

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 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 T Combellack (Chair), A Edyvean, P Gowland, L Plant,
P Matthews, L Way and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack	Service Manager - Corporate Services
E Palmer	Communications and Customer Services Manager
K Brennan	Senior Finance Business Partner
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

24 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Matthews as the new Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group.

26 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023 were approved as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

27 Financial and Performance Management

The Senior Business Partner presented the Q3 position for the Council's financial and performance monitoring for 2023/24.

The Senior Business Partner said that the revenue position had improved since Q2, from a £0.287m underspend to a predicted underspend of £0.665m, mostly due to grant income and which would be requested to be carried forward. She said that the biggest overspends were from the Crematorium, Streetwise vehicle hire and Planning income. She said that underspends were from homelessness grant income, utilities, leisure contract efficiencies, costs recovered and a delay in the HVO fuel project.

The Senior Business Partner said that there was a capital underspend

projected of £3.88m following a rephasing of projects and she referred the Group to Table 2 of the report. She said that the underspend arose from savings at the Crematorium, Bingham Leisure Centre, Gresham redevelopment and potential savings at Lutterell Hall. She said that there was also currently underspend with the Council's Registered Housing Providers, and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG).

The Senior Finance Business Partner referred the Group to paragraph 4.13 of the report which detailed the multi-asset funds and said that this also showed improvement since Q2.

In summary, the Senior Finance Business Partner said that the Council was in a good financial position.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager presented the Q3 Performance Scorecards, as found at Appendix G.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that there were five indicators currently not reaching target, including the Transformation Strategy savings being below target mostly due to income from the Crematorium, additional Streetwise costs and income related to primary contracts. In relation to the usage of community facilities, he said that Sir Julian Cahn and Rushcliffe Country Park were performing well and that the Council was looking at improving usage at Gamston Community Hall and was introducing a new diary management system.

In relation to householder planning applications, the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that performance was continuing to improve and that December 2023 saw the Team achieve their best performance in two and half years. He said that the information was only showing in current performance reporting due to the legacy in the reporting timeframe and that last month's performance stood at 89%.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that the Customer Services Team were receiving an increasing number of email enquiries and measures were being taken to meet that demand while continuing to answer customer phone calls.

The Vice Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group asked about the predicted underspend of £0.332 for the DFG given the significant demand on the grant. The Senior Finance Business Partner referred to Appendix D and the two elements to the funding, mandatory funding and the Council's discretionary top-up funding. She said that the underspend was from the discretionary funding as it was agreed at Cabinet in July 2022 to temporarily suspend that element of funding pending a national review of the formula. She said that the mandatory grant had been spent.

The Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group referred to Rushcliffe Oaks variance of £400k and asked whether this represented a loss or shortfall in income. The Senior Finance Business Partner confirmed that it represented a shortfall against predicted income as estimated in the original business case, which had since been revised to predict a more realistic income. She explained

that the Crematorium was holding an average of 38 cremations a month and was performing well. The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that much business was due to reputation and that this and business relationships were continuing to grow.

The Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group asked about reporting on usage of community facilities and whether it included facilities managed by Lex Leisure. The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that it only reported on Council managed facilities but agreed to look at whether it would be possible, whilst being mindful of potential commercial sensitivities, to provide usage information about the Community Hall in Bingham.

The Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group asked about targets for responding to email enquiries and the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that the target timeframe was within ten working days but he said that most were responded to much sooner and often within 48 hours.

The Vice Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group referred to the annuity charges and specifically what the £25k sinking fund for the Hook was allocated for and when the charges for West Park would end. She asked for an information breakdown and timespan for all of the West Bridgford special expenses. The Senior Finance Business Partner said that she would report this information back to the Group.

The Vice Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group referred to favourable variances arising from Homes for Ukraine and Homelessness funding and asked why this had not been spent during the year and whether the unspent funding going into reserves would be ringfenced. She asked how many Ukrainian families were hosted within the Borough. The Senior Finance Business Partner said that she would report back to the Group with this information.

The Vice Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group asked about traveller sites within the Borough and thought that the Council had a statutory requirement to provide thirteen permanent pitches by 2028 and seven before 2025. She asked whether there were any sites currently within the Borough and what would happen if the seven were not provided. The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that he was not aware of any currently and would report back to the Group with this information.

The Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group said that there was a site allocated as part of the Fairham development which would provide some provision in the future.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Corporate Overview Group considered:

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £0.665m and proposals to transfer to reserves
- b) the projected capital budget efficiencies of £3.880m including carry forwards of £0.430m to 2024/25
- c) the expected outturn position of £2.3k underspend for Special Expenses
- d) identified exceptions to judge whether further information is required.

28 **Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen**

The Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group reported that the Capital and Investment Strategy had been deferred from the last meeting and would be reported to the next meeting due to changes in the way that some of the valuations were carried out. He noted that the Annual Audit had been completed and that the Council was in a much better position than many other local authorities in terms of the speed at which its accounts were signed off. He said that audit costs were rising substantially but that as the Council required this service it had no option but to pay them. He referred to Treasury Management Training held recently which had been useful and said that Arlingclose had come back to work as the Council's Treasury Management Company.

The Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group reported that the last meeting had received a presentation on East Midlands Airports Flight Paths which had involved an interesting discussion with representatives from the Airport.

The Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group reported that the last meeting had received presentations about the Management of Open Spaces and had involved lively debate on the implications and costs involved with adopting open spaces. He said that the Group had asked questions which were due to be reported on by Officers at a later date. He said that the meeting also received a presentation regarding Sewerage and Flood Infrastructure from Nottinghamshire County Council as lead flood authority.

29 **Feedback from Lead Officers**

The Service Manager for Corporate Services said that following feedback, the Scrutiny Matrix form had been renamed and was now called a Scrutiny Request form. She said that this would be communicated through Councillors Connections, along with information about deadlines. The deadline for a Scrutiny Request to go the next Corporate Overview Group was 1 May 2024.

The Chairman was pleased at the form name change and said that she had also asked for some wording to be tweaked, such as changing 'understand' to 'explore' and that 'transition' now be 'development'.

30 **Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes**

Councillor Thomas joined the meeting to present the matrix for Accessible Housing. She said that this had arisen from budget discussion about the Disabled Facilities Grant and proposals for the Council to stop topping up the Central Government funding pot from its own funds. She noted that the £500k top up was a one-off amount which came from the Council's sale of council houses. She said that she had been alarmed by the identified impact that waiting times would increase and as such thought that there was need to understand how much they would increase by and whether the increase would continue to roll into subsequent years. She said that case studies would help with understanding and that there were many related issues, as listed on the form, such as how much adaptable housing was being built by both the

affordable and market sectors.

The Chairman said that this matter had implications for both the Communities and the Growth Scrutiny Groups and suggested options for having a joint scrutiny meeting or alternatively that one scrutiny group receive the item and invite the Chair and Vice Chair of the other scrutiny group to join for the discussion.

The Service Manager for Corporate Services said that a joint scrutiny meeting would allow the topic to be viewed from various angles but would also make it a big group requiring greater coordination and structure than normal, for example a pooling a questions ahead of the meeting. She said that alternatively a briefing session for all could be held which could feed into one scrutiny group reviewing the item, with the Chair of that group inviting the Chair and Vice Chair of the other group to attend for that item only.

Members of the Group discussed options, including holding separate discussions by both scrutiny groups and receiving a briefing session ahead of the item going to scrutiny. Members of the Group suggested that a briefing session for Councillors would be helpful in informing discussion at a subsequent joint scrutiny group meeting involving members of both scrutiny groups. The Chairman suggested consideration be given to inviting expert witnesses and the relevant Portfolio Holders to attend.

The Service Manager for Corporate Services suggested that the briefing session could be held on 17 October and the joint scrutiny meeting on 23 October and said that she would report back to the Group.

The Chairman referred to the Management of open spaces within new developments matrix submitted by Councillor Chewings and said that this arose from the same scrutiny meeting as the Management Charges Actions Review matrix submitted by Councillor Way. The Chairman asked for updates on housing density and SUDS.

The Service Manager for Corporate Services said that the housing density matter had been referred to the Director for Planning and Economic Growth who had spoken with the Chair of the LDF Group, with the proposal that it be taken through the LDF Group. She said that a briefing note regarding SUDS on new estates was being prepared which would be circulated shortly.

