Council felt that the five-year exclusion clause built into the contract was a good deal. The Board was reminded that this decision had already been taken as part of the Council's budget process earlier in the year. The Board discussed issues surrounding increasing the contract and the significant savings to be made by sharing the business rates over fifteen years. The only real change to the contract was that its length had been extended to facilitate the savings. After a vote, the Cabinet's decision was upheld.

Looking forward to the year ahead

The Performance Management Board will build on its work over the last year by scrutinising the Council's performance in delivering its priorities for improvement, along with scrutinising key service areas. The new work programme will be outlined at the first meeting of the year.

Corporate Governance Group

The Corporate Governance Group remit covered:

- **Statement of Accounts:**

To examine the outturn and statement of accounts, making comments and recommendations to Council.

- **Report on the Annual Governance Statement**

To consider the annual report on the application of the Council's system of internal control and make recommendations to Cabinet on improvements/changes in practice and the acceptance of a draft Statement.

- **Annual Treasury Management Activity report:**

To consider the annual report on Treasury Management activity and ensure that practice has complied with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, making comments to Cabinet as appropriate.

- **Fraud and Irregularities:**

To consider the annual report on fraud and irregularities in order to make an informed judgement on the corporate governance and internal control statements, making recommendations to Cabinet on improvements.

To consider any matters arising as a result of irregularity referred to it by Cabinet.

- **Capital and Revenue budget monitoring:**

To consider regular reports on progress against the revenue and capital budget, making recommendations to Cabinet on matters requiring its approval and where progress is considered to be unsatisfactory.

- **Periodic reports on the findings of Internal Audit/due diligence/controls over the key risk areas:**

To consider periodic reports on the more significant findings of internal audit in order to make an informed judgement in respect of the corporate governance and internal control statements, making recommendation to Cabinet on improvements.

To consider periodic reports on controls over key risk areas as identified in the risk register in support of making an informed judgement on the corporate governance and internal control statements, making recommendations to Cabinet on improvements.

Our work this year

Monitoring financial performance, contributing to internal controls and consultation prior to Cabinet

During the municipal year 2010/11 the Group considered the following items and made recommendations to Cabinet and Council, where appropriate;

- Annual Audit and Inspection Letter
- Audit Inspection Plan
- Annual Governance
- Financial Outturn and Statement of Accounts
- Budget Timetable
- Internal Audit Progress
- Capital Budget Monitoring and Outturn
- Revenue Budget Monitoring
- Treasury Management
- Risk Management
- Fraud and Irregularities
- Health and Safety Review
- Certification of Claims and Returns – Annual Report
- Joint Working Protocol – Financial Statements Audit
- 2010/11 Audit Plan

Annual Audit Opinion Plan and Audit Fee Letter

The Group received the Audit Opinion Plan from the Audit Commission in respect of the audit of 2009/10 Statement of Accounts and scrutinised the feedback from the auditors on the work performed on the 2009/10 Statement of Accounts. This is an important process to ensure that the audit is planned correctly and that the recommendations from the auditors are addressed.

Annual Governance

The annual governance statement details the internal control procedures in place throughout the year. This forms an important part of the Statement of Accounts and highlights any recommendations that need to be made to Cabinet on improvements and changes in practice.

Financial Outturn and Statement of Accounts

As part of the remit of the Corporate Governance Group, the financial outturn position and statement of accounts are considered. These are scrutinised to ensure that the financial position is accurately reported prior to consideration by full Council. The Statement of Accounts had changed format since the previous year. The changes were prescribed by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Statement of Recommended Practices to give a lot more detail to the users of the accounts. The Accounts highlighted that the Council's activities had been successfully achieved within the allocated resources. Savings of £1,074,000 had been generated primarily due to one off elements of income and savings on services of £300,00. The report was endorsed by the Group and forwarded to Council for approval.










Budget Timetable and Questions on the Draft Budget

At the September meeting the group were presented with a 2010/11 budget timetable. Due to the economic conditions affecting the levels of income and the likely reduction in Settlement Grant, the budget process was amended to include three workshops with Members to consider various options during the budget process. The scrutiny group also reviewed, as part of this fuller process, detailed questions raised by Members on the detail within the budget together with the answers provided by officers. This proved to be a valuable addition to the process to ensure that the budget was robust and well understood by Members.

Internal Audit Reports

We are satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow us to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of Rushcliffe Borough Council's arrangements.

For the 12 months ended 31 March 2010, based on the work we have undertaken, our opinion regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of Rushcliffe Borough Council's arrangements for governance, risk management and control is as follows:

	Red	Amber	Green
Governance			
Risk Management			
Control			

The group received regular progress reports from the Council's Internal Auditors, RSMTenon. The internal audit reports highlight the recommendations made to officers throughout the year. The plan also shows that all the audits were completed in line with the Audit Programme. The Internal Auditors also undertook an extra review within the audit programme covering controls at the Depot around fuel usage. The progress reports detailed the significant recommendations in relation to the controls around the processes that have been audited.

