



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

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Our reference:
Your reference:
Date: Monday, 13 November 2023

To all Members of the Cabinet

Dear Councillor

Cabinet – Tuesday, 14 November 2023

Please find attached an Addendum to Item 6 on the Cabinet Agenda - Corporate Strategy.

Yours sincerely

Gemma Dennis
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

6. Corporate Strategy Addendum (Pages 1 - 14)

Appendix 1 – Councillor Feedback to draft Corporate Strategy
Appendix 2 – COG 7 November draft minutes on Corporate Strategy

Membership

Chairman: Councillor N Clarke
Vice-Chairman: Councillor Brennan
Councillors: R Inglis, R Upton, D Viridi and J Wheeler

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Appendix 1

Councillor responses to the online consultation on the Draft Corporate Strategy

Subject: Please provide feedback on the following tasks in the corporate strategy:	Councillors' feedback	Officer comment
<p>1. The Council playing its part in tackling climate change and protecting and enhancing nature conservation in the Borough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make demands on developers to include solar panels, ground source heat-pumps as well as electric car charging points essential on all new builds, · Include linked bike paths on all new estates, · Make our green spaces more accessibly for ALL bikes by getting rid of discriminatory barriers, · Clear prioritisation of Active Travel and improvements to public transport · Do a full impact assessment of hybrid working strategy and consider different strategies for different times of the year · Publish air pollution data for the area in an accessible format Support residents with a One-Stop Shop and retrofit advice hub that will give residents impartial advice and guidance on how they can improve the energy efficiency of their homes through insulation, ventilation and clean heat technologies</i> • <i>I support this goal but it must not create unacceptable costs. We do not need to wear a hairshirt!</i> • <i>There is an additional key area which is about supporting, influencing, and working with partners operating in Rushcliffe including the County Council and Parish Councils and voluntary organisations. So called "devolution" will create another partner. At a higher level we are sometime bound by national policies and we can be trail blazing/ seeking to influence upwards – that might be fifth arm. Climate change isn't just about reducing emissions it is about protecting trees, hedges, soil etc which remove carbon. Not just protecting/conserving these – they need to increase. Council has agreed a strategic aim to increase the amount of hedges, and this should be mentioned. There should be a whole debate about breaking down this "task" in some forum - maybe a facilitated workshop?</i> 	<p>All of the councillor feedback was passed to the Service Managers responsible for developing the tasks. Some tasks will also flex over the period of the strategy and action plan.</p> <p>Progress against the tasks and ongoing feedback will be via scrutiny. Corporate Overview Group in particular and the other scrutiny groups for more detailed scrutiny on particular tasks.</p>

