

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 11 JULY 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 N Clarke (Chair), A Brennan (Vice-Chair), R Inglis, R Upton, D Virdi
and J Wheeler

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

8 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

9 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 June 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 13 June 2023 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

10 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizens' questions.

11 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor Birch to Councillor Virdi. Councillor Birch was unable to attend the meeting, so his question was read out by the Chair.

"How much money does Rushcliffe Borough Council currently have in cash reserves and investments?"

Councillor Virdi thanked Councillor Birch for his question and responded by stating that it was important to understand that the reserves held were to cover future risks and opportunities. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy brought together the revenue and capital pressures, funding risks and use of the reserves. Councillor Virdi referred to the Council's investment position, as at 31 March 2023, which had been scrutinised at the recent Governance Scrutiny Group meeting and had highlighted the healthy balance of reserves; however, over 60% of those were held by the Council as trustees. In addition,

the Council's Earmarked Reserves were a combination of funds held as trustees and committed expenditure, including an Investment Reserve and property portfolio. The Council had Corporate Reserves, including the Organisational Stabilisation Reserve, the Development Corporation Reserve, funding to cover potential planning appeals and the exceptional Collection Fund Reserve, which had been created due to Government Business Rates relief linked to Covid. There were also Operating Reserves, to cover leisure centre maintenance and planning. The final component, was working capital, to cover salaries and operating expenditure. Councillor Viridi concluded by stating that it was critical that the Council was properly insulated against future revenue and capital demands, hence the need to have sufficient reserves, whilst also being able to use those funds to support future projects, and those balances needed to be understood in that context.

Councillor Clarke asked Councillor Viridi if he would agree that this demonstrated that the Council's finances were run in a very prudent and efficient way and Councillor Viridi concurred.

12 **Financial Outturn 2022-23**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, Councillor Viridi presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, which outlined the year-end financial outturn position of 2022/23, linked to the closure of the accounts process and previous financial update reports.

In introducing the report, Councillor Viridi referred to his predecessor Councillor Moore, thanked him for his excellent work whilst on Cabinet, and stated that he hoped to continue this work, alongside the Director – Finance and Corporate Services and his team and fellow Councillors. Cabinet was advised that the overall position was positive, given the ongoing financial challenges being faced by all. Councillor Viridi advised that unlike many Councils, Rushcliffe had maintained positive budget efficiencies for both revenue and capital.

In respect of revenue, Cabinet noted that there was an efficiency position of just over £2m, which was required for service demands in 2023/24, and to potentially meet other risks, and therefore appropriation to Earmarked Reserves were recommended. Councillor Viridi referred to the notable variances in the report as detailed in Tables 1 and 2, including the budget variances for revenue and other service related variances respectively. Appendix C of the report detailed where the carry forwards were required for the appropriation to reserves and where the £2m budget efficiencies were required.

In respect of capital, Councillor Viridi advised that of the £21m budget, there was an underspend of £5.59m, which was largely due to the delays in opening of the Bingham Arena and the Crematorium. Details of the capital variances were outlined in Appendix C of the report and Appendix D highlighted the Special Expenses position.

Councillor Viridi stated that the financial impact of inflation had, through prudent budgeting been maintained within existing resources, without the need for any draw on reserves. Inflation was expected to continue to fall; however, there

was no time for complacency, with areas of risk to both Council expenditure and income receipts remaining. The Council had to be conscious of the need to balance the budget, whilst supporting residents during this difficult time and the Comprehensive Spending Review, together with the delays to both the Business Rates Re-evaluation and the Fairer Funding Reviews added further uncertainty and pressure and made financial planning even more challenging.

In conclusion, Cabinet was reminded that the Council needed to be properly insulated against such risks, and hence the need to ensure that it had sufficient reserves, as well as having the ability to use those reserves to support projects where there was an upside risk or a change in strategic direction. The Council continued to ensure that it was financially resilient, and Councillor Virdi advised that he would be working with the Finance team to ensure that carried on.

