

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

Councillors Jones and J Walker

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

32 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 October 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 12 October 2021, were declared a true record and signed by the Chariman.

34 Citizens' Questions

The following question was submitted by Ms Susan Edwards. Ms Edwards was unable to attend the meeting, so her question was read out by the Chairman.

“Do you consider that the presence of an Energy from Waste incinerator three times the size of the local Eastcroft incinerator on the Ratcliffe on Soar site will have a positive or negative effect on attracting future businesses to the site?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that the although the answer was unknown, the Council was confident that the Energy from Waste plant was part of Uniper’s vision for the future of the site, which the Council expected to include a mix of different energy generating schemes, as we moved away from

coal powered electricity. The site was likely to be of huge interest to businesses that were delivering energy and technologies for the future.

35 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Edyvean.

“What are the “very special circumstances” Cabinet feels will outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt should its status be removed on the Ratcliffe-on-Soar site?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that the Council was not in a position to comment on this, the work would be done as part of the Local Development Order (LDO) process and to comment in advance would not be appropriate. The Local Development Framework Group, a cross-party group, would be part of the process and it would have the opportunity to discuss this matter prior to the LDO coming forward for determination.

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

“Would the “very special circumstances” be decided locally and then discussed by Councillors?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by reiterating that the issue would be discussed as part of the lengthy timetable by the Local Development Framework Group.

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

“Does the infrastructure item “indoor leisure provision” include village halls and community centres that are used for a range of physical activities such as badminton, exercise classes and dancing as well as other leisure pursuits, or is it just the large Rushcliffe leisure centres that can benefit?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that the Borough did have a leisure provision and strategy, which included indoor leisure. The indoor leisure provision primarily referred to indoor sports rather than broader community uses. The larger leisure centres managed by the Council were the primary areas, which had been identified as the priority for this infrastructure category. The focus of the infrastructure list in the Community Infrastructure Levy document was on strategic priorities, and it was unlikely that items such as village halls would be included.

36 Electoral Review of Rushcliffe - Draft Recommendations

The Leader, Councillor Robinson presented the report of the Chief Executive outlining the draft response to the second stage of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) consultation, in respect of the electoral review of Rushcliffe.

The Leader advised that in March 2021, the Council had participated in a boundary review, which had been submitted to the LGBCE. Cabinet was advised that the LGBCE had decided that Rushcliffe should retain its 44 Councillors, and that a first stage consultation had taken place between May and July, asking for feedback on where the Borough's ward boundaries should be drawn. The second stage of the consultation had commenced on 5 October, with Councillors being given the opportunity to comment on the LGBCE's draft recommendations, and Cabinet noted that the Appendix to the report detailed the Council's draft response to that second stage of the consultation.

The Leader summarised the LGBCE recommendations, details of which were highlighted in the report at paragraph 4.2 and confirmed that the document would be presented to Council, before its submission to the LGBCE by 13 December. Cabinet also noted the detailed responses made by Councillors, details of which were highlighted in paragraph 4.4 of the report.

The Leader acknowledged that due to Covid 19, the LGBCE had been forced to undertake this exercise from a distance, and whilst the Council agreed with many of the proposed recommendations, there were a number, including the suggested loss of the Lady Bay ward and changes to Bingham that could not be supported, and the LGBCE should be urged to undertake site visits to those areas and reconsider those recommendations.

In conclusion, the Leader thanked Councillors for their comprehensive responses to such an important issue.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan referred to the importance of undertaking such reviews, especially where many wards were experiencing considerable growth, to ensure that the population of the Borough was properly reflected in the democratic process. However, it was reiterated that the proposals for Rushcliffe had essentially been a desk-based exercise and therefore had failed to capture some of the important characteristics of the area, or to understand the way that different settlements and communities within it interacted and were related.

Councillor Brennan stated that rural areas would be particularly impacted, as was often the case, and referred to the suggested changes to East Bridgford, which would become so extended geographically that members would be required to attend over 15 parish council meetings usually every month, which was unsustainable. The importance of maintaining natural communities including those at Tollerton and Lady Bay was also emphasised, and those areas would not be well served by the suggested proposals.

In conclusion, Councillor Brennan, referred to the importance of all elected representatives maintaining close connections to their local areas, and whilst welcoming the opportunity to comment on the proposals, it was reiterated that there were some aspects that did need to be re-examined.

Councillor Moore reiterated the comments made by Councillor Brennan, in particular to the difficulties experienced by having to cover a large sized geographical ward. Cabinet noted the benefits of smaller wards served by a

single Councillor, which had proved to work very effectively, and the LGBCE was urged to undertake site visits before finalising its proposals.

The Leader advised that the main issue related to ensuring that the ratio of residents to Councillor representation in each ward was correct; however, the important links with parish and town councils needed to be considered.

