

**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL**

**THURSDAY, 7 DECEMBER 2023**

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 D Mason (Chair), A Brown (Vice-Chair), M Barney, J Billin, T Birch, R Bird, A Brennan, R Butler, S Calvert, J Chaplain, K Chewings, N Clarke, T Combellack, J Cottee, S Dellar, A Edyvean, S Ellis, G Fletcher, M Gaunt, E Georgiou, P Gowland, C Grocock, R Inglis, R Mallender, S Mallender, P Matthews, H Om, H Parekh, A Phillips, L Plant, D Polenta, N Regan, D Simms, D Soloman, C Thomas, R Upton, D Viridi, J Walker, R Walker, L Way, T Wells, G Wheeler, J Wheeler and G Williams

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
C Caven-Atack	Service Manager - Corporate Services
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer
G Dennis	Monitoring Officer
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
K Marriott	Chief Executive
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

**37 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**38 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 21 September 2023, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**39 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor shared her experience of the Big Wheel at Goose Fair and informed Council that she was now looking for someone to take her up in a plane to do a loop-the-loop in aid of her charity Riding for the Disabled. The Mayor also mentioned attending the Commandery Carol Service in Kirkby-in-Ashfield. The Mayor informed Council that she had felt very honoured to preside over the Rushcliffe Community Awards recently, which had been a fantastic evening with over 350 nominations across ten categories. The Mayor thanked Councillors for their support of her charity so far this year. Finally, the Mayor

thanked the children and staff from the Plumtree Independent Primary School who had sung Christmas songs before the meeting.

#### 40 **Leader's Announcements**

The Leader of the Council echoed the comments of the Mayor in relation to the recent Rushcliffe Community Awards, which had been a fantastic event that showcased the superb effort Rushcliffe's residents, community groups and other organisations contributed towards the Borough. The Leader went on to inform Council that Sir John Peace, the Lord Lieutenant for Nottinghamshire, was retiring in March 2024, and that he had written on behalf of the Council, to Sir John to congratulate him on his successful tenure as the Monarch's representative in the county.

#### 41 **Chief Executive's Announcements**

There were no Chief Executive announcements.

#### 42 **Citizens' Questions**

- a) A Citizens' Question had been submitted by Mr Simon Young. Mr Young attended the meeting and read out his question.

"Why are solar panels and roof orientation not a mandatory condition of planning approval? We are building many thousands of new homes, and large acreages of warehousing, and it is much more sustainable and economic to fit them from new."

Councillor Upton thanked Mr Young for attending the meeting and advised that the current Local Development Plan contained policies, which encouraged developers to include carbon reduction technologies into developments. Councillor Upton stated that unfortunately the Council's powers were limited as currently National Planning Policy did not enable it to add conditions to insist on such provision, and without that power, if conditions were added, it was likely that a developer would win an appeal. Councillor Upton confirmed that the Local Development Plan was being rewritten, in conjunction with neighbouring local authorities and hoped that it would be adopted in early 2025, and it was expected that the new Plan would contain policies related to the issues raised in the question. Parallel to that, work was underway to revise the 2009 Design Code for Buildings, which would provide another opportunity to bring that up to date.

- b) A Citizens' Question had been submitted by Mr Lee Holden. Mr Holden was unable to attend the meeting, so his question was read out by the Mayor as submitted.

"Apart from a few streets in our town centres, the Borough is looking very scruffy. Why is it acceptable to reduce basic low cost routine cleaning and maintenance, such as thorough weed clearance and road sweeping activities, and does the Council believe that an intelligence lead reactive cleaning and maintenance regime is working, and more importantly offering long term value for money?"

