

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2022

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

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor R Jones

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
K Marriott	Chief Executive
S Sull	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies

49 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

50 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 December 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 December 2021, were
declared a true record and signed by the Chairman.

51 **Citizens' Questions**

There were no questions.

52 **Opposition Group Leaders' Questions**

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

“Can Rushcliffe use public procurement as a tool to deliver wider economic,
social, and environmental benefits that favour small, green, local businesses as
opposed to larger corporations?”

Councillor Moore responded by stating that the Procurement Strategy, which would be discussed later on the agenda highlighted the desire to utilise local businesses, as well as emphasising both social value, and environmental considerations. There was not a one fit-all solution in appointing contractors, particularly with large property or service contracts often with more technical requirements and the risk of significant liabilities. Examples included leisure centre builds, such as the Arena and Bingham, and the Council's insurance contract. The Council also had to balance both the need for value for money for the taxpayer and its legal position. Councillor Moore confirmed that the Council was committed to utilising smaller businesses and systemically, within its procurement process, to ensure social and environmental value was pursued.

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

"How does the Council and its partners engage with local SMEs to ensure a clear, robust and efficient procurement process?"

Councillor Moore responded by again referring to the Procurement Strategy and in particular Section 5.2 of that report, which highlighted what the Council was doing to ensure there was a clear, robust, and efficient procurement process. For example, an easy to use East Midlands tender portal, which matched that being used by neighbouring authorities, and provided timely feedback to businesses when requested.

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

"Policy H4 of the Hickling Neighbourhood Plan H4 states that:

Ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms will only be supported where:

A They are on previously developed (brownfield) or non-agricultural land

Assuming that Cabinet members believe this Policy is tenable despite the country's pressing need for renewable energy, is the Policy something they think should be included in other Neighbourhood Plans or in Rushcliffe's next Local Plan?

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that it was a matter for those preparing neighbourhood plans to decide which policies to put forward and to justify their inclusion, and in this instance Policy H4 had been accepted by the Examiner. In respect of the next Rushcliffe Local Plan, it was too soon to say which policies would be included, and any new policies would be considered over the course of its development. Any policy which was included must be justified and the level of evidence must be sufficient to support that, and it was noted that the level of evidence required to support a local plan was different to that required for a neighbourhood plan.

53 Procurement Strategy Update

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Access, Councillor Moore presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services

providing an update on the Council's Procurement Strategy for 2022/23 to 2025/26.

Councillor Moore advised that the report set out the Council's procurement objectives for the next four years and had been written with the support of Welland Procurement, an organisation which advised many councils on best practice and national initiatives and was already advising the Council on its current major projects. Reference was made to the current Government Green Paper "Transforming Public Procurement" and Councillor Moore stated that the Government's aim was to speed up and simplify processes, place value for money at the heart of it, and increase opportunities.

Cabinet noted that the Strategy was a high level statement of principles and policies and was subject to the Council's Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders and supported by the Council's Internal Procurement Toolkit, which set out procurement methods and practices. The Strategy set out key principles, which would enable the Council to demonstrate its leadership, commitment to being commercial through its adherence to social and environmental issues, in particular climate issues, details of which were highlighted in the Strategy.

In conclusion, Councillor Moore confirmed that he agreed with all of the key principles outlined in this comprehensive Strategy and welcomed the input and support of Welland Procurement.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan also welcomed the input from Welland Procurement in drafting this comprehensive document, which clearly addressed a range of issues and set out the Council's vision to secure the widest possible benefits from its procurement processes, in terms of value, social and environmental issues and engaging with local businesses.

Councillor Brennan advised that having read many papers on public procurement over the years, it was noted that Governments of all persuasions had attempted to use public procurement to secure a range of wider benefits, and she considered that the entire process had inherent contradictions in respect of securing value for money, whilst also trying to secure wider social, environmental, and small business benefits. Cabinet noted that by definition, in seeking to secure some of those additional benefits, it detracted from the core objective of seeking value for money.

Councillor Brennan commented that in her experience, all Governments wanted to encourage local businesses to procure from the public sector; however, due to the economies of scale, larger suppliers usually succeed in securing any contracts. Reference was made to the EU procurement rules, which were very complex and had disadvantaged small and local businesses and it was hoped going forward that a new national policy framework would provide a way for public bodies to secure value for money and additional benefits that opening up public contracts could deliver.

In conclusion, Councillor Brennan stated that how "best value" was measured would be key and it was hoped that this Government's Strategy would bring about a sensible reconciliation of those tensions.

The Leader reiterated the importance of ensuring a balance between securing value for money and supporting local businesses, particularly during the current difficult economic times, as they sought to work with public sector organisations. The importance of engaging with that supply chain to help rebuild the economy was emphasised.

In conclusion, the Leader referred to the key role that scrutiny played in ensuring good governance and emphasised the importance of that continuing going forward.

Councillor Edyvean acknowledged the frustrations felt by many small businesses trying to access markets and opportunities in the public sector, and hoped going forward that the situation would improve.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the Procurement Strategy 2022 to 2025/26 (Appendix A) be adopted; and
- b) any changes to the Strategy until 2025/26 be delegated to the Director – Finance and Corporate Service, in consultation with both the Council’s Monitoring Officer and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Access.

54 Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth providing an update on the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Edyvean referred to the Cabinet meeting in October 2021, when the Hickling Neighbourhood Plan had been considered and reminded Cabinet that at that meeting it had been agreed to accept all but two of the Examiner’s recommended modifications, 09 and 10 to the Plan. It was noted that those two modifications related to potential development of a brownfield site, which could spill over into open countryside, and the Parish Council had not wished to accept those two modifications.

Councillor Edyvean confirmed that due to those changes, a further consultation had been required, that had now been completed and all of the comments received had supported the Cabinet’s earlier decision.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis stated that Hickling was a delightful village, enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Reference was made to the importance of this document, which would allow residents the opportunity to influence future development within the parish. Cabinet noted that the omission of modification 09 and 10 had been fully justified and no objections had been raised against that proposed decision in the recent consultation.

In conclusion, Councillor Inglis gave his full support to the holding of a

referendum and thanked all those involved in producing the Plan for their hard work.

The Leader acknowledged the huge amount of work undertaken to produce this Plan and reiterated the thanks given to all of those involved for their hard work and dedication.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the decision not to accept the Examiner's recommended modifications 09 and 10 to the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan be confirmed;
- b) the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan Revised Decision Statement and its publication be approved;
- c) the holding of a referendum for the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan, with the area for the referendum being the Parish of Hickling be approved; and
- d) the Director – Development and Economic Growth be granted delegated authority to make any necessary final minor textual, graphical and presentational changes required to the referendum version of the Hickling Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN