

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 14 MARCH 2023

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, G Moore and R Upton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
G Dennis	Monitoring Officer
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
K Marriott	Chief Executive
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

49 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

50 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 February 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 February 2023 were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

51 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizen's questions.

52 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

There were no Opposition Group Leaders' questions.

**53 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Financial Update
Quarter 3**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Access, Councillor Moore, presented the report of the Director Finance and Corporate Services which set out the budget position for revenue and capital as at 31 December 2022.

Councillor Moore said that the overall picture was positive, with a predicted efficiency of £1.72m primarily as a result of Business Rates pool, additional

investment income and additional grants. He noted that this position could, and probably would, change during the following quarter but that the money was currently earmarked to assist with cost pressures and to cover reductions in the value of pooled investments which sat at £973k. Councillor Moore said that the money would also be used to enhance current service challenges.

Councillor Moore referred to a number of cost efficiencies, including a large increase in investment income as a result of higher interest rates, increased cash balances, increased planning income and increased usage of Edwalton Golf Course. He confirmed that efficiencies were tempered by increases in agency staff costs and lost income from the delayed opening of Bingham Hub and the Crematorium, although he was pleased to note that both were back on track, with feedback from Bingham Hub being that it was busy and generating revenue.

In relation to cost pressures, Councillor Moore said that these included staff salaries following a pay award in November 2022 which added £550k and inflation reaching 11% during the quarter which affected all departments and in particular energy costs.

Councillor Moore said that the overall capital budget, including carry forwards, was £22.2m, of which the Council anticipated that it would spend £18.5m, resulting in an underspend of £3.7m which would be carried forward. He confirmed that the carry forward combined with capital receipts meant that the Council did not currently have to borrow.

Councillor Moore confirmed that the overall financial position for both the revenue and capital budget was positive, considering the current economic climate and he was pleased that the local government finance settlement had delivered some clarity regarding future funding, including a new round of New Homes Bonus, and a grant to ensure that local authorities received an increase of at least 3% core spending power over the next two years. He noted that Government had deferred resetting Business Rates, New Homes Bonus and the Fairer Funding review until at least 2025/26.

Councillor Moore concluded that the Council was keeping tight control of expenditure whilst maximising income streams and opportunities.

In seconding the recommendations, Councillor Edyvean said that report demonstrated how, even against a challenging background, the Council could manage its finances positively. He referred to the high agency costs and explained that a large amount of the expenditure had been to cover planning and thought that the service provided by the Council was better than many other local authorities.

Councillor Edyvean noted that even though capital receipts were significantly down against forecast, the Council could still meet its borrowing requirements from internal resource. He thought it positive that the Council's approach to the pay settlement had meant that staff on lower salaries received a proportionately higher increase compared to those on a higher salary and said that it was a shame that other parts of the public sector did not show such pragmatism. He thanked the Director Finance and Corporate Services and his team for their continued hard work and dedication.

Councillor Robinson echoed his appreciation for the work of the Finance Team during difficult conditions. He highlighted the positive situation of Edwalton Golf Club and said that this endorsed the investment made by the Council with it forming an important asset as part of the Council's Leisure Strategy.

Councillor Robinson noted the excellent financial health of the Council and whilst there were uncertainties in the future, he thought that very few councils would meet them from such a strong financial position.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet approves the report and that:

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £1.723m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures (paragraph 4.1 of the report) be noted;
- b) the capital budget efficiencies of £3.758m including various re-profiling stated at paragraph 4.7 of the report, included in the MTFs to Full Council be noted; and
- c) the expected outturn position for Special Expenses to be £3.2k below budget (paragraph 4.5 of the report) be noted.

54 Support to the Rushcliffe Youth Forum

The Portfolio Holder for Communities & Climate Change, Councillor Brennan, presented the report of the Director Neighbourhoods which outlined proposals for support to the Youth Forum.

Councillor Brennan explained this report came on the back of a few motions that had come to Full Council over recent years, in looking to find ways of engaging young people in the democratic process and local decision making. She said that there had been a particular motion which had proposed the creation of a Youth Council for the Borough, and whilst that motion had been lost, the proposal had been referred to scrutiny for review.

Councillor Brennan said that in reviewing options, it had identified that Rushcliffe already had a Youth Forum in operation, which was chaired by the representative for Rushcliffe on the National Youth Parliament and supported by the County Council as part of their statutory duty to support young people. She thought that Youth Forums and Parliaments were a great way for young people to take part in debates and discuss issues important to them.

Councillor Brennan referred to paragraph 4 of the report which set out the background to the recommendations and noted that a number of other local Councils had similar Forums in operation, with varying degrees of success and engagement. She said that the most successful ones appeared to have good support both from their National Youth Parliament member and from Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Services department.