Councillor Inglis thanked Mr Holden for his question and confirmed that mechanical sweeping schedules had not been reduced, with additional remedial work carried out in the Radcliffe Road area following Mr Holden raising concerns, although some of those concerns, such as weed spraying fell under the remit of the County Council as the designated Highways Authority. Councillor Inglis confirmed that Streetwise would continue to monitor cleansing levels and take a targeted approach to cleansing high footfall areas or known hot spots. Councillor Inglis advised that the Council did have limited resources available to address cleansing issues, not just in this specific area but across the Borough and that cleansing included not just mechanical sweeping, but a range of other methods, with the Council being reactive to the cause. Monthly checks were undertaken on works carried out and an assessment of the Borough showed an overall cleanliness at 97.8%, which met statutory requirements under the Environmental Protection Act, and would in the Council's opinion represent good value for money.

#### **43 Petitions**

No petitions had been submitted.

#### **44 East Midlands Devolution Deal**

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Chief Executive, providing an update on the progress of the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority, following the passing of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act.

In moving the recommendation, the Leader referred to the importance of this issue not just for the four upper tier authorities but for the borough and district authorities too, and referred to the significant benefits that it would bring, including additional investment to the region. The Combined County Authority would also give a single voice, making it easier to focus, which was important given that there were 15 separate borough and district authorities in the region, as well as the four upper tier authorities. Council noted that there would be four borough and district representatives on the Executive Leaders Group, two from Nottinghamshire and two from Derbyshire, to ensure that local opinions were voiced. The Leader reiterated that this would bring £4billion additional investment to the region, to improve infrastructure and services and that this would be the first time that all authorities worked together. The Leader thanked officers for their hard work in bringing this forward, confirmed that it had been approved by the four upper tier authorities and stated that it was important that Rushcliffe was involved, to take advantage of the many benefits going forward, including an integrated transport system.

Councillor Brennan seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Grocock advised that the Labour Group would be supporting the recommendation, the ongoing engagement and involvement of Rushcliffe in this process and the delivery of the associated benefits. Councillor Grocock referred to the complexity and inconsistency of devolution across the country,

with the East Midlands being a pilot for this Combined County Authority. Councillor Grocock felt that the patchwork of devolution arrangements across the country was a result of a lack of commitment by successive Governments to deliver a consistent approach, and that no advanced western economy had the regional disparities in socio-economic opportunity as experienced in the UK. Despite those concerns, Councillor Grocock stated that there were many positives to take from this deal, and that the key question was how Rushcliffe could make the most of this and play its part. Councillor Grocock noted the proposed membership of the Executive Leaders Group, which was made up of four Labour councillors. Councillor Grocock hoped that going forward everyone would collaborate to find common ground and deliver for the residents of Rushcliffe, by recognising the role that it could play regionally as a locus for inward investment, and associated benefits.

Councillor R Mallender stated that devolution in the East Midlands was long overdue, and advised that in respect of transport, it was not long ago that the total funding allocated to the East Midlands was less than the annual uplift for London, which highlighted how far behind the region was compared to many other areas of the UK. Councillor Mallender stated that he wished that there was a better system of devolution in this country, which would allow money to be raised locally and spent locally; however, although he considered the system to be flawed, as it was the only one on offer, he would therefore be supporting Rushcliffe's continued involvement in it and hoped that a better name would be found for the Authority.

Councillor Way stated that whilst there were lots of positives, there continued to be concerns and questions regarding the process, including the worry that this additional tier would be costly, with the introduction of a further precept, adding to financial strain. Councillor Way noted that the interim district representatives consisted of four Labour Group Leaders and questioned if there would be more proportional representation in the future, if those elected would be elected for the whole term, or rotated and stated that it was a concern that some areas would miss out on funding. Councillor Way also asked how the failings of some councils to balance budgets would impact on other councils that had managed budgets more successfully, and if those councils would miss out on funding thereby becoming a victim of their own good management. It was hoped that all new initiatives would benefit the whole region, and in particular rural areas, which were often side-lined, and Councillor Way stated that it was therefore very important that Rushcliffe was involved, to ensure that its needs were heard.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan welcomed the report and the additional investment that the Combined County Authority would bring to the region, which previously it had missed out on, due to people not working together. Councillor Brennan stated that regional authorities had an understanding of local issues and needs and the idea of a single voice speaking for the region should be welcomed. Despite the Borough's perceived affluence, Councillor Brennan stated that there were needs in the Borough, which should be recognised. The Council must also not be naïve about the future trajectory for the organisation of local government, and it was vital that Rushcliffe remained involved and had a voice to advocate for local residents. Councillor Brennan welcomed the proposals for a wider District and Borough