The Service Manager for Corporate Services explained that Officers were in the process of preparing a document addressing a range of matters arising from scrutiny discussion about open spaces and said that the points raised by Councillor Chewings in his matrix had been included in that.

The Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group said that the actions arising from the scrutiny group meeting mirrored the matters raised in the matrix submitted by Councillor Chewings.

The Vice Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group referred to Councillor Chewing's request for detail about finances and a breakdown of the various quoted costs and said that it would be good for that information to be

provided in the open.

Members of the Group noted that legislation in relation to estate management companies was currently going through parliament, which was due to be introduced imminently, although it may be focussed on leaseholders rather than freeholders.

The Vice Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group said that her scrutiny matrix asked for the actions arising from the scrutiny group discussions to be reviewed at a future scrutiny meeting as this was an important subject for many residents in the Borough who were under much distress. She suggested that it perhaps come back for review in a year's time.

The Chairman summarised that whilst Officers were aware of the concerns being raised by Members of the Group and were preparing work in response, and that that work required some time, it would be appropriate to make Officers aware that there was a request for that information to be brought back to a future scrutiny meeting rather than reported through issuing a briefing note.

Members of the Group discussed plans for reporting of the information back to scrutiny, appreciating that it was a significant topic which required time but also mindful that it was a pressing matter for residents of the Borough and how best to communicate the information.

The Chairman requested that a progress report be brought to the Corporate Overview Group in September 2024 and the Service Manager for Corporate Services said that whilst the function of the Corporate Overview Group would not allow it to scrutinise the report and as such Officers would not attend to present it, an update report could be brought. She said that she could take back any questions arising from it to the relevant Officers and that that this would also allow the Group to then consider how it be taken forward thereafter.

The Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group left the meeting at 8:15pm.

It is RESOLVED that the Corporate Overview Group:

- a) considered any additional items for scrutiny from the current Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital and Investment Strategy and Transformation Plan (Appendix One)
- b) determined any additional topics to be included in a scrutiny group work programme for 2023/24 or 2024/25 for each of the scrutiny groups as presented on newly submitted scrutiny matrices (Appendix Two)
- c) reviewed the current work programme for each of the scrutiny groups (Appendix Three).

Work Programme 2023-24 and 2024/25 – Corporate Overview Group

20 February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○
xx June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversity Annual Report and update on the Equality and Diversity Strategy ○ Annual Update on Strategic Tasks
xx September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health and Safety Annual Report ○ Progress of recommendations from the January 2024 Growth and Development Scrutiny Group
xx November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer Feedback Annual Report

Work Programme 2023-24 and 2024/25 – Governance Scrutiny Group

22 February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Internal Audit Strategy • Risk Management – Update • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • External Annual Audit Plan • Asset Management Plan • Annual Audit Letter and Value for Money Conclusion • Capital and Investment Strategy 2024/25
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xx June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Internal Audit Annual Report • Annual Fraud Report • Annual Governance Statement (AGS) • Capital and Investment Strategy Outturn • Constitution Update • Code of Conduct
xx September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Update • Going Concern • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • Internal Audit Progress Report
xx November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Annual Audit Completion Report 2023/24 • Statement of Accounts • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • RIPA Review

Work Programme 2023-24 and 2024/25 – Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

	Items / Reports
6 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewerage and Drainage [extension of January meeting due to non-attendance of guest (due to flooding)] • Connectivity and Communications
xx July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Crematorium • Infrastructure Delivery • Annual Report on Scrutiny
xx October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Housing
xx January 2025	

Work Programme 2023-24 and 2024/25 – Communities Scrutiny Group

	Items / Reports
21 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetwise In-Sourcing • Carbon Management Plan Update
xx July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Community Facilities • Annual Report on Scrutiny
xx October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Housing
xx January 2025	

