

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 13 MAY 2025

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 and J Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Butler, Thomas and J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
A Hill	Chief Executive
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
S Pregon	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillor D Viridi

56 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

57 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 March 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 11 March 2025 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

58 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizens' questions.

59 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor Thomas to Councillor Inglis.

"The addition of a limit to the number of dogs that can be walked at a time is welcomed but it is astonishing that the limit has been set at six dogs. This is a huge number to keep under control. The RSPCA recommends a limit of four. It is not just a question of fouling as the report suggests, it is also about safety. There have been incidents in our ward of dogs attacking people and other dogs. Plus there are recorded incidents of dogs attacking swans and

destroying bird nests. A limit of four dogs all round would be more sensible, perhaps with a licensing process to allow up to six in special cases as is the case elsewhere. I note that three areas in West Bridgford have been given a limit of four dogs, rather than six. What criteria and consultation processes were used to ensure that all sites that would benefit from the tighter limit were included in the order?"

Councillor Inglis thanked Cllr Thomas and was pleased that she recognised the work undertaken to include a measure in the revised PSPO in relation to the maximum number of dogs that could be walked in public places. The figure of six was consistent with other local authorities that had similar PSPOs and it was also referenced as a maximum figure in the statutory guidance for dog day care establishments. The RSPCA suggested limit of four was only in relation to commercial dog walkers and clearly exceeded Government guidance for the same activities. It was also important to note that the PSPO applied to all public places, dogs and owners across the Borough, therefore it needed to be an appropriately balanced measure.

The draft PSPO with the six dog maximum element was widely consulted upon for a six-week period, which had given people the opportunity to suggest having a lower number. The Council's Communities Manager had provided evidence in three locations for having a lower number and this change was then incorporated into the final draft, which would be presented at the meeting tonight. There would be an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the PSPO over the next three years and Councillor Thomas could then look to provide further evidence at this time. Councillor Inglis advised that there was no provision for the Council to introduce a licensing regime just for the number of dogs being walked.

Councillor Thomas asked a supplementary question.

"As far as safety is concerned, in terms of attacks on people and other dogs, dogs off lead are a particular concern, especially when multiple dogs are involved, and they act like a pack. We have residents who will no longer walk in Meadow Park in East Leake because of the terror they experience when dogs run up to them. Why is there only one dogs on lead area specified in Schedule One."

Councillor Inglis stated that Schedule One had been approved three years ago as part of the PSPO, and was the only data for that period, nothing since then had come forward to suggest anything different and he was unaware of any attacks by packs of dogs. He hoped that the new PSPO would address the issue by limiting the number to six.

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor J Wheeler.

"With the incoming Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) changes and acknowledgment in the Strategy of the importance of communicating important issues with residents about LGR will Cabinet consider engaging with residents of West Bridgford about the inclusion of a Town Council as part of their Engagement Action Plan?"

Councillor Wheeler thanked Councillor Walker and confirmed that details of LGR had been communicated to residents, including details of the joint response from local councils, which had been submitted to the Government. The Council would continue to communicate with residents on any options and proposals received back from the Government.

Councillor Walker asked a supplementary question.

“How do you envision the democratic set up for West Bridgford after LGR.”

Councillor Wheeler stated that he could not respond to a hypothetical situation, further discussions would be taking place and any proposals, which came forward would be considered on merit.

60 **Communications and Engagement Strategy**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing, ICT and Member Development, Councillor J Wheeler, presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, which detailed the Communications and Engagement Strategy.

Councillor Wheeler referred to the importance of communicating with residents, with the Strategy aiming to build on the Council’s excellent track record of engaging with residents, whilst adapting to changes in how people wished to do this. Rushcliffe continued to have face to face services and Rushcliffe Reports magazine, whilst increasing its digital presence. Younger residents had been consulted on how they wished to engage with the Council and the Residents’ Survey had been reviewed. Councillor Wheeler referred to the Action Plan, detailed at Appendix Two to the report, which highlighted clear plans to enhance engagement both internally and externally, and going forward receiving as much feedback as possible on service delivery. Councillor Wheeler concluded by thanking the Communications Team for its hard work

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan reiterated thanks to the Communications Team for producing this excellent, comprehensive Strategy, which set out clear plans for engaging with residents, all partners and groups that the Council worked with. Councillor Brennan referred to the challenges of communicating effectively what the Council did in this digital age, and it was pleasing to see that new ways of communicating were being explored for new audiences. Cabinet was reminded that this work was also in response to the Peer Review, which talked about engagement with stakeholders, and Councillor Brennan stated that considerable work had been undertaken to look at how that could be improved. The Strategy was both strategic and practical and she welcomed its development.