Assembly, which would also give voice directly to the district authorities and stated that this was a great opportunity to devolve funds and decision making, and Council was reminded that the Borough had already benefitted from £580k funding for environmental retrofitting and it was important that the funding continued to come where it was needed.

The Leader referred to comments made by Councillor Grocock regarding the membership of the Executive Leaders Group and confirmed that the four representatives had been voted in by the district councils. The Leader referred to previous comments regarding the region lagging behind, and he hoped that this would allow more focus on the East Midlands as a whole and attract significant investment into the region. The Leader also echoed comments made about transport and agreed that this should allow for better service integration across the county. The Leader concluded by welcoming the general consensus around the Chamber.

It was **RESOLVED** that the ongoing involvement and engagement of Rushcliffe Borough Council in the development of the East Midlands Mayoral Combined County Authority and in the delivery of benefits that will come to the region through Devolution be supported.

#### 45 **Corporate Strategy**

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Chief Executive.

In moving the recommendation, the Leader informed Council that the updated Corporate Strategy presented for approval built upon the successes of the previous Strategy, which continued to deliver improvements within the Borough including Bingham Arena and the Crematorium. The updated Strategy would carry forward the same four priorities as the last two strategies, providing stability and the opportunity to deliver long-term change. He noted that the Strategy supported the delivery of the quality services that residents expected, maintained the Council's position charging the lowest Council Tax, whilst achieving the highest recycling rate, and drew Council's attention to the range of projects included under the environment priority focusing on delivering further improvements in the Borough.

Councillor Brennan seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor J Walker commended the work of officers on the new Strategy but informed Council that the Labour Group would not be supporting its adoption as it was not in any way reflective of their views and stated that the Strategy lacked ambition especially in the areas of climate breakdown and the local economy. Councillor Walker went on to say that there had also been a lack of democratic engagement in the development of the Strategy, and that whilst Councillors had been given the opportunity to feedback on the draft Strategy that had been too late in the process. She went on to list the suggestions the Labour Group had made during the consultation process, including more stringent requirements on developers to incorporate more green technology, increased sustainable links between communities, including improved public

transport; kerbside glass recycling and a recognised recycling strategy; local start-up funds and community wealth building; a commitment to lobby central government for a more regressive tax system and a business rates reset, and a commitment to learn from the peer challenge in respect of how other local authorities were increasing local democracy and resident participation; an assessment of the Council's asset base to increase engagement across local communities; ensuring that the decommissioning of the power station made a positive contribution to the Borough; development of a robust social value strategy and a commitment to pay at least the national living wage as a minimum.

Councillor Thomas expressed the view that the document felt like a box-ticking exercise. She felt that the consultation was too high-level, did not encourage engagement from Councillors and happened too late in the process and that the responses received appeared to have been ignored. Councillor Thomas went on to highlight other aspects of the document that she felt were detrimental, such as its backward focus on achievements, that there were too many tasks in which the Council had limited control above setting its own goals, there was a lack of follow through relating to important Council initiatives such as increasing hedgerows, putting in requirements for solar panels on all new developments, making new homes more energy efficient, and a workable alternative to the management charges on new estates. She concluded that the process of developing the Corporate Strategy was flawed and she found herself unable to support its adoption.

Councillor Polenta expressed a number of views about the importance of local democracy and participatory democracy and the Council's role in improving the lives of vulnerable residents in terms of access to homes, education and jobs.