Councillor Clarke agreed that the report demonstrated that the Council protected taxpayers' money extremely well on their behalf whilst also providing excellent services, within allocated finances, through prudent management, and thanked officers.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor J Wheeler reiterated the importance of having prudent financial management and noted that other councils were not in such a good position and had been forced to borrow heavily. Rushcliffe was able to maintain the lowest Council Tax rates in the county, still invest in facilities for the benefit of residents and meet any challenges that came forward. Councillor Wheeler thanked officers, Councillor Moore and Councillor Virdi and hoped that this positive situation would continue going forward.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the 2022/23 revenue position and efficiencies identified in Table 1, the variances in Table 2 (and Appendix A) be noted and the carry forwards and appropriations to reserves in Appendix E be approved;
- b) the other changes to the earmarked reserves as set out at Appendix B be approved;
- c) the re-profiled position on capital be noted and the capital carry forwards outlined in Appendix C and summarised in Appendix F be approved; and
- d) the update on the Special Expenses outturn at paragraph 4.20 and in Appendix D be noted.

13 Low Carbon and Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor Upton presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, which outlined the Low Carbon and Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Councillor Upton advised that the purpose of the SPD was to provide guidance on how low carbon and sustainable design construction could be considered,

to sign post people to best practice and to establish a check list for those submitting planning applications. Cabinet was advised that Nottinghamshire councils had jointly prepared the template, with Rushcliffe adapting it to reflect local circumstances and the SPD would provide guidance on how to maximise energy conservation and minimise use. Councillor Upton confirmed that the document had been scrutinised and approved by the cross party Local Development Framework Group and had been subject to extensive public consultation, and if adopted it would provide further guidance for the Local Plan Part 1.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis considered that the document went along way to encourage and inspire planning guidance for low carbon and sustainable design construction, which was something that the Council could lead on by example through its recent major projects. Cabinet was reminded that construction significantly contributed to CO2 emissions and global warming, and this document was addressing those global issues at a local level. It would help to achieve the essential objective of reducing the Council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030.

Councillor Clarke reiterated previous comments regarding the immense importance of this document in both helping to reduce the impact on the environment and reducing carbon emissions and the need for this work to continue, both by setting a good example and encouraging residents and businesses to employ whatever means they could to contribute to carbon reduction.

Councillor Brennan praised the author of the document and stated that it was very accessible and readable, and she could see it being put to good, practical use.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the proposed revisions to the draft Low Carbon and Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document be supported;
- b) the adoption of the Low Carbon and Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document be approved; and
- c) the Director – Development and Economic Growth, be delegated authority, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, to make any necessary final minor textual, graphical, and presentational changes required to the SPD prior to publication.

14 Shaw Street Cemetery, Ruddington

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Brennan presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, which provided an update on the Shaw Street Cemetery, Ruddington.

Councillor Brennan confirmed that this was a procedural matter to rectify a small administrative oversight. Cabinet was advised that the cemetery had been the Council's responsibility since 1974, and it had been managed since

then as a closed cemetery. Looking back through the records it had become apparent that no formal closure had been undertaken, with details of the background to the decision highlighted in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.7 of the report. Councillor Brennan advised that essentially the requirement was to agree that the cemetery was full, or otherwise impractical for use, and the formalities to do that were minimal. Cabinet noted that the site was assessed as being nearly full when it was transferred over in 1974, the plots were very hard to identify, with no plots sold since 1974. It was theoretically possible that someone could come forward with a valid grant of burial, and that could be accommodated; however, as time passed that was becoming less likely and Councillor Brennan confirmed that there was an alternative cemetery close by.

Councillor Upton agreed with Councillor Brennan's comments and seconded the recommendation.

It was RESOLVED that the closure of the Rushcliffe Borough Council owned cemetery , known as Shaw Street Cemetery, Ruddington be approved.

15 **Exclusion of the Public**

It was resolved that under Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

16 **Land Disposal Update**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Brennan presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, which provided a land disposal update.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Brennan and seconded by Councillor Viridi.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the disposal of the piece of land identified in Appendix A for the purposes outlined in the report be approved; and
- b) the Director – Development and Economic Growth and the Director – Finance and Corporate Services be granted delegated authority to negotiate and agree the sale value, not less than the amount specified within the report.

The meeting closed at 7.28 pm.

CHAIR