

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 8 MARCH 2022

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

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors R Mallender and J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Banks

P Linfield

S Sull

H Tambini

Director of Neighbourhoods

Director of Finance and Corporate
Services

Monitoring Officer

Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillor A Edyvean

68 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

69 Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 February 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 8 February 2022, were declared a true record and signed by the Chairman.

70 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizens' questions.

71 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor A Brennan.

“In respect of the Housing Delivery Plan has Cabinet considered re-establishing our own housing stock to support an increase in social housing availability in the Borough as a way of dealing with the growing gap between house prices and earnings as well as the ever-increasing pressures put on residents from a private rental market forces?”

Councillor Brennan responded by stating that the Council did not consider that this would adequately address the issues raised by Councillor Walker, nor that

it would be financially viable. The Council was already delivering significant numbers of affordable housing across the Borough, with the delivery of a further 750 units anticipated over the next five years. Cabinet noted that between 2016-2021, the Council delivered more affordable and social housing units than any other council in Nottinghamshire. Councillor Brennan stated that the Council had a very successful track record of partnership working with its registered social providers and that the Council's capital budget was used to deliver a balance of tenures to meet local housing need. There would be significant financial risks associated with bringing housing back into Council ownership, not least having to significantly borrow to fund any acquisitions, future development, and recruiting suitably qualified staff to manage that stock. Councillor Brennan advised that the Council would continue to focus on supporting good quality private sector housing coupled with financial incentives to assist individuals and families on low incomes to gain access to accommodation and by doing so alleviate the pressures on the demand for social rented housing. The Council would also work collaboratively to co-produce bids to secure Government funding to support the provision of additional supported housing for vulnerable groups, such as rough sleepers and survivors of domestic abuse thereby improve wider health and wellbeing outcomes.

Councillor J Walker asked a supplementary question to Councillor Brennan regarding the possibility of using the new County Deal to fund social housing.

Councillor Brennan responded by stating that the issue would be the financial viability of purchasing and holding housing stock under any arrangement that was likely to be available and the fact that the Council has declared that it did not want to take on any additional borrowing. Councillor Brennan stated that if there was any additional information that she was unaware of, that would be provided in writing following the meeting.

72 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/22 - Quarter 3

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 31 December 2021.

Councillor Moore advised that this budget had been cleverly set anticipating the adverse impact of Covid, together with a combination of budget efficiencies, Business Rates and government funding had helped mitigate the financial impact of income losses. Cabinet was advised that the position remained volatile, with the reduction in Business Rates as a result of the power station appeal, additional charity reliefs and the subsequent reduction in the Business Rates Pool surplus affecting the Council. The Council had an outturn surplus of £54k, which considering the recent difficult times, was pleasing to note.

In respect of the Capital Programme, Councillor Moore confirmed that the Council currently had an underspend of £5.1m, which was again largely due to slight delays in rephasing of work schedules. Cabinet noted the main items impacting on the current Revenue Budget, detailed in Table I of the report. In terms of the timings on Capital Receipts, it was noted that any borrowing could

be met from internal resources.

In conclusion, Councillor Moore drew Cabinet's attention to the important information in the report related to the implications of bringing Streetwise in house and of the Council's decision to replenish the Climate Change Reserve by £200k, to reinstate it to £1m. It was confirmed that all capital schemes would now be assessed for carbon reduction elements, and that fund would be used accordingly.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan stated that it was pleasing to receive such a positive report, which also recognised a number of on-going risks in the wider operating environment, which the Council need to be mindful of. Councillor Brennan advised that just as the Council had quickly anticipated an improvement in circumstances following Covid, given recent international instability, it was pleasing that the budget efficiencies had enabled the Council to have a robust buffer in place to counter such eventualities, and that it continued to support and invest in key initiatives for the Borough.

It is RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the attached report both noting and agreeing to:

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £0.054m inclusive of committed reserves;
- b) the planned use of reserves totalling £4.140m (detailed in Appendix A of the report);
- c) the capital underspend of £5.1m; and
- d) the expected outturn position for Special Expenses of £15.7k deficit.