Subject: Please provide feedback on the following tasks in the corporate strategy:	Councillors' feedback	Officer comment
<p>2. Fulfilling the Council's obligations as a Local Authority to make environmental improvements in relation to waste, resource efficiency, air quality, water, nature and biodiversity, and conservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We should be encouraging reduction in food waste rather than just concentrating on collection. We need to find ways to increase the types of items that can be recycled.</i> • <i>The Labour Group supports all the above priorities and would include: • Encourage reduced use of weedkiller and reduced cutting cycles and continuously explain the strategy and proposed cutting cycles to residents • Devise a process to licence people to repair and maintain computers to support residents and reduce computers going to landfill due to simple software errors. • Consider those who are vulnerable as well as those unable to use our glass collection sites when formulating our recycling strategy</i> • <i>The environment act is long overdue and we need to consider what we can do in the meantime, without jumping the gun or incurring excessive costs.</i> • <i>The wording has a bit of a flavour of being forced to act. We could be doing over and above what is required. How are we tracking the work?</i> 	
<p>3. the Council to be financially self-sufficient and demonstrate value for money in all areas of operation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Labour group acknowledges the importance and requirement to deliver a balanced budget but would like to see a more holistic and progressive attitude to its implementation that uses the council's influential position to see economic improvements for residents: • A commitment to Community Wealth Building at the council that looks in much more detail at procuring locally and less extractive based models to build a more localised capital programme, • An in-depth study on the use of Business Rates to help fund a local investment opportunity for new start-ups, • A commitment to lobby for a more progressive tax system that will replace Council Tax.</i> • <i>We cannot just keep increasing Council Tax, residents' incomes do not automatically go up to cover it</i> 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Absolutely disagree with an objective to “set Council Tax that keeps Rushcliffe in the lowest quartile nationally”. Please can we get rid of this? We need to set council tax to do the job, while providing value for money. All councils have different profiles and challenges. Anyway with almost all councils increasing council tax at the level of the cap, there should be little movement in our relative position.</i> 	This has been removed from the Draft Strategy
4. Undertaking a corporate peer challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Labour Group support this type of review and looks forward to it in January. We hope the council will use it not simply as a way of patting ourselves on the back but as a way of seeing how other, progressive local governments are trying out new and interesting ideas to increase local democracy and resident participation.</i> <i>Fully support this to ensure that we are at the forefront of best practice.</i> <i>How often does this happen? How much will it cost? Suggest the commitment includes robust consultation with our residents, parish councils, businesses, staff etc - their views should be presented alongside the Peer Review, and inform it.</i> 	It is up to the Council how often this happens. Last one was 6 years ago. There is no cost to the Council.
5. Undertaking a strategic asset review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Labour Group would like to change the council's approach to its current asset base and think of new ways to use the council's asset base to help grow the local economy. We would also like to see an assessment of our current asset base to see how it is used in ways that are accessible to those who are traditionally not engaged in their local community with a target of engaging people considered vulnerable.</i> <i>Fully support this, it's important to continue to make good returns from our investment properties. We should only make disposals as a last resort as we cannot make any further investments in property solely as investments.</i> 	Some assets are held to help support the local economy – eg Cotgrave shopping centre area and Bingham enterprise centre.

Subject: Please provide feedback on the following tasks in the corporate strategy:	Councillors' feedback	Officer comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are there assets not covered by these three categories? IT systems? Suggest add "land" to second bullet. There should be consideration of adding to assets, e.g. building/operating our own social housing, adopting public open spaces etc in new estates. Would reorder these and put the "profit making" category last, mentioning that this is now historical and we do not intend to acquire any more property assets unless they are related to services that we provide.</i> 	
<p>6. Ensuring that, post decommissioning of the power station, the site makes a positive contribution to the Borough and the region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>There is a need to ensure that nearby local communities are not negatively impacted by this development and BNG is addressed, preferably on-site.</i> • <i>The Labour Group would like to see a much broader representation on the board and evidence that there has been: • Engagement with Unions, • Engagement with Green businesses, • Engagement with worker-led cooperatives, • The immediate addition of representative from these groups to the board. We would also like to see: • Active travel to the site a priority, • A detailed plan of improved public transport to the site, • Local procurement central to its redevelopment, • Engagement with community organisations, • Engagement with employment, skills and inclusion programmes and providers, • A robust social value strategy to maximise local economic and community benefit, • A commitment that all new jobs created should pay the National Living Wage.</i> • <i>It is essential that this site delivers high value jobs, does not become a sprawl of sheds down the A453, and is not used for housing. EMDC needs to work this area for us and not the opposite.</i> • <i>Please include additional bullets under "involvement" along the lines of: * Working to minimise any negative impacts on residents , e,g from additional traffic * working with partners to increases and promote sustainable travel options to the site * Advising on and monitoring opportunities to protect trees, hedges, soil, open spaces</i> 	<p>Uniper would be able to comment on the engagement with staff and unions as appropriate. They are carrying out their own consultation processes with staff.</p>