Councillor Brennan explained that the scrutiny process had concluded that the existing Youth Forum for Rushcliffe was essentially a Youth Council by another name and that there was no need to establish a new body. She noted,

however, that engagement with the existing Youth Forum had been patchy and that numbers were quite low, especially since the pandemic. She also noted that Rushcliffe, as a Borough did not have contact with schools and that setting up a new youth body from scratch would require a budget and resources, and it was therefore proposed that, rather than reinvent the wheel, focus be put on reinvigorating the existing Forum with support from the Council, such as in providing meeting rooms, perhaps with Members attending some of their meetings, for the Council to consult with the Forum on some of its strategies and proposals and to provide publicity for the Forum to attract new members and support its online presence.

Councillor Brennan noted that since the writing of the report, the representative for Rushcliffe on the National Youth Parliament had stood down to concentrate on their studies and the Council would support Nottinghamshire County Council in recruiting a new representative to the role.

Councillor Brennan concluded that this provided a great opportunity for the Council to build on something that was already in place to help it grow and encourage young people to become involved in local decision making

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis said that it was important for young people to have a forum and opportunity to express their views as they were the future. He highlighted paragraph 7.3 of the report which referred to encouraging young people to engage in democracy to ensure that their voices are heard and paragraph 7.4 which identified that the Youth Forum offered a safe and effective way for young people to bring their issues that are important to them to the attention of decision makers.

Councillor Inglis said that it was important for the Council to be inclusive to all its residents and none more so than those who would inherit the decisions being made today.

Councillor Robinson agreed with the proposals to support the Youth Council and said that offering usage of the Arena's meeting rooms would give a flavour of how adult democracy takes place. He said that these proposals highlighted the excellent scrutiny process of the Council as they came from a motion which had gone to Full Council, which although rejected, had been amended with a commitment to take it through the scrutiny process and was now before Cabinet for a decision to take it forward. He said that it showed democracy in action and demonstrated how the youth of Rushcliffe could engage and play a part in shaping their services of the future and the wonderful facilities offered by the Council.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet agrees to support the existing Rushcliffe Youth Forum for the next two years to help expand membership, increase awareness and increase opportunities for collaboration.

55 **Endorsement of Plan for UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural England Prosperity Fund 2023/24**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business & Growth, Councillor Edyvean, presented the report of the Director Development and Economic Growth which outlined plans for UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England

Prosperity Fund (REPF) 2023/24.

Councillor Edyvean explained that UKSPF funding had been set up to replace European funding and had first been considered by Cabinet in July 2022. He said that the funding worked better at delivering money locally and highlighted that in its first year the Council had spent £312k of UKSPF funding on communities and place and local businesses. Councillor Edyvean explained that it had allowed the Council to provide initiatives such as further improvements to Rushcliffe Country Park, reed clearance on Grantham Canal and cost of living workshops and had enabled the Council to employ an advisor to support local high street businesses. He added that the funding would also support people and skills, with that money kicking in the third year of funding.

Councillor Edyvean said that the proposals before Cabinet were for the coming financial year of 2023/24 and amounted to funding of £624k, to be split between community and place at £325k and business support at £274k. He referred to paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 of the report which set out the proposed funding allocations.

Councillor Edyvean referred to paragraph 4.2 of the report which set out proposals for REPF, including £80k for businesses to bid for, for projects such as diversification of their business, net zero infrastructure, support for rural business hubs and supporting a visitor economy. He said the £69k was allocated for communities and place and that the Council would invite applications for funding between £10k to 40k, with match funding required in certain instances. He said that business grant applications would require 60% match funding and that community grants would require 30%, which could be either financial or in kind. He explained that whilst match funding for the community and place was not mandatory, the Council would like to see commitment for some match funding. He said that the Council would be accepting bids from the end of April 2023.

Councillor Edyvean referred to paragraphs 4.19 through to 4.22 of the report which set out the proposal for governance. He highlighted that Officers would continue to refine the programmes as they unfolded, with the Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer being able to agree any changes and that grants would be assessed monthly by report to the Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth and sign off of the grants would be through the S151 Officer and the Director Growth and Economic Development. He added that quarterly reports would be presented to the Strategic Growth Board and monthly monitoring would be carried out by the UKSPF and REPF Project Board to ensure delivery of projects and that spend was on track.

In seconding the recommendations, Councillor Moore said that £3m to spend in Rushcliffe was a good thing and he was pleased to see the process put in place to spend the funding. He was also pleased to see practical, local and visible expenditure within the communities, bringing extra green spaces, energy conservation, improvements for local community and sporting facilities which were all very important for residents.

Councillor Moore stressed that it was important that improvements were seen and visible and referred to the work that had been carried out on the canal. He said that this had received hugely positive views with a lot of residents asking

about the funding and feeding back about the positive impact, how well the funding had been well spent and how appreciated it was. Councillor Moore looked forward to seeing the variety of interesting projects coming forward.

Councillor Upton echoed the comments of Councillor Moore and said that the funding would bring significant amounts for money to the Borough of Rushcliffe for projects that would be highly visible to many of the local communities. He said that whilst the processes for the funding may appear complicated, it was positive and targeted to local projects.

