



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

PRESENT:

Councillors T Combellack (Chairman), B Bansal, R Butler, N Clarke and
J Wheeler

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack	Service Manager - Corporate Services
E Palmer	Performance and Reputation Team Leader
L Webb	Democratic Services Officer
S Whittaker	Service Manager - Finance

APOLOGIES:

Councillor D Viridi

ABSENT:

Councillor B Gray

7 Declarations of the Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

8 Minutes of the Meeting 20 July 2021

The minutes of the meeting 20 July 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

9 Finance and Performance Management Q1

The Service Manager – Finance presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services which detailed the quarter one position in terms of financial and performance monitoring for 2021/22. It was noted that this was linked to the closure of accounts process and previous financial update reports and includes the in-year variances along with variances resulting from Covid.

It was noted that income lost related to Covid-19 totalled £0.071m with in year efficiency savings of £0.394m and non-ringfenced grant funding £0.061m. It was stated that for this financial year, the overall budget variance including Covid related pressures and in-year efficiencies, was expected to result in an overall budget efficiency of £0.880m. It was noted that in regards to business rates the Council was expecting a surplus of £2.338m but that a significant

proportion of this would need to be appropriated into the Collection Fund Reserves (£1.765m) to cover next year's deficit arising as a result of additional Covid related business rates reliefs issued in the year. The Group were informed that additional pressures had been identified including a contribution towards a feasibility study into the pedestrianisation of Central Avenue in conjunction with Nottinghamshire County and a £1,000 payment per driver to refuse HGV drivers totalling £27k given the unusual market conditions and demand for HGV drivers and that this along with the £1.765m business rates results in £1.842m being used from reserves.

It was explained that budgets within the special expenses area had been impacted by Covid, particularly on the loss of income from hire of venues and bar sales mainly at Gamston Hall which was being used as a vaccination centre. These projections were included in the total Covid related budget pressure of £0.071m and the expected budget deficit for the year is £5k. It was explained that the Governments Sales, Fees and Charges reimbursement scheme had been extended to the first quarter of this year. It was estimated that the total reimbursement would be £46k and that part of the total estimated reimbursement had been allocated to the Special Expense fund to support the lost income from closure of facilities in the West Bridgford area.

It was noted that the Capital Programme monitoring statement and funding position projected a variance at this stage is £2.837m. Additionally, the original Capital Programme of £28.158m, plus agreed carry forwards of £6.533m, plus in-year adjustments of £0.911m g a revised total of £35.602m. It was explained that the net expenditure efficiency variance of £2.837m was primarily due to support for Registered Housing Providers £0.692m and Disabled Facilities Grant £0.218m amongst others. It was concluded that the projected financial position of the council was stable but that risks were still present over the winter period and uncertainties over funding and government policies.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager asked the Group to comment on the monitored tasks which were outlined in the Corporate Strategy and the performance measures within the Corporate Scorecard.

It was noted that there were four strategic performance indicators falling below target:

- LINS18 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, and composting
- LINS23 Residual waste collected per household, in kilos
- LICO64 Number of pavilion, community hall and playing field users
- LICO66 Percentage usage of community facilities

There were four operational performance exceptions:

- LIDEG01 Percentage of householder planning applications processed within target times
- LIDEG17 Percentage of planning enforcement inspections carried out in target time
- LIFCS61 Percentage of calls answered in 40 seconds
- LINS38 Robberies per 1,000 population

It was explained that the collection of waste had been affected due to the pandemic and the fact that more residents were working from home. The knock-on effect being more waste created at home for collection.

It was explained that the number of community facility usage was up on this period last year but had been impacted by Gamston Community Hall being used as a vaccination centre, Gresham Sports Park being closed for redevelopment and the transferred management of Lutterell Hall on 1 May 2021. Additionally, with Covid-19 restrictions extended until 19 July 2021, it had an impact on the percentage of users returning to use the Council's community buildings. For example, some users had deferred returning until September, some groups were working on reduced groups sizes and some groups particularly the vulnerable or older groups had been slow to return until confidence had been restored.

The Group praised the refuse team for their hard work and suggested that a new campaign be released to residents to let them know what can be recycled. However, it was noted that Nottinghamshire County Council were in the process of preparing for the recommendations of the Resources and Waste Strategy and the Environment Bill and so any new campaigns should not take place until proposals from central government have been considered.

The Group also praised the planning team, who were currently dealing with a 42% increase in householder planning applications. The Service Manager – Corporate Services agreed to provide the Group with a structure of the planning team with their contact details as there was currently a number of new members of staff.

The Group were disappointed that refurbishments to the Council's community facilities had been delayed until 2022/23. The Group asked for an update following the recommendations of the Community Facilities Working Group. £2.338m of Business Rates surplus and refers to deficit created as a result of additional reliefs and if this deficit is funded by government. The Service Manager Finance confirmed that it is fully reimbursed by Government.