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	<i>etc in the</i> [this is the end of the comment so a word must have been missed off.]	
7. Delivering the requirements of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act including planning reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This is still too vague for reasoned comment. Communities that have been overdeveloped in recent years and need to be protected from being overwhelmed.</i> • <i>The LuR Bill acts upon long running requests from Councils and the Local Government Association (LGA) for further devolution in England. It is currently going through the House of Lords and a number of amendments have been tabled which remain to be considered by the Government. We are broadly supportive of the LGA position on the Bill which includes</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Speeding up the process of devolution so that all areas have the opportunity to benefit from a devolution deal by 2030.</i> • <i>Recognising that Councils of all sizes are engaged in the devolution process.</i> • <i>Significant concerns with the proposed Infrastructure Levy (IL). There are serious concerns that it could be counterproductive by delivering fewer affordable homes and could expose Councils to excessive levels of financial risk.</i> • <i>Planning fees do not currently cover the true cost of processing planning applications with 305 out 343 local authority planning departments operating at a deficit totalling almost £250m. LGA modelling indicates that a 35% increase in fees would still result in a £80m deficit. Amendment 235 to the LuR Bill is supported as it lets Councils set planning fees which would cover their costs.</i> • <i>Don't know enough about this but the planning process does need attention, particularly the urbanisation of open countryside and the green belt.</i> • <i>In the many consultations about implementing this legislation, the council should be seeking to influence the changes and how they are implemented – this is as important as just doing what we are told. Each area of the country is different and we need to ensure the implementation considers our particular set of circumstances. It</i> 	We are awaiting further detail on the Act and its implementation.

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	<i>might be worth signalling that we will give thought to changes that might occur after this bill - "modification or any related legislation to follow" or something.</i>	
8. Setting out a vision for future development in the Borough, which will be used to decide future planning applications and other significant planning decisions via the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>See previous answer. Infrastructure needs to not lag behind housing development.</i> • <i>The Labour Group strongly support the positive engagement of RBC in the preparation, approval and implementation of the revised GNSP. • The current Plan provides an important strategic framework for the spatial planning of the City of Nottingham and its surrounding Boroughs, including Rushcliffe. It has a strong emphasis on sustainable development and what infrastructure is required to support it. • When the new Strategic Plan is approved by all the Councils in the Plan Area it will shape the revised policies in their Local Plans, including the revised Rushcliffe Local Plan. • It has proved difficult in the past to engage the public in consultations on long term Strategic Plans, such as the GNSP, which will be looking forward to 2041. All the Councils involved with the revised GNSP should work together to be creative in how they engage with local Councillors, local partners, local businesses and the public to ensure that there is every opportunity for their range of views to be heard. • There should be a new commitment that reflects the effect of housing and building on flooding and there needs to be an up-to-date flood data to run alongside it and inform decision-making.</i> • <i>We must not become a part of a Greater Nottingham sprawl through taking away our green spaces and countryside.</i> • <i>We need to emphasise that we are active in shaping this so that it applies well to Rushcliffe, not something that is happening to us.</i> 	
9. Delivering Strategic Land Allocations within existing Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Examine current public transport options and work with providers to improve travel options for residents in the whole of the borough.</i> 	

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Plan including Fairham, Gamston, RAF Newton and Bingham	<p><i>Realise that active travel is not always an option for some sections of the community.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Labour Group would like to see a commitment to Community Wealth Building principals that sees wealth recirculated in our communities and not extracted out.</i> • <i>The involvement of local communities more by having open discussions about where and when CIL and S106 monies are spent</i> • <i>Fully support this to drive through homes in the right places, along with good employment opportunities. I would like to see a review of LP2 as soon as possible to consider removing a few inappropriate sites that do not lend themselves to good design. This could be achieved without any harm to our apoversll numbers that we could deliver.</i> • <i>The first para should include LPP2 sites. CIL and S106 needs to be spent, not just banked, and we have a role in making sure this happens even when it is not Rushcliffe that is spending it. There should be something about preparing for future targets, as the period for delivering 13500 ends soon after this strategy ends. It would be good to mention something about management charges. Housing types should better reflect the demographic and provide a variety of sizes/prices on market homes. More homes should be made wheelchair adapted or adaptable in the future for wheelchairs/limited mobility. Imaginative retirement complexes are needed.</i> 	
10. Ensuring that the local economy remains productive, innovative and sustainable and delivering an Economic Growth Strategy for the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We would like to encourage small business and ways of building and fostering a more circular economy and not one that extracts wealth out of our borough.</i> • <i>It's important that we help to develop a strategy to deal with our changing high streets as shopping habits change. We want our</i> 	