Councillor Upton applauded the use of plain English, referred to the importance of effective communication, and felt that this Strategy addressed some previous criticism raised regarding alleged poor communication with certain sections of the community.

The Leader agreed that the Strategy was well presented, easy to read and engaging.

It was RESOLVED that the revised and extended Communications and Engagement Strategy 2025-2028 be approved.

61 Renewal of Public Space Protection Order (Dog Control)

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, Councillor Inglis, presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods, detailing the Public Space Protection Order PSPO (Dog Control), which was due to expire on 8 July 2025 and to consider its renewal.

Councillor Inglis referred to the large increase in dog ownership since the Covid pandemic, and whilst both acknowledging and thanking the majority of dog owners, who were responsible, he stated that it was unfortunate that a small minority were not, hence the need for the PSPO. Through the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, local authorities had powers to introduce measures to address ASB in public places, with any enforcement intelligence led, to remain fair, appropriate and proportionate, as detailed in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

Cabinet noted that a six week public consultation period had taken place between February and March 2025, as referred to in Appendix 2 to the report, which sought views on the proposal to extend the PSPO and to control the number of dogs being walked by one person at any one time. Councillor Inglis stated that other councils and relevant agencies had also been consulted for best practice and consistency. 75.64% of responses supported the renewal of the PSPO, with paragraph 4.6 detailing the four elements of control proposals. Feedback also supported that the number of walked dogs needed to be restricted, with suggestions that a maximum of four to six dogs would be appropriate. It was felt that fixing the number to four could be too restrictive for professional dog walkers, so Councillor Inglis advised that at this time a maximum of six was proposed, which was proportionate and consistent with other councils. He stated that an annual review would be undertaken to ensure the PSPO remained effective, especially to the number of dogs under a single persons control, in addition to the review criteria detailed in paragraph 4.3. It was noted that the consultation had highlighted particular problems with dog fouling on three of the Council's sports pitches, as detailed in paragraph 4.4, and to try to reduce those issues, the maximum number of dogs in those areas would be limited to four. Cabinet noted that the Parish of Tollerton would now be included, so the report covered all the public spaces in the Borough.

Councillor Inglis concluded by thanking the Head of Public Protection and the Environmental Health Team for their hard work in preparing the PSPO.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Upton referred to the public consultation, and the new limit of six dogs, or four in specific sites, and stated that in his experience it was rare to see a person with six dogs or more, and it was likely that the instances of this was quite low. Councillor Upton stated that he understood the issue regarding professional dog walkers and the implications around that; however, overall he felt that this was a reasonable number, and given that it would be reviewed annually he was happy to accept it.

Councillor J Wheeler stated that a balance had to be struck and when issues were raised, it was often related to people with one dog. The signage used and communication regarding fines also provided a deterrent and it was important to remind people to be responsible dog owners. He felt that the correct balance had been struck and reiterated that this issue would be reviewed annually.

It was RESOLVED that the renewal of the Public Space Protection Order for Dog Control, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved, to take effect from 8 July 2025, and for the data relevant to the PSPO to be reviewed annually by officers to ensure its effectiveness.

62 Exclusion of the Public

It was resolved that under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, 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.

63 Rushcliffe Carbon Offsetting Framework - Land Acquisition

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor Upton, presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods, which detailed the Rushcliffe Carbon Offsetting Framework – Land Acquisition.

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

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the acquisition of the land set out in paragraphs 4.4 and 4.6 of the report be approved, subject to contract and due diligence;
- b) the identification of external funding to offset woodland design and planting and maintenance be approved; and
- c) if external funding is not available, funding from either the Climate Change Reserve and/or future revenue budget growth be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm.

CHAIR