The group questioned if there was a corresponding increase in planning income given the significant increase in applications and the Service Manager – Finance stated that there is an expected variance at Q1 that will bring the income up to pre-covid levels but the Q2 report will be based on more data and any expected variances above this level will be reported on.

A question was asked about the borrowing figure in Appendix C and why the projected outturn was exactly as the budget. The Service Manager – Finance explained that the borrowing figure shown was internal borrowing and would only likely vary if there were significant movement in other funding sources for the capital programme.

The planned refurbishments to some of the Council's properties in the Capital Programme had been deferred and it was asked if the works had deemed to be no longer necessary in the current year. The Service Manager – Finance explained that the Property Team have assessed the urgency of planned works

and prioritised the works in line with available resources. The works will be reprofiled into next year.

Further information was requested on the options available for use of funding for Registered Housing Providers. The Service Manager - Finance agreed to provide a summary of options to the group.

The Service Manager – Corporate Services stated that finance and performance management was scrutinised by the Corporate Overview Group so that the Group are able to see an overview of finance and performance monitoring which could also indicate topics for scrutiny.

It was RESOLVED that the Corporate Overview Group notes:

- a) The expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £0.880m;
- b) The capital budget efficiencies of £2.837m;
- c) The expected outturn position for Special Expenses of £5k deficit in Appendix E
- d) The planned use of reserves at paragraph 4.3 (primary to meet the Collection Fund deficit as a result of business rates reliefs and the grants received in the General Fund to fund the deficit)
- e) The comments for performance exceptions and considers whether additional scrutiny is required
- f) The performance of strategic tasks
- g) The Group be provided with a list of potential options that Registered Housing Providers may spend the Capital Grant on
- h) The Group be provided with an update regarding the Community Facilities Working Group
- i) The Group be provided with a list of the members of the planning team and their contact details.

10 **Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen**

The Group discussed the length of presentations during scrutiny meetings and agreed that they were too long and did not enable the councillors to have enough time to answer questions afterwards. It was agreed that presentations should cover parts of the report that need emphasising and that the Chairman should intervene during the meeting if the presentations are too long.

It was also agreed that scrutiny training should be arranged. It was suggested that training could take place before the next scrutiny meetings. The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services suggested that scrutiny Chairmen could attend future East Midlands Council's networking events if the topics were of interest and agreed to circulate these when they were available.

The Chairman of the Communities Scrutiny Group noted that the Group had scrutinised police performance in Rushcliffe and the work of the Trent Bridge Community Trust at its last meeting. The Group were pleased to meet Rob Lawton the new policing inspector for Rushcliffe who delivered a presentation to the group to outline his priorities for the Borough. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety also attended the meeting. He asked the councillors to contact him if they had any concerns regarding crime in their wards. It was

noted that if crime was reported, it was more likely to be added to the neighbourhood policing teams' list of priorities. The Portfolio Holder agreed to report back to councillors the outcome of their meetings to discuss priorities. The Group received a presentation from Mark Clifford at the Trent Bridge Community Trust. The Chairman was pleased to note that the Trust went above and beyond to ensure that young people continued to be supported during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Concerns were raised about the approval of work programme items for the scrutiny groups as sometimes items were delayed to a later meeting without the knowledge of the Groups. It was agreed that the work programme reports would be changed so that the workflow could be better explained.

The Vice-Chairman of the Growth and Development Group noted that the Group had discussed the allocation of the Community Infrastructure Levy. It was agreed that the allocation of the levy should go to:

- Secondary school places across the Borough through new provision or extension to existing provision
- Park and Ride along the A52 corridor and bus priority measures in West Bridgford
- Indoor leisure provision or improvements to existing provision
- Health facilities across the Borough through new provision or extension to existing provision
- Playing pitches and ancillary facilities provision or improvements

The Group also recommended to Cabinet that the proportion of levy receipts be increased to 25% rather than 15% to those Parish Councils without a neighbourhood plan to provide a consistent level of local funding across the Borough.

The Growth and Development Scrutiny Group also received a presentation from the Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property delivered a presentation to update members on the Covid 19 Business Recovery, providing members with data across the D2N2 authorities, including Furlough and self-employment claims, unemployment claims, job vacancies and business closures, as reported in June 2021.

11 **Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes**

The Service Manager –Corporate Services presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services which asked the Group to create and receive feedback on the scrutiny group work programmes for 2021/22 based on the Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Investment Strategy and Transformation Plan. The Group were also asked to consider potential topics for scrutiny which were submitted by Councillors and officers.

The Group first considered the requests for scrutiny items submitted by either Councillors or officers using the scrutiny matrix. The first item discussed was the scrutiny of solar energy. The Group agreed that alternative energies would be scrutinised (including solar.) The Group were minded that by discussing

different types of alternative energies it would stop councillors from discussing specific planning applications which were not relevant to the scrutiny of the topic. It was suggested that Councillor Thomas would receive answers to her questions in the scrutiny matrix in the short term as the item was not due to be scrutinised by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group until October 2022.