Councillor R Mallender recognised that a lot of work had gone into the development of the Corporate Strategy but expressed disappointment that in this instance the Council had not achieved its usually high levels of participation and engagement. Councillor Mallender agreed with Councillor Thomas that within many activities the Council was a participant rather than a leader, and that the tasks outlined lacked ambition and commitment to real change, stating examples such as solar panels on new homes and retrofitting flood defences in existing communities.

Councillor S Mallender expressed the view that the tasks included under the environment priority were all laudable but did not go far enough. The Council had a target to become carbon neutral in its own operations, but the target needed to stretch to all businesses and homes within the Borough, and in many areas the Council was waiting on national policy before taking action, instead of being a leader in its community. Councillor Mallender called upon the Council to be more ambitious and to recognise its role as a community leader as the planet had finite resources that could not sustain unfettered growth.

Councillor Butler expressed disappointment in the negativity from Councillors across the Chamber and felt it was important to celebrate the successes of the previous Strategy as that put the forward elements of the Strategy in context and stated that it was right that the Council was proud of what it had achieved.

He also felt that opportunities were created for members of the public and Councillors to get involved in the development of the Strategy and that this was clear in the range of tasks the Council had committed to.

Councillor J Wheeler echoed the views of Councillor Butler and stated that the development of the Strategy had included months of work by officers, being featured in Rushcliffe Reports, which went out to every home in the Borough, reaching over 50,000 followers on social media, and there had been two opportunities for Councillors to contribute their views. Councillor Wheeler confirmed that he was satisfied that opportunities to become engaged had been sufficient and that if there were only four objections it suggested that everyone else was satisfied with the document that had been developed.

Councillor Gowland clarified for Council that one of the four consultation submissions was from the Labour Group, where all response had been drawn together into one submission to make it easier for officers to take into account.

Councillor Way echoed the views put forward by other Councillors that the engagement of those outside of Cabinet in the development of the Corporate Strategy had been lacking.

In addressing the points raised, Councillor Brennan stated that she welcomed the updated Corporate Strategy and reminded Councillors that it was a living document, which could be expanded over the next four years as tasks were completed and new opportunities presented themselves. She went on to point out that many of the suggestions made, in particular by the Labour Group, were not within the remit of the Borough Council to deliver and this was why they were not included in the revised version of the Strategy. Additionally, all Councillors needed to be mindful that whilst they contributed to the consultation there was no commitment to include all suggestions in the final Strategy as this would stretch the Council beyond what it could realistically deliver. That was not to say that those suggestions had not been taken on board by officers and some might be actioned outside of the priorities stated in the Corporate Strategy. Councillor Brennan concluded by saying that the Cabinet would take on board the comments relating to involvement and consultation for the future but that it was beholden on individuals to get involved when the opportunities were presented.

The Leader was disappointed to hear that Councillors across the Chamber would not be supporting the Corporate Strategy, which aimed to guide the Council's activities over the next four years. He felt that the document represented a lot of hard work and contained many excellent projects, which would further enhance the Borough and the quality of life of its residents. The Leader advised that he would take on board the comments made by Councillors in relation to the consultation and called upon them to support to adoption of the Corporate Strategy.

Councillor J Walker requested that a recorded vote be taken.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken for this item as follows:

FOR: Councillors M Barney, R Bird, A Brennan, A Brown, R Butler, N Clarke, T Combellack, J Cottee, A Edyvean, S Ellis, E Georgiou, R Inglis, D Mason, P Matthews, H Om, H Parekh, A Phillips, N Regan, D Simms, D Soloman, R Upton, D Viridi, R Walker, T Wells, G Wheeler, J Wheeler, and G Williams

AGAINST: Councillors T Birch, S Calvert, J Chaplain, K Chewings, G Fletcher, M Gaunt, P Gowland, C Grocock, L Plant, D Polenta, C Thomas and J Walker

ABSTENTION: Councillors J Billin, S Dellar, R Mallender, S Mallender and L Way

It was **RESOLVED** that Council adopted the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027 and requested scrutiny to oversee the delivery of the Strategy and its action plan over the next four years.