Budget Monitoring and Treasury Management

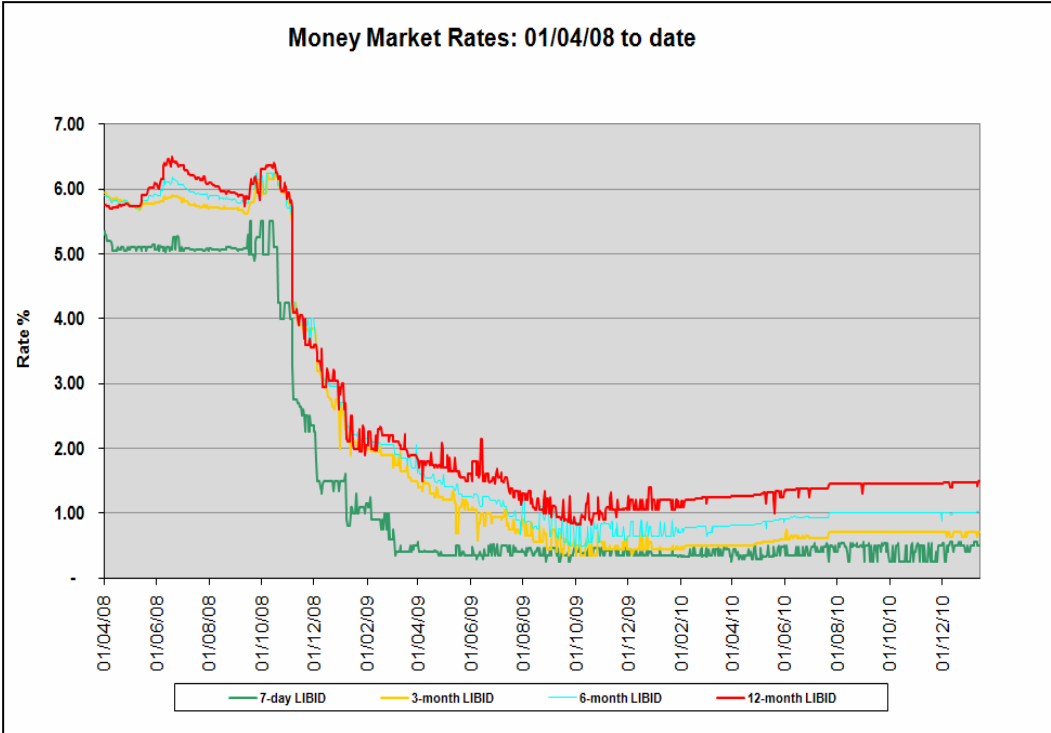
The Scrutiny Group received quarterly reports on the revenue and capital expenditure of the Council throughout the year. The group recognised the improvement the Council had made in monitoring and completing the capital projects since this group had undertaken a review of this process and identified a number of possible improvements. This has been reflected in the outturn position as the majority of schemes have been completed.

The monitoring of the revenue budgets has highlighted the impact of the current economic situation on the Council's budgets. The income streams from land charges, building control and planning applications have been hit by the downturn but the group have recognised the savings that are being made in other areas, without

affecting service delivery, to counter the income shortfall. The group have been extremely keen to understand and scrutinise the treasury management activities of the Council. This has helped ensure that the cash is invested wisely, within the prescribed parameters but still earning interest at a level slightly higher than budget.

At the meeting in January, Phiroza Katrak, a representative from Arlingclose Limited, the Council’s Treasury Management advisors gave an excellent presentation to the Group on the current national and international economic position in the financial markets, the impact this had on the Council and the difficulty of making decisions in the current period of extreme uncertainty.

The graph below details the position of money market rates from April 2008 upto the end of 2010. It shows the sharp drop in returns around the end of 2008 and the start of 2009 and a slow minor increase since then as interest rates have remained at 0.5%.



Risk Management

The Group have considered the work undertaken by the Risk Management Group throughout the year. The priority of the officer group has been to update the risk register and the group were presented with a summary of the more significant risks at its November meeting. The scrutiny group has also heard how the business continuity plan has been tested by officers and that it has been updated and reissued during the year.

Fraud and Irregularities

The Group considered the annual report detailing the level of fraud and irregularities detected by the authority. The group considered the one case that was investigated by internal audit. The report also detailed the level of housing benefit fraud and the actions taken to recover the debts

Health and Safety

A health and safety progress report was considered at the November meeting. The group considered the training programme for officers, changes in health and safety policies and the progress the authority has made towards its health and safety goals. The group were also presented with accident statistics and ensured officers work to minimising the number of accidents.

Certification of Claims and Returns – Annual Report

A representative from the Audit Commission presented a report of the Audit Commission summarising the work undertaken during 2009/10 in relation to grant claims and returns. The Group was informed that all Rushcliffe's claims and returns were well complied and that the Auditors had not detected any significant errors, nor were there any matters reported to grant-paying bodies. In terms of future work on grant claims, the Group established that this would be a cyclical approach, in that it would be light touch, except for every three years when a fuller audit would be undertaken.

Joint Working Protocol – Financial Statements Audit

A representative from the Audit Commission presented a report detailing the joint working protocol in relation to the 2010/11 Statement of Accounts audit. The approach formalised the arrangements in place and related to different stages in the process such as testing date, control measures, and reporting lines. After consideration the Group agreed that the Audit Commission's Joint Working Protocol – Statements Audit be accepted.

2010/11 Audit Plan

The District Auditor presented to the Group the Audit Commission's 2010/11 Audit Plan. The report detailed the audit work that the Audit Commission proposed to undertake. The Group learnt that it was formulated on a risk based approach to audit planning and reflected the current national risks relevant to the Council and any local risk. The Group scrutinised the proposed fees and found that the Council would see a reduction in audit fees in 2012/13 and also confirmed that the only way the fee would increase would be if he identified any significant specific risks. Overall, the Group agreed that the Audit Commission's 2010/11 Audit Plan be accepted.

Member Panels

There were no Member Panel reports this year

Looking forward to the year ahead

The Group is keen to build on the good work undertaken this year and will continue to deliver a work programme focusing on relevant issues so that it influences how services are delivered and how decisions are made. In particular, the Group will look to develop a programme of activities that fits within its area of expertise and helps to add further value to scrutiny's role as a 'critical friend'. It is anticipated that a report on the Group's future work programme will be considered at its first meeting in the new municipal year.