

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 2 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 G Williams (Chair), T Combellack, M Gaunt, H Parekh, L Plant,
D Simms and L Way

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor C Thomas and Councillor A Phillips

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack
K Brennan
T Coop
J Wilkinson

Head of Corporate Services
Finance Business Partner
Democratic Services Officer
Strategic HR Manager

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies

9 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

11 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Strategic HR Manager presented the annual Health and Safety Report which provided a summary of the Council's occupational health and safety performance for the period 1 April 2024 to the end of March 2025.

The Strategic HR Manager highlighted the current safety risk profile, the appointment of the new Health and Safety Advisor, and a summary of the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) visit.

In addition, the Group was advised of the Health and Safety objectives for 2025/26 as follows:

- Prioritise the review and update of policies that are over 3 years old
- Continue to improve the induction programme for high-risk work areas
- Health and safety compliance audits of medium to low-risk areas across the authority

- Risk assessment and training audit continuation
- Continue to deliver appropriate workplace health initiatives in line with employees' needs
- Review duty to manage Asbestos to ensure all RBC occupied buildings are compliant
- of lone worker procedures and controls.

With regards to the HSE visit on the 30 January 2025, the Strategic HR Manager advised the Group this was a targeted visit in relation to a notification of an employee diagnosed with vibration white finger and under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), the Council is required by law to notify HSE about certain occupational incidents. The Strategic HR Manager reassured the Group there were no material breaches found by HSE during their visit and it is believed the exposure to vibration in this incident was from a previous employer.

The Group were advised that HSE are required to carry out a full inspection on site when they have completed a visit in relation to RIDDOR and the HSE inspector returned to the Streetwise Depot on 12 February 2025 and concluded no material breaches were noted, only a few verbal recommendations which have been addressed.

The Strategic HR Manager advised the Group of some of the key activities including policy reviews, health and safety audits and visits and observations at Rushcliffe Country Park, Streetwise and R2Go Eastcroft Depot and reviewing health and safety training needs across the Council.

The Strategic HR Manager advised of a change to the delivery of service and the recruitment of a new Health and Safety Officer increasing the hours previously set from 18.5 to 26 hours per week.

Councillor Simms asked a specific question around the recent employee diagnosis of Hand Arm Vibration and what occupational health pre-checks were in place to prevent this escalating to a HSE visit. Councillor Simms also stated that he was surprised that the HSE had not insisted on the Health and Safety officer role being full time and felt 26 hours were not enough to cover an authority of this size. The Strategic HR Manager explained that a pre-employment questionnaire had been completed by the employee which asks the individual to declare any pre-conditions, which in this particular case the condition had not yet been diagnosed and the condition can build up over time and therefore it was reported that the injury was unlikely due to working conditions at Rushcliffe.

Councillor Gaunt referred to tables 7.8 and 7.6 in the report and asked a specific question relating to injuries and days off and should the Council be concerned about the number of days lost due to employee absence. The Strategic HR Manager explained that when accidents and injuries occur at work it can be difficult to get employees back in to work because of the nature of the manual work they do. She added that fluctuations will occur in the number of accidents which do remain quite low in comparison to previous years. With regards to one individual employee who had been absent for some time, the Group noted this had escalated to a mental health issue and HR were

providing support for the employee in an attempt to get them back to work.

Councillor Plant also commented on the Health and Safety officer's hours and asked what had prompted the increase. The Strategic HR Manager explained that the Health and Safety Officer role had always been a part time position which she had done herself for a number of years. When promoted to the position of Strategic HR Manager (retaining responsibility for Health and Safety Officer) the Council had adopted a hybrid model, with Bolsover District Council providing a good range of Health and Safety advice. In 2024, when Streetwise came back in house there was an increased need for health and safety support and a part time Health and Safety Officer position was created to cover the extra work. The Strategic HR Manager explained that this Health and Safety Officer left earlier this year, and the Council recruited a part time Health and Safety position solely for Streetwise and recently recruited a Health and Safety Officer on 26 hours to cover other areas of the authority.

Councillor Plant asked questions around providing an evacuation test for Councillors, the role of the Workplace Health Champions and whether employees are provided with concessions at the Council's Leisure Centres. The Strategic HR Manager noted the comment about a Councillor evacuation test and would look into providing this. With regards to the Workplace Health Champions, the Group were informed that the Champions meet quarterly and cover areas specifically aimed at health and wellbeing awareness days and events such as smoking, alcohol, cancer and mental health awareness. The Group noted that Council employees do benefit from concessions at all of Rushcliffe's leisure centres.

