

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 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, D Virdi
and J Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
R Clack	Deputy Monitoring Officer
A Hill	Chief Executive
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

8 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

9 Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 July 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 8 July 2025 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 Thomas to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Clarke MBE. Councillor Thomas was unable to attend the meeting, so her question was read out by Councillor Clarke.

"We note from the report for item 7 that even more funds have been set aside for the ludicrous Local Government Reorganisation exercise.

Please could you explain how staff time is being accounted against this budget line so that once this has all played out the public is fully informed of the costs that have been incurred, and outline how this drain on staff resources is

impacting delivery of regular services and processes such as scrutiny?”

Councillor Clarke advised that the Council did not systematically record staff time and in the main senior officers have been heavily involved in the process, along with Councillors and acknowledged that holding extra council meetings, engaging with the community and working with consultants was resource intensive. Senior officers have to prioritise work and currently they did not believe this was affecting services or processes such as scrutiny. Work pressures were likely to increase as the LGR process moved forward and allocations had been made to the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve, which would meet any additional direct costs. Councillor Clarke felt that the Council was as well-resourced and organised as it could be given the circumstances.

12 **Technological, Digital and Customer Access Strategy 2025-2028**

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 Technological, Digital and Customer Access Strategy 2025-2028.

Councillor Wheeler advised that the proposed new Strategy would replace three existing strategies, with its focus on residents’ needs, striking a balance by continuing to enhance the Council’s technological offer, whilst maintaining face to face services. The Strategy acknowledged the role that Artificial Intelligence (AI) now played in society and the need to continue adapting Council services to incorporate it. Councillor Wheeler referred to the detailed Action Plan, at Appendix One, which highlighted how wide ranging the Strategy was and he thanked all the officers involved in producing it.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis felt that bringing together new and innovative technology was a positive step forward and that the new Strategy should be embraced. AI was continually developing, which would enhance and simplify user experience and improve online security, which was becoming increasingly important. Councillor Inglis stated that this Strategy was another example of the Council continually striving to deliver a quality service for residents.

It was RESOLVED that the Technological, Digital and Customer Access Strategy 2025-2028 be approved.

13 **Quarter 1 Finance Report**

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 Quarter 1 budget position for revenue and capital.

In introducing the report, Councillor Virdi confirmed that given the current state of public finances, overall the report was positive; however, the Council could not be complacent given the many challenges that lay ahead. Councillor Virdi provided Cabinet with a breakdown of the report highlights.

In respect of revenue, Councillor Virdi advised that there was an overall budget

efficiency for the year of £0.637m and referred to Table 1 of the report and Appendix B, which highlighted the reasons. Appendix F detailed a projected minor overspend on the Special Expenses of £11.3k, with details of that in paragraph 4.7. Paragraphs 4.10 to 4.13 provided details of additional financial pressures that the Council continued to face and Councillor Viridi reiterated that the Council had no external borrowing. He stated that the Transformation and Efficiency Plan was progressing well and on target, with details highlighted in paragraph 4.12. In respect of capital, Appendices C, D and E detailed its overall position, with a projected underspend of £0.681m, with Table 2 detailing the reasons.

In conclusion, whilst noting the Council's positive financial position, Councillor Viridi said that things could change, and the Council's healthy reserves allowed it to mitigate risks, whilst maximising opportunities. With future uncertainty around Government funding, those reserves would help to protect the Council.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor J Wheeler referred to the huge impact that Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) was already having and given future uncertainty regarding Government funding, he agreed that it was important to be cautious, whilst still investing wisely through the Capital Programme. Councillor Wheeler thanked the Director – Finance and Corporate Services and his team for continuing to manage the Council's finances so well. He felt that rather than penalising well run councils by cutting funding, the Government should be holding less well run councils to account.

The Leader echoed those comments, with the report demonstrating that the Council's finances continued to be very well managed, and he reiterated thanks given to the Director – Finance and Corporate Services and his team

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

- a) the projected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £0.637m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures given in Appendix A and paragraph 4.1 to the report;
- b) the projected capital budget efficiencies of £0.681m including the budget changes given in Appendix D to the report; and
- c) the projected overspend on Special Expenses of £11.3k given in paragraph 4.7 to the report.

