

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2021

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and livestreamed on the Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors S J Robinson (Chairman), A Edyvean (Vice-Chairman), A Brennan,
R Inglis and G Moore

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
K Marriott	Chief Executive
S Sull	Service Manager - Legal Services
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies

40 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

41 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 November 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 23 November 2021, were declared a true record and signed by the Chairman.

42 Citizens' Questions

There were no questions.

43 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor Thomas to Councillor Robinson. Councillor Thomas was unable to attend the meeting, so her question was read out by the Chairman.

“Residents have huge concerns about nationally based, commercially driven companies managing their estates, the "extras" that they charge, and the lack of control over this. To what extent is Streetwise gearing up to take on the management of open space in new developments, and could this be a better option for the residents?”

Councillor Robinson responded by stating that there needed to be a management company in place and Streetwise was not in a position to be the management company. Streetwise did undertake work for management

companies; however, they had to bid for that, and the control for that work was all done through a management company.

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Inglis. Councillor Walker was unable to attend the meeting, so her question was read out by the Chairman.

“Due to the long delay in the Environment Act - along with the growing frustration of our residents at not being able to recycle glass or food waste kerbside - what action will the Council take to explore the delivery of these services for local residents?”

Councillor Inglis responded by stating that the Council continued to liaise with DEFRA, the County Council as the waste disposal authority, and other district collection authorities via the Notts Joint Waste Management Committee, on the progress of the Act and its implications for waste collection arrangements in the County. It was hoped that national clarity would be provided by the Government early in the New Year, so the Council could work with key partners such as the County Council, as any nationally imposed change must be implemented at a ‘waste system’ level and not unilaterally, as the Council could not act as the disposal authority, and it must also act in the best interests of the Council taxpayer. Rushcliffe Borough Council was the highest recycling authority in the county and the bring site glass recycling scheme located across the Borough recycled more glass each year than some other kerbside schemes in the county, with that glass being made into new bottles.

Councillor J Walker asked the following supplementary question to Councillor Inglis.

“Will Cabinet push for more certainty regarding the Environment Bill as dates, timescales and costs to councils are still unknown?”

Councillor Inglis responded by stating that the Council would continue to press for clarity on the key waste reforms contained in the Act through a number of routes including the District Council Network, where recently the relevant Minister had been invited to attend.

44 Review of Investment Assets

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the performance of the commercial property estate, together with a methodology for the ongoing performance of the Council’s commercial assets.

Councillor Edyvean confirmed that the Asset Investment Strategy had been launched four years ago and advised that the report specifically referred to those assets, which formed part of an Investment Strategy, and were designed to generate income. Cabinet was reminded that it was important to review the investment portfolio, assess its ongoing performance, and future predicted performance. It was pleasing to note that the Council currently had no high risk investment properties, and ongoing monitoring would continue to ensure that continued.

Cabinet noted that the Council had always maintained an appropriate balance of properties, which generated an annual income of around £1.6m, with 35% of that income coming from some of the most recent acquisitions. The report confirmed that the property portfolio continued to perform well, with even those highlighted in the report as a medium risk generating about 7% returns. Generally, the medium risk properties were those identified as requiring relatively high future maintenance, which in itself was an investment to ensure that properties were fit for purpose, and Cabinet noted that the methodology for assessing the risk rating had been supported by the Governance Scrutiny Group, before being brought to Cabinet for consideration.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Moore thanked Councillor Edyvean for the comprehensive review, noted that the Council had 99 investment interests, covering a variety of uses, and acknowledged the importance of maintaining those assets

The Leader reiterated the importance of maintaining a balanced portfolio, particularly during the pandemic, and this had proved to be a particular strength to the Council. It was pleasing to note the good returns on the investments, and it was a compliment to the Council that it had such a strong, well-managed portfolio.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the methodology of assessing the Council's commercial property portfolio on an ongoing basis be supported; and
- b) a review of the commercial property portfolio be undertaken every two years, reporting back to the Governance Scrutiny Group and Cabinet.

45 Streetwise Annual Report 2021

The Leader, Councillor Robinson presented the report of the Chief Executive outlining the annual report of Streetwise Enterprises Ltd and Streetwise Enterprises Trading Ltd, both of which were wholly owned companies of Rushcliffe Borough Council.

The Leader advised that the annual report had been considered by the Governance Scrutiny Group, with details of the issues raised outlined in 4.1 of the report. Cabinet was advised that the Group had not raised any serious concerns regarding its governance or its status as a going concern, with the exception that its membership should be reviewed.

Cabinet noted that there was a core contract of £1.77m in place with the Council, and that would be up for renewal in the summer of 2022.