#### 46 **Statement of Licensing Policy**

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, Councillor Inglis presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods outlining the new Statement of Licensing Policy.

In moving the recommendation, Councillor Inglis advised that under the Licensing Act 2003, the Council was required to produce a Statement of Licensing Policy every five years, which was now due. This draft Policy had undergone public consultation and then been endorsed by the cross-party Licensing Committee on 17 October. Councillor Inglis confirmed that the Council was responsible for licensing and regulating licensed premises in respect of the four licensing objectives as detailed in Section 4 of the Licensing Act 2003, together with issuing personal licences to sell alcohol, transfers and variations of licences and processing notices for temporary events. Councillor Inglis referred to the amendments to the current Policy, as detailed in Paragraph 4.6 of the report, which were welcomed. Council noted that there was a new inclusion in the transfer of pavement trading licences to the Council and an amendment to the response from the Director of Public Health regarding specified areas. Councillor Inglis advised that the Policy had been updated, taking into account changes in legislation and updated policies and he considered it to be proportionate and relevant to the Council's obligations, and he asked Council to endorse the recommendation, to ensure that the Policy could come into force from 7 January 2024.

Councillor Matthews seconded the recommendation and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Chaplain confirmed that the Policy had been examined in detail by the Licensing Committee and referred to the unanimous agreement to amend Paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 of the Policy, which in the draft had named specific areas of the Borough as having relatively higher levels of alcohol associated harm. Whilst being very pleased that the Policy emphasised that employers had a duty of care to ensure that all staff working late or unsocial hours got home safely, Councillor Chaplain stated that she would have been happier if the wording had been stronger and referred to the Unite Union's 'Get Me Home



Safely' Campaign, which called for the granting of licenses to be dependent on the provision of free transport, and she hoped that the Council could work towards that. The issue of ensuring that staff were aware of their rights had also been questioned at the Licensing Committee, as it was felt that there was no point if staff were unaware that help was available. Councillor Chaplain thanked officers for their hard work in preparing the document and confirmed that the Labour Group supported the recommendation.

Councillor Chewings agreed that the Policy had received broad support at the Licensing Committee meeting, he fully supported the document and thanked officers for the significant work undertaken to produce it.

Councillor R Mallender reiterated previous comments regarding the thorough discussion of the Policy at the Licensing Committee and confirmed that he was happy to support the document.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Matthews thanked Councillor Chaplain for raising those issues and for her time on the Committee. Councillor Matthews confirmed that there was unanimous agreement to the list of amendments, the majority of which were procedural to reflect national changes. Councillor Matthews stated that he had been very reassured by officers, that in respect of the 'Get Home Safely' Campaign, they did check with both the licensees and privately with staff, to ensure that this was happening. Councillor Matthews concluded by thanking officers for their hard work in preparing this Policy.

Councillor Inglis thanked officers for their hard work and all those for their input, especially the Licensing Committee and reiterated the Council's commitment to ensuring that all staff got home safely after work.

It was **RESOLVED** that the adoption of the Statement of Licensing Policy be approved.

#### 47 **Changes to the Constitution**

The decision had been taken by the Monitoring Officer and the Chief Executive before the meeting to withdraw this report pending the discussion of a number of outstanding points around the wording of the proposed amendments. This item would be postponed until Council in March 2024.

#### 48 **Notices of Motion**

a) The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Brennan and seconded by Councillor Soloman.

Prior to presenting her motion, Councillor Brennan informed the Mayor that she wished to make an alteration to the motion using Standing Order Paragraph 4.58. After outlining the alteration, consent was given by the Council and Councillor Brennan proceeded to move the motion.

"This Council agrees to use policy 38 of Local Plan Part 2 to apply a planning condition that will see Swift Bricks incorporated in the vast

majority of new commercial and residential developments in the Borough, in addition to any biodiversity mitigation or enhancements normally requested through the planning process.