Councillor Robinson referred to the good governance for the funding and said that there was control through the Rushcliffe Strategic Growth Board which had been set up some years ago by the Council. He suggested that the funding could go through the scrutiny process at some point to ensure that the funding was delivering as expected. He said that unlike European funding which at times could be bureaucratic and slow this funding should be a lot more direct and accountable and he looked forward to seeing the projects come to fruition.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) recognises UKSPF activity delivered in 2022/23;
- b) endorses the proposals for UKSPF and REPF in 2023/24;
- c) delegates sign off of refinements to proposals for 2023/24 to the Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer, with both revenue and capital implications reported in future financial reports to Cabinet and the MTFS to Full Council; and
- d) delegates sign off of grant awards for UKSPF and REPF to the S151 Officer and Director Development and Economic Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, following officer recommendations based on assessment and moderation.

56 Revised Off Street Car Parking Strategy 2023-2026

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, Councillor Inglis, presented the report of the Director Neighbourhoods which set out the key elements of Rushcliffe's Revised Off Street Car Parking Strategy for 2023-2026.

Councillor Inglis said that the revised Strategy addressed the supply and management of the Council's off street car parks designed to encourage short-stay car parking and reflect local variations in the demand for parking. He said that the Council operated 29 off street regulated car parks, with 13 being enforced by Civil Enforcement Officers, and levies pay-and-display charges on 8 of them. He said that the Council prioritised short stay car parking over long stay provision and that whilst there was a range of stay provisions from up to 2 hours to 12 hours maximum, the Council operated a non-uniform tariff policy based on local need and usage.

Councillor Inglis said that the revised Strategy would continue to focus on the ten main car parking objectives as identified in the previous off street car

parking strategy of 2018-2022, which he outlined as being to:

- maintain the vitality and viability of district and town centres by ensuring the needs of shoppers and visitors are prioritised
- encourage short stay rather than all-day parking
- make sure that enforcement was fair and consistent
- improve traffic flow and reduce congestion
- encourage the use of more sustainable modes and smarter choices
- provide access to key services for people with special needs and mobility difficulties by providing appropriate parking spaces
- contribute to the reduction of Carbon Dioxide and Nitrogen Dioxide emissions
- minimise the negative impacts of parking on the streetscape and environmentally sensitive areas
- improve the efficiency of the Council's parking services
- provide revenue to reinvest in parking services to support local economic and social vibrancy.

Councillor Inglis confirmed that income from car parking had returned to pre pandemic levels, and that usage remained consistent, with the Council expecting to receive £748k for the year of 2022/23. He said that the Council also received income from the surplus generated by enforcement activities carried out for off street parking and that in 2021/22 this amounted to circa £4k.

Councillor Inglis explained that the Council had worked closely with the Midlands Energy Hub and had been successful in securing over £1 million in funding to provide a number of vehicle charging points across the Borough and he said the Council could be proud of the Park Mark accreditation awarded for excellence across a number of its car parks. Councillor Inglis referred to paragraph 4.14 which, which along with the day to day management of car parks, outlined future initiatives of the Car Parking Strategy.

Councillor Inglis said that it was important that charges were not a restriction factor to deter retail customers and provided good value for money, especially when compared to others not too far away. Councillor Inglis also praised and highlighted initiatives adopted by the Council, such as Free after Thee in supporting a post pandemic recovery for its high streets' economy.

Councillor Inglis referred to paragraph 3.1 of the report and said that whilst the car parking strategy was not a legal requirement, the points set out in the paragraph provided strong drivers for supporting its adoption, to secure future delivery.

Councillor Inglis explained that the Car Parking Strategy was a living document and would change to best meet the needs of Rushcliffe. He thought that the Council had got it right so far and that this report supported taking that desire forward.

In seconding the recommendations, Councillor Upton said that change was happening all of the time and he agreed that there was need to respond to it, no more so than in how and when we travel, if by car and where we park and how we pay for it. He said that cars were adapting to climate change with the transition to electric power, which brought a need for electric charging points.

He said that off street car parks could have a significant effect on the economic vitality and resilience of town and village centres, hence the focus on short stay and varying tariffs based on local need.

Councillor Inglis said that it was therefore relevant for the Council to update its Off Street Car Parking Strategy and noted that the revised Strategy looked forward and tried to anticipate the changes ahead in a rapidly changing sector. He thought that it would meet the challenges and interests of residents in Rushcliffe over the next four years.

Councillor Edyvean recognised that the Council reinvested money received from car parking back into its future car parking requirements and that it had worked hard to ensure that the changes were not excessive and provided a service to residents rather than acting as a cash cow as happened in some areas.

Councillor Robinson noted that the Council had returned to pre pandemic income levels, compared to some councils who were still struggling to do so, and thought that this was testament to the vitality of the Borough's high streets and demonstrated that people wanted to remain in Rushcliffe and use its facilities. He was delighted that this review had been carried out to ensure that the Council continued to keep its car parking competitive, not just in pricing but in facilities such as lighting and access and said that the car parks of Rushcliffe were comparable with the very best.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) approves the Council's revised Off Street Parking Strategy 2023-2027; and
- b) agrees that the Director for Neighbourhoods be delegated to make minor amendments to the Strategy, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to ensure the technical and legal accuracy of the document during its lifespan.

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm.

CHAIRMAN