14 Confirmation of Rushcliffe Borough Council (67-69 Loughborough Road and 2A Patrick Road, West Bridgford) Article 4(1) Direction

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor Upton, presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, which detailed a proposal to confirm the Rushcliffe (67-69 Loughborough Road and 2A Patrick Road, West Bridgford) Article 4(1) Direction.

Councillor Upton stated that the report detailed the three properties in question, all of which were located on a significant gateway to the western side of West Bridgford. Councillor Upton confirmed that the Council had made this

temporary Direction in May 2025 for six months, to allow for a public consultation, ahead of a decision whether or not to make it permanent. He advised that the report set out in detail the planning history of the buildings in section 4 and advised that the Council had identified Welbeck House and Grafton House as Non-Designated Heritage Assets, and that this had not been disputed by the owners. The consultation produced 90 responses of those 83 supported the Article 4 (1) Direction, with one against. Councillor Upton advised that no new development could currently be undertaken, as no scheme had planning permission, with a previous scheme being refused, which was now subject to an appeal. He referred to paragraph 217 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which made it clear that local planning authorities should not permit the loss of a heritage asset, which included non-designated assets, without taking reasonable steps to ensure any new development would proceed after the loss. Councillor Upton referred to the main risks of confirming the Article 4 (1) Direction, which were detailed in paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 of the report.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis felt that this procedure was a well-defined planning tool to protect any unnecessary loss of character and heritage, especially when no future vision was in place. Councillor Inglis agreed with the many residents who felt that it would be devastating to see such fine buildings demolished, especially without any future development being considered.

Councillor J Wheeler felt that there was plenty of evidence in the report to support the recommendation and was very concerned about the potential loss of such iconic buildings, especially without any plans in place. He applauded officers for taking proactive action in May and stated that it was clear from online comments that local residents valued the buildings and he hoped that the applicants would respect that and work with the Council and local community going forward.

Councillor Brennan reiterated comments made and stated that the buildings were synonymous with the style and heritage of West Bridgford and it would be a travesty to demolish them, particularly when no future plans were in place and thanked officers for being vigilante.

The Leader echoed comments made by other Cabinet members.

It was RESOLVED that the Rushcliffe Borough Council (67-69 Loughborough Road and 2A Patrick Road, West Bridgford) Article 4(1) Direction 20 May 2025 be confirmed, giving it ongoing effect in revoking permitted development rights for demolition under Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) until such time as it be withdrawn.

15 **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.

16 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question to Councillor Brennan was submitted by Councillor J Walker in relation to Exempt Item 10 on the agenda – Proposed Sale of Telecom Mast Sites.

Councillor Brennan responded to the question.

A supplementary question to Councillor Brennan was asked by Councillor Walker.

Councillor Brennan responded to the supplementary question.

17 Proposed Sale of Telecom Mast Sites

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 proposed sale of Telecom Mast sites.

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

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the disposal of the Rushcliffe Borough Council mast sites to APW as set out at b), c) and d) below, be approved, having regard to the identified risks to ongoing income levels (and future capital values) posed by the new Government Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill (PSTI);
- b) the freehold sale of mast sites at Buckfast Way and Stamford Road be approved, with the latter subject to an overage payment at first Lease Renewal for the value stipulated in the report;
- c) the long lease disposals of the two masts at Wilwell Farm be approved;
- d) the future long lease disposal of Masts 1 and 2 at Rushcliffe Arena be approved, each at a minimum value stipulated in the report, with final negotiations and sale price to be delegated to the Director – Development and Economic Growth; and
- e) the requirement for immediate full payment of all the freehold sales and leasehold premium payments for the masts referenced in the report be approved on completion of the sum stipulated in the report, as opposed to an alternative APW offer of equal payments over five years.

The meeting closed at 7.31 pm.

CHAIR