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	<p><i>shopping areas to remain vibrant, however they adapt to the future and peoples changing purchasing habits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Should we also be helping businesses to be sustainable and make a positive contribution to the environment? Mention leisure/tourism and farming as types of businesses too? Something about leveraging available grants?</i> 	
<p>11. Ensuring that Rushcliffe is represented and benefits, as plans progress for a combined authority for the East Midlands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Definitely need a seat at the table.</i> • <i>The Labour Group strongly support the principle of devolution from Central Government to Regional, Sub-Regional and Local Government. The East Midlands devolution deal, with its transfer of some powers and funding from Westminster to the new Combined Authority (CA) of Derby/Derbyshire and Nottingham/Nottinghamshire offers many opportunities. The current proposals are relatively modest bearing in mind the guaranteed funding stream is to be spread over 30 years. It will be important that the new CA has an effective governance process and a robust and skillfull technical support to ensure that it receives its fair share of funding when bidding for more local funding and additional powers. In addition to focusing on economic and environmental improvement, the new CA should also have as a key objective the need to reduce the social/health inequalities within its own area and in comparison with other parts of the country. The current proposals included evolving the adult skills budget and giving the CA powers to buy land, build new homes and regenerate derelict land, commercial spaces and infrastructure. The proposed powers to create a new integrated and sustainable transport plan for the whole area provides the chance to improve accessibility to local services and facilities for all the residents, particularly those dependent on public transport. This could play a major role in meeting the climate change objectives of the new CA if the policies</i> 	

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	<p><i>are truly sustainable and the resources are sufficient to meet a wide range of needs. We would strongly encourage Rushcliffe Borough Council to be an active partner in the Governance of the CA. Furthermore, there will be opportunities through Partnership groups such as the Joint Planning Advisory Board to promote the needs of the Greater Nottingham Area. We would also like to see a much stronger push for integrated transport and local economic development.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's hard to see how we can influence this as the higher tier authorities have the most voice and apart from Rushcliffe the other Boroughs have different political makeups. We could find ourselves in a minority with little influence. It is vital that we don't allow this to happen, nor should we allow conflicts of interest with our Councillors who are also County representatives.</i> • <i>My thoughts on this extra layer of government are not suitable for sharing.</i> 	
<p>12. Making sure that the Council's leisure facilities continue to meet the needs of its residents, over the next four years and beyond</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Labour Group would like to see more control on what is offered to residents so that it is not entirely driven by demand since currently the supplier does not support groups that need significant resources (eg bowling). Make efforts to engage with members of the community who currently do not use the services to find out how their needs can be met including those in vulnerable groups.</i> • <i>I fully support this and we should be proud of what we have and are delivering. It's important that as East Leake nears the end of the PPI agreement we deliver great facilities there.</i> • <i>What evidence is there for the statement that leisure facilities are why people want to live here? Leisure strategy should reflect the demographic.</i> 	

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13. Any additional tasks proposed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We have decided to submit this as a group to avoid duplication and extra work for officers so please give it the weight of our Labour group membership. Thank you.</i> • <i>I'd like to see our Leadership be strong and clear about how we will deliver the Corporate Strategy and its timetable.</i> • <i>I may submit these separately later</i> 	

**DRAFT MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2023**

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

and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors T Combellack (Chair), A Edyvean, P Gowland, L Plant, R Walker
and L Way

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack	Service Manager - Corporate Services
E Palmer	Communications and Customer Services Manager
K Brennan	Senior Finance Business Partner
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors G Williams

16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

17 Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

20 Corporate Strategy

The Service Manager Corporate Services presented the Corporate Strategy Report and explained that a very draft form of the Strategy had been brought to the previous Corporate Overview Group meeting in September, including information from the public consultation, after which it had been opened up for consultation with Councillors. She said that the Corporate Strategy presented today was believed to be near final and following review this evening, was due to be presented to Cabinet next week before moving to Full Council in December.