It was RESOLVED that the draft response to the second stage of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England consultation be endorsed as the Council's response, and it be recommended for approval to Full Council.

37 **Community Infrastructure Levy Allocation and Spend Process**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Director for Development and Economic Growth outlining the draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Framework Appraisal document and the proposed allocation and spend process.

Councillor Edyvean confirmed that the CIL had now been in force in the Borough for two years, and the proposals being considered had been scrutinised by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group. Cabinet noted that the report set out the criteria for using CIL money, details of which were highlighted in the Appendix to the report.

Councillor Edyvean advised that additional money would be made available to both parished and non-parished areas without a Neighbourhood Plan, giving them an additional 10% of locally collected CIL, to bring that up to the 25% currently allocated to parish and town councils with a Neighbourhood Plan. Cabinet noted that the additional 10% would have to be spent locally, within the strategic spend priorities.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Moore referred to the importance of spending this money wisely, and that the increased percentage to areas without a Neighbourhood Plan, including West Bridgford, and smaller parish councils would be welcomed.

The Leader agreed that the proposal would result in a welcome levelling up and make the process much fairer for all.

It was RESOLVED that the draft Community Infrastructure Levy Framework Appraisal document and proposed allocation and spend procedure be approved, and it be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

38 **Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station Local Development Order**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Director for Development and Economic Growth providing an update on the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station Local Development Order (LDO).

Councillor Edyvean advised that this report constituted further steps in planning terms in creating opportunities for the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar

Power Station site. Cabinet was reminded of the importance of this significant strategic site, as a key component of both the East Midlands Freeport and the East Midland Development Corporation (EMDC). The Council had worked closely with the site owners, and after looking at all of the options, it was considered that an LDO would be the best route to secure the future redevelopment of the site, as a multi-use complex with a low carbon energy focus.

Councillor Edyvean reminded Cabinet that in order to meet the requirements to qualify for Freeport benefits, businesses would need to be established by 30 September 2026, and the LDO was the best vehicle to meet this target. Cabinet noted that the Government guidelines also recommended the use of LDOs for this purpose.

The report detailed that consideration was being given to the removal of the site from the Green Belt in preparation for the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan; however, it was noted that the timescale for that Plan did not facilitate the required timetable to bring the site forward for the Freeport process. Cabinet was reminded that consideration of this report was only the first step, and this draft document would be considered by the cross-party Local Development Framework Group (LDFG) and Full Council. To allow this to happen, an amendment to the Council's Constitution would be required to the LDFG terms of reference.

Councillor Edyvean stated that a clear vision for the redevelopment of the site had already been outlined, in accordance with the terms of reference for both the East Midlands Freeport and the EMDC, and details of the reasons for the suitability of the LDO as a correct vehicle, together with an outline of the process were highlighted in sections 4.7 to 4.17 of the report. Cabinet was reminded that the LDO would give the Council, as the Local Planning Authority, considerable control to ensure that the site was developed as envisaged, and to bring economic prosperity and opportunity for the future.

In conclusion, Councillor Edyvean referred to the huge opportunities that lay ahead, to increase the prosperity of the area and transform it to a greener economy.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis stated that the report provided a strong case for approving the preparation of the LDO and referred to the significance of this important strategic site. Cabinet was reminded that the LDO was a tool, recommended by the Planning Advisory Service, and which was also encouraged within the Government's Freeport prospectus, to expediate the future development of the site, within the necessary timescales.

Councillor Inglis reiterated that this would be the first stage in the process, which would incorporate public consultation, early engagement with the community and stakeholders, together with scrutiny through the Council's cross-party LDFG, before finally being presented to Full Council.

In conclusion, Councillor Inglis referred to the considerable opportunities that the development of this site would create, for new and major business activity, together with the creation of substantial employment, which could be achieved

by the early delivery of this project with its low carbon energy focus.

The Leader commented that undoubtedly this site was a significant strategic site not just for the East Midlands but the country, given its unique strategic importance, with its location, close to East Midlands Airport, the M1, and with the recent confirmation that HS2 would be coming to this site. Cabinet was reminded that the East Midlands Freeport and the EMDC were also planned for this area, and so it was key that as a Council, Rushcliffe helped to facilitate this process.

The Leader confirmed that the National Planning Policy Framework encouraged Local Planning Authorities to use LDOs to set the planning framework, where it was deemed that the impacts would be acceptable, and in particular where this would promote economic, social or environmental gains for the area. Cabinet noted that green technology would be an important aspect of this site, so it was likely to meet the criteria.

The Leader reiterated that Cabinet was not considering granting planning permission, it was looking at the framework, hence the consideration of the LDO. The LDO was a tool, and Cabinet was reminded that this was the first time that Rushcliffe Borough Council had done this, and it reflected the importance both locally and nationally for this site.