73 **Housing Delivery Plan 2022-2027**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities and Climate Change, Councillor Brennan, presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods, outlining the Council's Housing Delivery Plan for 2022 to 2027.

Councillor Brennan advised that the Plan set out three high level priorities, with associated actions and targets to deliver those priorities, details of which were highlighted in paragraphs 1.3 and 4.4 of the report.

Councillor Brennan reminded Cabinet that although it was no longer mandatory to produce such a Plan, it did support the Council's statutory duties and it clearly linked to its Corporate Priorities.

In conclusion, Councillor Brennan stated that this was a clear and concise Plan, with measurable targets, as detailed in paragraph 5.4 of the document attached as Appendix 1 to the report and in Appendix 2 of the report. The Plan provided an excellent overview of the housing situation in the Borough, together with the Council's plans to address those issues raised and Councillor Brennan commended the officers involved in compiling the Plan.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis referred to the importance of housing and having an ongoing strategy, which could be clearly monitored in the priority areas. Rushcliffe's excellent reputation in providing affordable and sustainable housing, beyond national standards was well known and the importance of ensuring both quality and environmental sustainability was becoming even more important, especially when there was increasing uncertainty over future energy costs. Councillor Inglis reminded Cabinet of the far reaching social and wellbeing consequences that homelessness caused and stated that it was pleasing to note that the Council had a strong support system in place to offer support.

The Leader reiterated comments made regarding the need to address the pressures on housing, not just locally but nationally and stated that the focus must be on the green agenda, to improve standards and that developers and manufacturers had to catch up with new technology.

Councillor Moore referred to the new development at Abbey Road, which would be very energy efficient and stated that he was pleased that the Council was moving in the right direction, particularly as energy costs continued to rise.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the Housing Delivery Plan 2022 – 2027 (Appendix 1 of the report) and Action Plan (Appendix 2 of the report).

74 **PSPO - Dog Control**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, Councillor Inglis, presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods detailing a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Dog Control.

Councillor Inglis confirmed that this PSPO had been developed following an extensive consultation, which had generated overwhelming support, following complaints and concerns regarding dog control, and fouling within the Borough. Cabinet noted that the PSPO would run alongside current legislation, and would provide officers with enforcement powers, particularly on new, unadopted land, new housing estates and spaces with public access.

Councillor Inglis stated that he appreciated that the majority of dog owners and walkers acted responsibly; however, a small minority were at the root of this antisocial problem, with everyone seeing and experiencing problems. Cabinet was advised that the order would define a standard of conduct, with the aim of increasing people's safety and wellbeing, and would be a tool to address complaints and direct intelligence to specific areas. It was noted that the four E's approach, to engage, educate, encourage, and finally enforce, would be the approach.

Cabinet was advised that although the PSPO had received widespread support across the Borough, Tollerton Parish Council had stated that it wished that the playing field under its ownership be excluded from the order, which was disappointing. Councillor Inglis advised that talks continue with the Parish Council and the report to Full Council would address this issue.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Moore confirmed that this was a

subject that was brought up at every parish council and village meeting he had attended, and it was good to see that the issue was now being taken seriously and addressed. This was an important report for the general public, as well as responsible dog owners, as it should help to deal with irresponsible owners and Councillor Moore reiterated that this was a necessary and proportionate order.

Councillor Brennan was pleased to see this come forward and was amazed that people could still behave irresponsibly, given the known associated health risks involved. Councillor Brennan stated that she was pleased that the Council's enforcement contractor, WISE would be undertaking this, as they would inform and engage with the public and give a proportionate response, and whilst numbers were small, it would be good to be able to tackle the problem.

The Leader referred to the many new housing estates and the importance of ensuring that bins were installed as early as possible, as it was a common complaint that bins were not available, and this could be used as an excuse.

It was RESOLVED that the proposed Public Space Protection Order for the control of dog related anti-social behaviour as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be endorsed and recommended for approval by Full Council.

The meeting closed at 7.19 pm.

CHAIRMAN