This will:

1. require a minimum of two swift bricks per suitable dwelling in at least 50% of any proposed new development
2. require commercial and industrial developments to have a minimum of three swift bricks installed per appropriate unit
3. on appropriate single dwelling schemes require two swift bricks
4. be attached to all relevant planning permissions for new buildings granted in the Borough from the earliest opportunity.”

In moving the motion, Councillor Brennan provided an example of antisocial behaviour at a bus shelter on Shelford Road, explaining that swift's nests in the shelter had been deliberately destroyed and the nesting chicks killed. Councillor Brennan explained that she was looking into having the shelter replaced and to find an alternative nesting location for the swifts. Councillor Brennan continued stating that swifts were an iconic bird, but with the decline in insects, modern farming methods and the loss of old farm buildings and housing development, swifts were now on the UK's red list of endangered species. Councillor Brennan advised that by incorporating swift bricks into the vast majority of new commercial and domestic properties, it could prevent and halt the decline of swifts and other native birds, adding that the boxes would be maintenance free and would provide a safe and permanent nesting site.

Councillor Soloman seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Gowland endorsed the motion and suggested that residents should be informed as to why the Council had adopted a no mow policy in some areas of the Borough to encourage insects and wildlife.

Councillor Way expressed her horror of the mindless destruction of the swift nests described by Councillor Brennan and in supporting the motion explained that the Council needed to work with developers to provide areas of scrubland to encourage wildlife and that this motion provided a significant step forward. Councillor Way also questioned what measures the Council could put in place to ensure developers were committed to providing swift boxes.

Councillor Billin endorsed the motion and asked whether Policy 38 of Local Plan Part 2 could be applied to any planning applications already submitted but not yet approved.

Councillor Bird endorsed the motion adding how important and cost effective the policy would be.

In response to Councillor Billin, The Leader advised that Policy 38 of

Local Plan Part 2 was relevant to planning applications already submitted.

Councillor Soloman endorsed the motion and referred to the importance of providing safe and appropriate nesting sites for swifts coming to the UK to breed. Councillor Soloman added that this was a positive motion and thanked all Councillors for their positive comments and support.

Councillor Brennan thanked Councillors and reminded everyone of the importance of the motion and reiterated that it would require some element of monitoring, including a design guide for the boxes and their location. Councillor Brennan added that if the Council was to come back to this in three summers time, she was hopeful that there would be noticeable evidence of an increase in swift numbers.

The motion was carried.

- b) The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Calvert and seconded by Councillor Gowland.

“The Council will include an annual quantitative audit of all its activities undertaken related to the reduction of Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and Girls and report it to Community Scrutiny Group.”

Councillor Calvert asked Council to support the motion, which drew attention to the Council's work on domestic violence and violence against women and girls through an annual quantitative report to the Communities Scrutiny Group. Councillor Calvert went on to say that the Council meeting fell at an opportune time for bringing this motion, as the national 16-day White Ribbon Campaign was nearing its end for this year. Councillor Calvert informed Council that the violence experienced by women and girls took many forms and normalising such behaviours ignored the damage they created. The Labour Group recognised that the Council had undertaken staff training as well as specific activities within strategic housing and community safety; however, Councillor Calvert considered that much of that appeared to be uncoordinated and the Council was lacking an overall strategy, against which actions could be evaluated. A clear strategy and action plan were required to become accredited by White Ribbon UK, something that other councils and public bodies in Nottinghamshire had already achieved. Councillor Calvert concluded by suggesting that there was currently limited evidence to confirm the effectiveness of the work to eradicate domestic violence in the Borough and that by supporting the motion Councillors would be taking a step towards the development of the strategy and action plan required to achieve accreditation with White Ribbon UK.