Councillor Plant raised concern about the first recommendation of the report which asked the Group to consider the results of the Councillor's consultation as she did not think that that sufficient information had been included in the report for this to be approved. The Group asked that the Service Manager for Corporate Services feedback that it would have been helpful for the Group to have seen the responses from Councillors.

Councillor Plant referred to the fact that the papers for Cabinet, including this version of the Corporate Strategy, had already been published before the Group had had chance to comment on it, which did not create a positive perception. Members of the Group echoed these comments but suggested that it would still be possible for this Group to feedback and make recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

The Service Manager Corporate Services said that the publishing of the Cabinet papers had been a technicality and that the report to Cabinet was clear that the Strategy was being considered by Corporate Overview Group this evening and that any recommendations from the Group would be verbally presented to the Cabinet meeting. She confirmed that there was then a month between Cabinet and Council for any recommended changes to be made.

The Service Manager Corporate Services said that it would be possible to remove the first recommendation, 'A', from the report if the Group agreed for this to be done.

Councillor Way expressed surprise that only four responses to the consultation had been received from Councillors, one of which was from a political party. The Service Manager Corporate Services confirmed that Councillors had been notified about the consultation through emails, Councillors Connections and through discussion at this Group. She said that the matter of one response being from a political party had not skewed the results.

Councillor Gowland asked about home and hybrid working practices at the Council and the Service Manager Corporate Services said that this came under the remit of the Head of Paid Service and was an internal, operational, matter rather than an outward, corporate, practice and as such it wasn't included in the Strategy. She confirmed that the Council had facilitated for its staff to be able to work from any location and that working remotely did not impact on staff being able to complete all aspects of their job. She said that the Council had support systems in place for staff to communicate wherever they were working and that staff could communicate via live chat groups, even when taking a phone call, so that they could seek support at all times.

Councillor Way asked about the five Council Leisure Centres and the Service Manager Corporate Services confirmed that the Council had Rushcliffe Arena, Bingham Arena, Cotgrave Leisure Centre, Keyworth Leisure Centre and East Leake Leisure Centres. She said that East Leake Leisure Centre would come back under the Council's control in 2027 with a stipulation that it be returned to the Council in the same condition as it was given and as such the handover should not result in a significant financial implication for the Council.

Councillor R Walker referred to terminology in the document in relation to delivery of some targets, such as 'to support' and 'be an active partner' and thought that more direct language, such as 'implementation' could be used. The Service Manager Corporate Services said that the wording for various tasks had been designed to differentiate between tasks within the control of the Council and those where it was an influencing partner. As a result, those which were outside of its control were more to ensure that the Council kept them in focus as they had a wider importance for the Borough. Councillor R Walker asked

that Cabinet reflect on the wording for the delivery and measurement of the various targets.

Councillor Gowland referred to mention of benefits for the Council and suggested that this be reworded to reflect that the actions of Council had led to an increased benefit for residents, that through its interactions the Council had ensured that Rushcliffe residents benefited in some way in which they wouldn't otherwise have done so.

The Chairman confirmed that the Group agreed to remove recommendation A and suggested updated wording for the two recommendations, as recorded below. The Chairman asked that comments from the Group's discussion be put forward to Cabinet to provide background to the updates.

It was **RESOLVED** that that the Corporate Overview Group:

- b) considered the draft Corporate Strategy for 2024-2027 and;
- c) endorsed the design of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and forwarded it to Cabinet for consideration and reflection upon the wording.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

CHAIR

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