It was also agreed that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group would receive the opportunity to discuss cycling routes in the Borough in January 2022 which would enable the Group to ask additional questions from the presentations which were received in July 2021. The Growth and Development Scrutiny Group would also scrutinise planning communications in April 2022 and Conservation Areas in July 2022.

Another item which was agreed to be added to the Communities Scrutiny work programme was Sports Development in Rushcliffe. It was noted that the item would inform the Group about barriers to participation in sport, Gresham sports pitches and links with CIL. The Communities Scrutiny Group would also scrutinise the feedback from the residents survey in January 2022.

It was also agreed that the Corporate Overview Group would scrutinise the impact of Covid 19 on Rushcliffe Borough Council in two parts. The Group would discuss the internal impact in February 2022 and the external impact in May 2022.

It was RESOLVED that the work programme as outlined below be agreed:

Corporate Overview Group

1 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programme ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Impact of Covid-19 on Rushcliffe Borough Council Internal Focus
3 May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programme ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversity Annual Report ○ The Impact of Covid-19 on Rushcliffe Borough Council External Focus
xxxx 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programme ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health and Safety Annual Report

Governance Scrutiny Group

25 November 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Annual Audit Report 2020/21 • Statement of Accounts • Streetwise Annual Report • Treasury and Asset Investments – 6 monthly update • Asset Management Plan
3 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Internal Audit Strategy • External Audit Annual Plan • Annual Audit Letter • Value for Money Statement • Risk Management – Update • Treasury and Asset Investments Strategy - Update
19 May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Internal Audit Annual Report • Annual Governance Statement • Constitution Update
September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management • Going Concern • Asset and Investment Outturn 2020/21

Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree Conservation • Cycling Networks – Part Two
April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Communications
July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Areas – Part Two
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies relating to Alternative Energy Sources

Communities Scrutiny Group

January 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Delivery Plan • Feedback on Residents' Survey 2021
April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Strategy • Carbon Management Plan
July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Development in Rushcliffe
October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

12 **Annual Customer Feedback Report 2020/21**

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, which summarised the customer feedback received by the Council during 2020/21 and provided a comparison to previous performance as well as to other authorities. Key points included:

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- 49 complaints were received by the Council at Stage 1 of its complaints process – this is comparable with recent years despite the service pressures and hardships to residents caused by the pandemic
- The percentage of complaints escalated past Stage 1 has increased slightly from 20.0% in 2019/20 to 22.4% (11 from 49)
- Consistency in handling complaints has stayed at a high level, as has the number of complaints that are responded to within target time – 48 out of 49 – this is despite the additional work pressures of the last eighteen months
- Analysis of the 49 complaints received in 2020/21 showed that 61.2% were unjustified
- Seven complaints were directly related to the pandemic
- Fourteen complaints were referred by complainants to the Local Government Ombudsman – none of these complaints were upheld
- The Council received 155 compliments about its services in 2020/21 – 23 more than the previous year.

The Group raised concerns that there was a slight trend increase in the number of complaints received by the Council. The Service Manager believed that this was not a cause of concern and may be due to factors such as population increase, the increase in the use of social media and more residents being at home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Group were pleased to note that any complaints which were a matter for the County Council to deal with were passed onto them by the customer services team and the resident would be informed that the complaint had been passed on to the relevant officer and complaints team at the county council.

It was RESOLVED that the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services is noted and accepted as a true record of customer feedback in 2020/21.

The meeting closed at 8.58 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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Item	Action	Responsible Officer
Finance and Performance Management	<p>The Group be provided with a list of potential options that Registered Housing Providers may spend the Capital Grant on</p> <p>The Group be provided with an update regarding the Community Facilities Working Group</p> <p>The Group be provided with a list of the members of the planning team and their contact details</p>	<p>Service Manager – Finance</p> <p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p> <p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p>
Feedback from Scrutiny Chairmen	<p>Training be organised for scrutiny group members</p> <p>Members of Corporate Overview Group be informed of topics being discussed by the East Midlands Councils Scrutiny Network</p> <p>The work programme reports be changed so that the workflow could be better explained</p>	<p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p> <p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p> <p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p>
Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes	<p>Covid-19 Recovery item be rescheduled for Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in 2022</p> <p>A briefing paper be circulated to councillors to address the questions raised by Councillor Thomas in her scrutiny matrix regarding solar farms</p> <p>A scrutiny matrix be drafted with Councillor Clarke concerning the Council's policies in relation to alternative energy sources</p> <p>Circulate reminders to relevant scrutiny group members in advance of the upcoming 'part two' items on cycling networks and conservation areas to ensure that questions are not repeated</p> <p>Circulate headline figures for the residents' survey as soon as they are available to enable Communities Scrutiny Group members to raise queries and concerns in advance of the January 2022 discussion of this topic</p>	<p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p> <p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p> <p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p> <p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p> <p>Service Manager – Corporate Services</p>

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