Councillor Gowland seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Inglis thanked Councillor Calvert for highlighting an exceptionally important issue and recognised that it was essential to ensure that the Council was actively involved in reducing domestic

violence, providing support to victims of domestic violence and playing its part in reporting concerns at an early stage. Councillor Inglis informed Council that he felt there was an opportunity to strengthen the proposed motion to ensure the Council was taking broad and effective action rather than just reporting annually on what it did and proposed an amendment to the motion which read:

“Rushcliffe Borough Council will continue to work proactively with its partners and stakeholders in the common goal of reducing all types of domestic violence and abuse, especially that aimed towards women and girls. This Council will submit a Scrutiny Matrix item, through the relevant portfolio holder, to the Corporate Overview Group to report on the actions Rushcliffe Borough Council undertakes in the reduction of domestic violence and abuse against women and girls.”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor J Wheeler who reserved the right to speak.

The Mayor asked Councillor Calvert if he was prepared to accept the amendment or if it needed to be put to the vote. Councillor Calvert did not accept the proposed amendment.

In support of his amendment, Councillor Inglis informed Council that domestic violence and abuse was not just about physical assault to a victim, and whilst the majority of victims were female, domestic abuse also affected men, children and other family members. It also included a broad spectrum of behaviours with the common themes of power and control and unfortunately, the recorded numbers of domestic violence and abuse were increasing. Councillor Inglis went on to say that the Council was already working with the Safer Notts Board, the Domestic Abuse Partnership and the South Notts Community Safety Partnership and confirmed that the Council actively supported the White Ribbon Campaign each year to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse within the Borough. The proposed amendment moved this important debate into the scrutiny arena, where evidence from a range of sources can be brought together and examined and it would give Councillors a much better opportunity to understand what the Council was already doing, what services others offered, and how best the Council could use its resources to benefit the local community.

Councillor Parekh spoke in support of the amendment outlining a number of initiatives the Council had already supported and actions it had undertaken, which included the use of Safer Streets funding for CCTV cameras, the Council's Sanctuary Scheme, and support of Clare's Law and the Ask for Angela scheme in local bars. Councillor Parekh felt that the Council was already very active in this area and that scrutiny would help Councillors to understand more about what was already being done.

Councillor Gowland explained that the Labour Group had already considered submitting a scrutiny matrix but concluded that the more effective action would be an annual quantitative report to scrutiny rather

than a one-off discussion.

Councillor Thomas supported the commitment to a scheduled annual audit as outlined in the original motion and asked, if the amendment were to be successful, that the relevant Portfolio Holder would undertake to work with the original proposer of the motion on the drafting of the scrutiny matrix.

Councillor Soloman reported that she and Councillor Barney had been on a J9 training course run by Nicola Brindley MBE, which she described as both heart-breaking and empowering and encouraged other Councillors to become similarly accredited. Those views were echoed by Councillors Way and J Walker who had also undertaken the J9 training.

Councillor Birch welcomed the expansion of the wording to include reference to the victims of domestic violence and abuse in the amendment, which recognised the inclusion of men as victims as well as perpetrators.

Councillor S Mallender reported to Council that she would like to see a combination of the two proposed motions and welcomed the wider definition of domestic abuse in the amendment but preferred the commitment of an annual audit to the scrutiny matrix as proposed in the original motion. She also put forward the statistic that 60% of female prison inmates were also survivors of domestic abuse and wondered if better access to support and services could have avoided their incarceration.

Councillor Gaunt called upon the Council to be a better leader in this field and stated that the J9 training had been excellent; however, it was unfortunate that the opportunity had not been offered through the Borough Council, which could be doing more to lead in this area.

Councillor R Mallender raised concern that the debate was losing focus and wondered if there was the option to take the motion and the amendment away, work cross-party on something that everyone could support, and bring it back to the next meeting of Council. He stressed that this issue was too important to be rushed or turned into a political point scoring exercise.

The Chief Executive asked if he was proposing to adjourn the debate on this item to which Councillor Mallender agreed. The motion to adjourn the debate was seconded by Councillor J Walker.