In conclusion, the Leader reminded everyone that this was the start of the process, including extensive consultation, scrutiny by the LDFG, further reports to Cabinet, and it was hoped a final report to Full Council in December next year. Cabinet noted that the six week public consultation would commence on Monday, 29 November, and everyone was asked to get involved and have a say in this important issue.

Councillor Brennan reiterated the comments made and stated that it was pleasing to see this really useful tool coming forward, given the potential for this site, together with its possible uniqueness, in respect of its transport connectivity, particularly given the recent news about the HS2 project. It was hoped that there would be a considerable demand to use the site going forward, and it was vital that as a Council, Rushcliffe had the best tool to utilise that potential.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the preparation of a Local Development Order for the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site be approved;
- b) it be agreed that the Council enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with the site owner and works with them to prepare a draft Local Development Order, to be brought back to the Cabinet for approval;
- c) the draft timetable contained in Appendix A of the report be approved;
- d) the following additions to the terms of reference for the Local Development Framework Group in the Council's Constitution be

approved: “The Local Development Framework Group shall consider and make recommendations to cabinet or Council on all draft Local Development Orders and any other relevant documents”; and

- e) it be agreed that the Director for Development and Economic Growth act as project Director for the Local Development Order and oversee its preparation and all associated consultations.

39 **Covid 19: Update Report**

The Leader, Councillor Robinson presented the report of the Chief Executive providing an update on the work completed to date on response and recovery due to the Covid 19 pandemic since July 2021.

The Leader highlighted the key headlines in the report, which reflected the work undertaken both internally and externally by the Council during the pandemic and referred to the lifting of restrictions, which had taken place on 19 July, details of which were highlighted in the report.

The Leader referred to the £106k European Regional Development Welcome Back funding, which had been used for a number of events. Cabinet was advised that a temporary High Street/Town Centre Manager had been appointed, and that £10k had been ringfenced for each of the six larger town/parish councils.

In respect of leisure, the significant impact to this sector could not be underestimated and the Leader was pleased to note that since the lifting of restrictions, usage was up to about 80% of pre-pandemic levels. Work was currently underway at the Arena to convert the indoor bowls facility into a new sports and exercise hall and bring that back into full use.

The Leader acknowledged the £37k allocation from the County Council, which had focused on providing healthy food and enriching activities to children aged five to 16, and that had been very well received.

In respect of staff sickness or those having to self-isolate, Cabinet was advised that to date 31 employees had tested positive, and 97 employees had self-isolated.

The Leader reaffirmed the incredible success of the Council in supporting local businesses, with over 6,500 payments being made, which equated to over £15m and the Director – Finance and Corporate Services and his team were thanked again for their hard work and diligence during this challenging time.

Details of the events programme which had taken place, were highlighted at 4.8 in the report, with over 77,000 people attending those events, which had been well received, and Cabinet noted that it was the Christmas lights switch on in West Bridgford on Saturday.

In respect of other notable updates, the Leader confirmed that the Council had signed up to the new Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Compact, which had been developed to build upon the successful response by the voluntary and

community sector during the pandemic. In relation to commercial properties, occupation levels of council owned commercial property remained high at around 96% and Cabinet noted that in respect of rent holidays, that had now been reduced from £134k to £65k as people were able to pay that money back.

In conclusion, the Leader referred to track and trace and mass vaccinations, with booster vaccinations now being rolled out to the over 40s age group. On 18 October, Gamston Community Hall, which had played such a pivotal role in the initial vaccination programme had been handed back to the Council, and Cabinet acknowledged the work of officers in helping to run such an important operation. The Leader also referred to the important work being undertaken at the mobile testing centres at Cotgrave and Bingham, which continued to be well received.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan thanked officers for their continued hard work to support the Borough's recovery as regulations had been relaxed. Reference was made to the fantastic events, which had taken place over the summer and autumn, which had been well attended, with very positive feedback, and it was also pleasing to note that the Council had continued to support local town and parish Councils to do the same.

Councillor Brennan was pleased to note the positive steps that had taken place, including improved attendance at leisure centres, supporting local children with nutritious meals throughout the school holidays, the quick and efficient payment of grants to businesses, and bringing back services as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, Councillor Brennan advised that the Council would continue to respond flexibly to changing circumstances as we moved into winter and it was pleasing to highlight in the report the excellent progress to date in responding to the pandemic.

The Leader agreed that the threat from Covid remained and referred to the importance of the vaccination programme and emphasised that the Council was resilient and would remain so and continue to support local residents and businesses.

It was RESOLVED that the work of officers of the Council and partners in responding to and supporting the recovery from Covid 19 be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.37 pm.

CHAIRMAN