The Leader referred to the very challenging circumstances faced by the business over the past two years and acknowledged the work of the Managing Director and his team for keeping the business running and overcoming those challenges. Cabinet noted the Managing Director's report and detailed operational information outlined in the appendix, together with the audited

accounts for 2021.

In conclusion, the Leader reiterated that the Governance Scrutiny Group had acknowledged the excellent service that Streetwise had provided for this period, and with the contract due for renewal next year, Cabinet noted that this would be a very important period for Streetwise. There would be challenges ahead, such as reducing its carbon footprint and a review of assets, including its vehicle fleet, which it was acknowledged would be expensive.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Edyvean welcomed the positive feedback from the Governance Scrutiny Group, and that it had highlighted the need to strengthen Board membership, and the necessity for Streetwise to continue to deliver both as a financially sound entity and an essential service provider to the Council was noted.

It was RESOLVED that the Streetwise Annual report 2020-21 be approved and comments made by the Governance Scrutiny Group be considered.

46 **Ratcliffe on Soar Update**

The Leader, Councillor Robinson presented the report of the Chief Executive providing an update on the Ratcliffe on Soar site.

The Leader referred to the significant strategic importance of the site, to the Borough, the East Midlands and nationally, and advised that due to the nature of the projects being discussed for the site, the situation was constantly evolving.

The Leader focused on three key issues; the East Midlands Development Corporation (EMDC), the East Midlands Freeport (EMF) and the STEP (Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production), details of which were highlighted in part 4 of the report.

In respect of the EMDC, the Leader confirmed that it was recognised in the Government's IRP report that this would be the delivery vehicle, with further details expected in the forthcoming Planning Bill. Cabinet was advised that the current focus was on the recruitment of non-executive posts and to refresh the Alchemy Board. The Leader advised that collaborative working was taking place, on a number of themes and Cabinet would continue to be updated as work progressed.

The Leader reported a similar evolving situation in respect of the EMF, with an outline business case submitted to the Government in September, and following feedback, the final business case was due for submission at the end of January 2022. Cabinet noted that the Leader and Chief Executive were attending regular Board meetings, which covered an extensive range of challenging issues. Work to consider any alignment between the Freeport and the EMDC was also being undertaken.

In respect of the STEP, the Leader confirmed that the site had been shortlisted as one of five final sites to host the project, and as previously reported to Cabinet in March 2021, the UK Atomic Energy Authority was undertaking a

rigorous assessment of the site, to identify its final chosen site. The Leader referred to the significance of the HS2 major hub being located so close to this site and advised Cabinet that it would receive an update report on the progress and timelines of the project in February 2022. It was noted that the consultation would close on 24 December, and the County Council would prepare the feedback to the responses received.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Edyvean reiterated the importance of this significant site and was pleased to note that the Council was doing everything it could to ensure a successful redevelopment of the site. Cabinet was reminded how much the Borough could benefit from the proposed projects, and whilst none of the outcomes were guaranteed, it was essential that the Council continued its endorsement of those projects.

The Leader concluded by confirming that the Cabinet would continue to receive regular updates, as given the complexity and challenges of the site, there was a great deal of work to be done, and the huge employment and investment opportunities could not be underestimated. It was also important that everyone got involved and took part in the consultation, to help shape the future of this site.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the progress on the programmes in place to support the redevelopment of Ratcliffe on Soar be noted; and
- b) the Council's continued involvement in all programmes be endorsed.

47 Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities and Climate Change, Councillor Brennan presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods outlining the new Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030.

In bringing this report to Cabinet, Councillor Brennan advised that this was the Council's overarching Strategy, which would be a public facing document, bringing policies and plans together that set out the Council's corporate ambitions and leadership role across the Borough. Cabinet noted that adopting the Strategy would provide a clear demonstration of how the Council would work with partners to deliver its ambition to make Rushcliffe a carbon neutral Borough by 2050, and for its operational services to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Councillor Brennan referred to recommendation b) in the report and reminded Cabinet that at the last Full Council meeting, the very strong commitment to deliver the Council's Nature Conservation Strategy had been reiterated. Cabinet noted that the Strategy contained a chapter on Biodiversity, which recognised the ecological crisis faced by the planet, and by reflecting on the discussion at the Council meeting, Councillor Brennan proposed that the wording to the introduction of the Strategy be amended. The amendment would recognise that there was both a climate emergency and an ecological crisis, and it would ensure that the commitments as set out in the Biodiversity

chapter received joint attention with the Council's climate change ambitions, as both were inextricably linked and had to be tackled together.

Councillor Brennan proposed the recommendations in the report and requested that the Director – Neighbourhoods be asked to amend the introduction of the Strategy to reflect the wording contained in the Biodiversity chapter related to the ecological crisis.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis referred to the universal commitment of Councillors and officers to address the environmental and ecological challenges faced by the planet. Cabinet was reminded that the new Strategy would provide the framework for the Council's ambitious programme going forward, with dates in place to become carbon neutral, and it was hoped that with continued action and commitment, those targets could be achieved earlier than 2030 and 2050.