Actions Table - 20 February 2024

Min No.	Action	Officer Responsible
27	The Vice Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group asked about the predicted underspend of £0.332 for the DFG.	The £323k underspend in year is committed but the time frame for completion of the works in 7 months and therefore will not complete until next financial year, any unspent funds will be carried forward.
27	The Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group asked about reporting on usage of community facilities and whether it included facilities managed by Lex Leisure, such as Bingham Community Hall	None of our sites managed by a third party, such as Lex Leisure, are included in our performance statistics as they are not classed as Rushcliffe-managed community venues and scrutinised instead regularly in line with their contract with us. The majority of our West Bridgford based venues which the data focuses on are still community venues due to link to the special expense area and how they are funded.
27	The Vice Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group asked for an information breakdown and timespan for all of the West Bridgford special expenses, including what the £25k sinking fund for the Hook was allocated for and when the charges for West Park would end	<p>The hook sinking fund is in relation to the skate park, the £20k per year is to maintain the legacy of the asset and includes for full replacement within 10 ten years.</p> <p>Re the annuities, just to clarify the annuities are charged each year to the special expenses area as per the budget, this is to pay back the monies borrowed for capital works and includes an element of interest. The amount charged is paid back into reserves. Timescales for these are detailed below:</p>

<i>Special Expenses</i>	<i>Matures</i>	<i>Term</i>	
Annuity Charges			
West Park	2035	30.00	Major upgrade to West Park Pavilions and Grounds
WBCH	2032	20.00	Major refurbishment of WBCH
Alford Road	2055	40.00	Upgrade works to Alford Rd Pavilion
Boundary Rd Cycle 21/22	2037	15.00	Creation of Boundary Rd Cycle Track
Lutterell Hall 21/22	2052	30.00	Heating, Boiler and flue replacement plus upgrade to toilet facilities
Gamston CH 21/22	2042	20.00	Internal Refurb including specialised flooring surfaces
WP Enhancements 23/24	2034	10.00	Internal decoration
Abbey Circus 23/24	2034	10.00	Fencing
Compton Acres Fencing 23/24	2024	10.00	Fencing
Devonshire Av Bridge 24/25	2040	15.00	Significant repairs to Bridge

Lutterrell Hall 24/25	2040	15.00	Internal upgrade not committed yet
Gamston CH 24/25	2040	15.00	Heat decarbonisation works
Edwalton Comm Fac 24/25	2065	40.00	Build on new Community Facility. Est cost £500k potential UKSPF Grant £250k
WP Enhancements 24/25	2055	30.00	Refurbishments of Sir Julian Cahn Pavilion
WP Enhancements 25/26	2036	10.00	New Fencing provision
Lutterrell Hall 25/26	2041	15.00	Main Hall Floor and thermal fabric upgrade
27	The Vice Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group asked why funds for Homes for Ukraine and Homelessness had not been spent during the year and whether the unspent funding going into reserves would be ringfenced. She asked how many Ukrainian families were hosted within the Borough		<p>On the Homes for Ukraine project, here are the latest figures for the Borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of February 20, Rushcliffe has received 387 Homes for Ukraine (HFU) visa applications, with 296 arrivals to date. Current NCC records show that 105 guests are still living with 51 sponsors. 84% of these sponsors have hosted for six months or longer and 67% have done 12 months or longer. In regards to the funding, in November 2022 Rushcliffe Borough Council received £183,000 from Nottinghamshire County Council, to support HFU guests with homelessness and access to private rented / follow-on accommodation. According to the 2023-24 Q3 return completed by Rushcliffe BC, £11,126.65 of this funding has been spent to date. 12 HFU families have been supported so far using these funds.
27	The Vice Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group asked whether there were any traveller sites currently within the Borough and what would happen if seven were not provided by 2025		<p>The current traveller sites located within the Borough are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Leake Road East Leake. 1x pitch, personal permission Cedar Lodge Radcliffe on Trent 12x caravans Flintham Lane Screveton 6x pitches, personal permission Harmony Park at Stragglethorpe <p>Sites with planning permission but not yet built are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> South of Clifton (Fairham) 1x site for 4x pitches <p>Allocations requesting provision of a gypsy and traveller site are as follows:</p> <p>Land East of Gamston/North of Tollerton. Unspecified number of pitches in policy</p>
30	In relation to Accessible		Service Manager for Corporate

	Housing, Members of the Group requested that a briefing session for all members of both Growth and Communities Scrutiny Groups be held prior to a joint scrutiny group meeting involving all members of both Scrutiny groups, potentially holding the briefing session on 17 October and the joint scrutiny meeting on 23 October	Services
30	In relation to Management of Open Spaces, the Chairman requested that a progress report be brought to the Corporate Overview Group in September 2024	Service Manager for Corporate Services

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm.

CHAIR