

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2024**

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

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
G Dennis	Monitoring Officer
K Marriott	Chief Executive
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager
S Whittaker	Service Manager - Finance

53 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

54 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 February 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 13 February 2024 were agreed
as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

55 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizens' questions.

56 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Brennan.

"How will this Council use the Business Rates Pool surplus to engage, support
and then monitor the impact of the investment to the larger than national
average number, of Micro businesses in the Borough?"

Councillor Brennan confirmed that Micro businesses were a key part of the
Borough's economy, although in terms of Business Rates they only generated
about 0.3% of the Council's income. She stated that a good business mix was
vital and that would be reflected in the Council's first Economic Growth
Strategy due to be published later this year. Micro businesses were very
important and a valued contributor to the wealth and job creation within the
Borough. Councillor Brennan advised that the Business Rates Pool surplus

was not used directly to support Micro businesses; however, there were a range of other budgets and initiatives designed to benefit this important sector, which in turn supported the skills and supply chain required to benefit major growth sites and opportunities across the Borough. Councillor Brennan stated that there were a number of teams in the Council, which supported businesses, various grant schemes, and that the Council serviced and supported the Rushcliffe Business Partnership, with over 1,500 members, who were mainly Micro businesses, which delivered various networking and engagement events. Councillor Brennan went on to list the considerable support provided:

- In 2023/24 £170k was allocated through UKSPF/REPF to support 24 businesses.
- £116k was allocated to the Rushcliffe Accelerator Business Support Programme, which provided one to one business support as well as workshops on a range of topics.
- In 2024/25 £326k was allocated for business grants, £50k of this is for High Street Grants, to be launched in April 2024.
- There was an allocation of £150k to support projects in town centres and to support the delivery of some of the outcomes of West Bridgford Accessibility Study, as well as recently commissioned retail reviews.
- £150k was allocated to people and skills activity in 2024/25, with some grants available to upskill employees as well as take on interns.
- The Strategic Growth Board pot supported Ruddington and East Leake Markets.
- The Shop Front Improvement Grant supported around 27 businesses at a total of around £58k.
- There was a temporary High Street Manager role.
- Social media support for West Bridgford Way.
- A Bingham voucher book featuring local businesses, which was distributed to local residents.
- The Council's commercial estate, which mainly housed micro/small businesses was now 100% let and provided 111 units.
- The Council had attracted approximately £2.35m of funding for the 12 Bingham Arena offices and supported 67 jobs.
- £1.2m was secured for the 11 Cotgrave Industrial Units.

Councillor Walker thanked Councillor Brennan for her very detailed response and asked if there was any data on Micro businesses and how was it used?

Councillor Brennan stated that considerable research was undertaken by both the Council's Economic Growth Team and working with the LEP. She went on to say that given their scale, Micro businesses could be difficult to identify as they often did not engage, and work was being undertaken with the Rushcliffe Business Partnership to try and improve that and the new Economic Growth Strategy would need to reflect that Micro businesses made up a significant proportion of vibrant businesses in the Borough and to use that to try and draw in further investment.

57 **Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2023/24 - Financial Update Quarter 3**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Governance, Councillor Virdi presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, which set out the budget position for revenue and capital as at 31 December 2023.

Councillor Virdi stated that given the various financial challenges, which the Council continued to face, the overall position was positive. Cabinet was reminded that wider economic risks still prevailed, and whilst the position remained fragile, it was noted that the report had been considered by the Corporate Overview Group, with no significant issues arising.

In respect of revenue, Councillor Virdi confirmed that there was an overall revenue budget efficiency of £0.665m, which was largely due to a Business Rates Pool surplus, as detailed in Appendix A to the report. Cabinet noted that there were both adverse and positive variances, which were highlighted in Paragraph 4.3 of the report. Councillor Virdi reminded Cabinet that pay and inflationary pressures remained, together with other pressures referred to at Council last week, which were detailed in Paragraphs 4.9 and 4.10.

In respect of capital, Councillor Virdi stated that Paragraph 4.7 and Table 2 of the report focused on the key variances and carry forwards requested. There was an estimated underspend of £3.880m out of a budget of £12.417m, including £7.068m in relation to rephasing of schemes. Councillor Virdi advised that there was a remaining £3.450m underspend, which as previously discussed was mainly due to timing, and most of the funds were committed, as detailed in Paragraph 4.7.

In relation to Special Expenses, Councillor Virdi referred to Paragraph 4.5 and Appendix E to the report, which highlighted a slight budget efficiency of £2.3k.

Councillor Virdi concluded by reminding Cabinet that the economic climate remained challenging, and it was therefore imperative to keep a tight rein on the budget and not be complacent, to ensure that the Council continued to have the resources to deliver its Corporate Priorities and excellent value for money for residents.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor J Wheeler stated the importance of remaining prudent during such uncertain times. He stated that in respect of variances, it was very hard to predict what would happen throughout the year, although it was important to remember that the budget process was thoroughly scrutinised.

The Leader referred to the capital underspend and reiterated that this was simple a question of timing and the funds would be spent going forward.

It was RESOLVED that the report be approved, and the following be noted:

- a) the projected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £0.665m and

proposals to transfer to reserves, as referred to in Paragraph 4.1 of the report;

- b) the projected capital budget efficiencies of £3.880m including carry forwards of £0.430m to 2024/25, as referred to in Paragraph 4.7 of the report; and
- c) the projected outturn position of £2.3k underspend for Special Expenses, as referred to in Paragraph 4.5 of the report.

58 **Mobile Homes Fees Policy 2024-2029**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, Councillor Inglis presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods, outlining the Mobile Homes Fees Policy 2024-2029.

Councillor Inglis advised that this was an update to the current Policy, which would expire this year, and stated that it was a requirement of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 to publish a policy when a Council intended to recover its costs. Councillor Inglis advised that licensing ensured that Health and Safety standards were met, and any infringement would be subject to enforcement, if required. Cabinet noted that there was an alternative not to charge; however, Councillor Inglis felt that in the interests of efficiency, it was important to cover costs.

In seconding the recommendation Councillor Upton stated that the Policy outlined the work officers did and noted from the report that the fees were to remain unchanged this year, but as part of the annual review would be looked at again next year.

It was RESOLVED that the revised Mobile Homes Fees Policy 2024-2029 be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.18 pm.

CHAIR