Councillor Inglis referred to the Council's excellent record in the delivery of numerous eco-friendly projects, including the construction of the new Bingham Leisure Centre and the Crematorium, together with the free tree scheme, and plans to reduce vehicle emissions by up to 90%.

In conclusion, Councillor Inglis reiterated the need to tackle the ongoing crisis facing the planet and welcomed the adoption of this Strategy, which would continue to be regularly reviewed by the Communities Scrutiny Group.

Councillor Moore reiterated the importance of everyone supporting this Strategy, confirmed that it had been built into the budget process and reminded Cabinet that there was a substantial £1m Climate Change Reserve budget, together with a £50k grant scheme approved for tree and wildflower planting. The Leader endorsed the comments made by Councillor Brennan, noting that the amendment would reflect the debate at Full Council, and highlighted a quote from the Strategy, which emphasised the importance of "us to repair, restore and rebuild our natural world", which summed up what was required.

In conclusion, the Leader referred to the importance of delivering this ambitious Strategy and ensuring that its ethos permeated through all of the Council's decision making processes. The Council must take leadership and lead by example, with individuals being able to make a difference going forward.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the Climate Change Strategy 2021-2030 be adopted as a Strategy of the Council;
- b) the Director – Neighbourhoods be granted delegated authority to make minor revisions to the Strategy to ensure it meets the Council's objectives; and
- c) the Council's commitment to work in partnership to ensure that the Borough of Rushcliffe will be Net Zero for its emissions by 2050 be confirmed, in line with National Government's Net Zero targets.

48 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/22 - Q2

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Access, Councillor Moore presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services outlining the budget position for revenue and capital as of 30 September 2021.

Councillor Moore was pleased to confirm that this report provided the most positive news for some time, and it was hoped that the situation would not deteriorate due to the outbreak of the new variant. Cabinet noted that the Council had remained diligent, kept a tight control of its expenditure, and quickly identified any impact from external changes, whilst maintaining healthy reserves.

Cabinet was advised that the current budget had been set anticipating an adverse impact on the Council's finances, which had been a prudent step; however, Business Rates, Government funding and budget efficiencies had helped to significantly reduce that impact, leaving the Council with a budget efficiency of £673k. Councillor Moore confirmed that a request had been made for the approval to transfer £100k of that sum to boost the Strategic Growth Board budget for 2022/23. Cabinet noted that a further £1m of that sum was proposed to be utilised for vehicle improvement and replacement to ensure the Council's continued commitment to the carbon neutral agenda.

In respect of the Council's Capital Programme, Councillor Moore highlighted details of the carry forward, totalling £8.29m, which were due to slippage in two major schemes; however, the figures still emphasised the Council's commitment to those capital projects.

In conclusion, Councillor Moore emphasised that this was a very favourable report and highlighted the excellent work undertaken by officers, in both managing Covid and the recovery

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Edyvean endorsed Councillor Moore's comprehensive comments and in particular welcomed the additional funds for the Strategic Growth Board and local businesses. The Director – Finance and Corporate Services and his team were thanked for their ongoing dedication, and their prudent management of the Council's finances was acknowledged.

The Leader confirmed that given the timing of the report, it had yet to reflect any impact from the new variant, and it was essential that the Council remained flexible going forward, as there could be implications ahead. Cabinet was reminded that due to the prudent management of its finances the Council had remained resilient, and had not needed to borrow money, whilst still being able to fund large projects internally. Given that the country had only come out of lockdown in July, it was pleasing to see how positive the Council's position was.

In conclusion the Leader reiterated the thanks given to the Director – Finance and Corporate Services and his team for their hard work and dedication during this challenging time and welcomed the very positive position outlined in the report.

It was RESOLVED that the report be approved, and the following be noted:

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £0.673m, incorporating the potential appropriation of £1m to a Vehicle Replacement Reserve (to be included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy report to Full Council in 2022);
- b) the use of £0.1m in budget efficiencies from 2021/22, to boost the Strategic Growth Board budget in 2022/23, to support the community recovery from Covid, at paragraph 4.4 of the report;
- c) the capital underspend of £10.204m, of which £8.420m is to be carried forward: £8.295m to the 2022/23 Capital Programme and £0.125m to the 2025/26 Capital Programme;
- d) the acceleration of £40k capital provision for Play Areas from 2022/23 to 2021/22 to meet commitments;
- e) the expected outturn position for Special Expenses of £10.2k deficit; and
- f) the planned use of reserves at paragraph 4.2 of the report.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm.

CHAIRMAN