The Leader supported the proposal to adjourn the debate and committed to a cross-party discussion to draft wording that the whole chamber could sign up to. The Leader asked that the minutes show that all Councillors were in agreement with the sentiment of the motion but were anxious to get the wording right so that the most effective action could be taken.

On being put to the vote, the debate on this motion, and the amendment, was adjourned.

#### 49 Questions from Councillors

a) Question from Councillor Gowland to Councillor Upton

“As you know, the local planning authority may at any time prepare a revision of an LDO. Is the Council planning to revisit the Ratcliffe on Soar LDO given that HS2 will no longer be coming to East Midlands Parkway?”

Councillor Upton responded by stating that in his opinion the Local Development Order (LDO) was not predicated on HS2 coming to East Midlands Parkway, as when it was first discussed HS2 was coming to Toton.

b) Question from Councillor Birch to the Leader, Councillor Clarke

Was an offer made by the Conservative-led Rushcliffe Borough Council administration in 2019 to take the proposed Butt Field car park site from Bingham Town Council by either a land swap, or by accepting a land transfer from Bingham Town Council?

The Leader responded by advising that no formal offer was made, such a proposal would have to be agreed by Cabinet, with a full business case and options appraisal including financial and legal advice, and it would clearly also have to be agreed by Bingham Town Council.

The Mayor asked if Councillor Birch had a supplementary question.

Councillor Birch asked if this Council would please write and publish an open letter to the residents of Bingham and the surrounding villages that it served explaining precisely what the Rushcliffe Borough Council Conservative administration has done to attempt to fix the car parking problems in Bingham from 2011 to the present day?

The Leader advised that the supplementary question did not relate to the original question; however, he did confirm that the issue was being considered by the Borough Council's Car Parking Strategy Group and its findings would be made known in due course.

c) Question from Councillor Plant to Councillor J Wheeler

“One of this council's Corporate Parenting commitments recently published in Councillors' Connection is " working closely with our Leisure contractors to offer free access to leisure services for care leavers". Do we know how many care leavers have taken up the offer?”

Councillor J Wheeler responded by stating that this commitment was very important and had been discussed at the last Council meeting during the debate on the care leavers motion and he confirmed that to date 20 identified care leavers had benefitted from the scheme.

The Mayor asked if Councillor Plant had a supplementary question.

Councillor Plant stated that it was her understanding that care leavers living in Rushcliffe were exempt from Council Tax payments up to the age of 25 and asked if that was correct.

Councillor J Wheeler advised that the Council did have a Council Tax reduction scheme in place for care leavers and so far 46 had received that, which totalled over £100k and in respect of the exemption, Councillor Wheeler confirmed that he would supply those details as he did not have them to hand.

d) Question from Councillor Chewings to the Leader, Councillor Clarke

“In light of the ongoing consultation by Nottinghamshire County Council regarding the tram concessionary pass scheme, scheduled from 10 November 2023 to 7 January 2024, there is a significant concern amongst our residents about the potential removal of concessionary travel benefits for the elderly and disabled. Given the importance of this issue and its impact on our community, can you confirm that Rushcliffe Borough Council will make a formal submission to the consultation emphasising the critical need for these travel benefits for our elderly and disabled residents, and the broader implications of any changes on their well-being and access to essential services?”

The Leader responded by advising that the Borough Council would not be submitting a corporate response as the whole point of the consultation was to allow individual responses, and emphasised that anyone could respond, not just those in receipt of a concession.

The Mayor asked if Councillor Chewings had a supplementary question.

Councillor Chewings stated that given the significant implications that this might impose on the community, would Councillor Clarke join him in urging Nottinghamshire County Council to extend the consultation deadline to the end of January 2024, and to proactively engage with concessionary pass holders, by writing to them directly about the consultation and how they might engage with it.

The Leader reiterated his previous comments that the consultation was for individuals to respond to, it was open to anyone, and he felt that to write to concessionary holders would discriminate against anyone else. The Leader confirmed that it was for the County Council to decide if it wished to extend the deadline.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

CHAIR