Councillor Simms raised his concerns about the arrangements for health and safety across the Council in the event of a red light incident or injury and asked that the Council consider a professional body to audit its health and safety arrangements as he felt the current process lacked competency. The Strategic HR Manager advised the Group that she, herself was a chartered member of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and oversees the Council's two Health and Safety officers. The Strategic HR Manager added that the Council has had very little interaction with the HSE and, in this particular incident, no material breaches had been found and the diagnosis of the illness was not related to the work at Rushcliffe. In addition, the Strategic HR Manager informed the Group that risk assessments are in place, there is an internal audit of the Council's health and safety arrangements expected in quarter four of the internal audit process and that we also have a position on the Nottingham wide health and safety quarterly meetings and that we are comparable with other authorities.

Councillor Combella encouraged the Group to trust in officers who are clearly qualified to do the job.

Councillor Simms remained concerned about the nature of self-regulation and the lack of surveillance in regard to civil claims against the authority. He wanted to see evidence of detailed risk assessments, training risks and how targets were met.

After some discussion of this request and a potential fifth recommendation, the

Group agreed to keep a watching brief on Health and Safety allowing for new staff to become settled in their roles, the impact of increased hours to take effect, and the quarter four internal audit to be carried out. They accepted that Health and Safety would be scrutinised as standard in 12 months.

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

- a) Considered the detailed information contained within the Annual Health and Safety Report
- b) Noted that a new permanent Health and Safety Advisor had been appointed
- c) Noted the significant progress made against the health and safety goals and objectives previously agreed by Corporate Overview Group for the financial year 2025/25
- d) Endorsed the proposed health and safety objectives for 2025/26 as set out in the report.

12 Financial and Performance Management

The Senior Finance Business Partner presented the Q1 Finance Monitoring report for 2025/26 and took the Group through some key points in the report.

The Group were asked to note a couple of clerical errors the first in recommendation c) the project overspend on Special Expenses should read £11.3k and secondly at 4.4 and 4.13 the underspend to support additional costs should read £0.377m.

The Senior Finance Business Partner highlighted the significant variances arising from savings in refuse collection resulting from housing development progressing slower than expected. This is expected to be earmarked for additional cost pressures and financial challenges, mainly to support the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and Simpler Recycling.

The Group were advised of a capital budget underspend due to the reduction in expenditure on Warm Homes Grants to match final indicative funding notification.

The Senior Finance Business Partner highlighted the Q1 position of the Special Expenses budget and the expenditure projected to being £11.3k above budget and explained this was due to security improvements at Bridgford Park and responsive works at West Park including repairs to doors and grounds work. Extra costs had also been incurred due to anti-social behaviour patrols at Bridgford Park which has been offset by funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

In summarising, the Senior Finance Business Partner advised that the financial position remains healthy but that this can quickly change especially with the challenges of LGR.

The Head of Corporate Services presented the Q1 Performance Monitoring report in line with the Corporate Strategy 2024-27 approved at Council on 7 December 2023.

The Group were advised that there are eight performance measures that have not met target this year. These are primarily community facilities (two performance indicators), Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium (two performance indicators) and Waste Management (two performance indicators).

The Head of Corporate Services explained that the Communities Scrutiny Group had scrutinised the under-performance of community facilities and the Crematorium, and as a result action plans were put in place, but that it will take some time for any benefits to be realised. With regards to the performance of waste management this is lower than historic levels due to waiting on the Environment Act changes and the introduction of Simpler Recycling to be implemented later this year.

Councillor Plant asked two specific questions relating to Rushcliffe Oaks and whether there were any significant issues with the service and whether there will be a review of the Council's assets and if this come to a Full Council meeting for consideration. The Head of Corporate Services advised that feedback from the Crematorium continues to be positive and with regards to an asset review this would only come to Full Council if a decision needed to be made regarding an asset's disposal.

Councillor Plant asked a further question relating to the current position of Disabled Facility Grants. The Senior Finance Business Partner explained there are two pots of funding, Mandatory and Discretionary both and the Council is still in the position to provide both funding streams.

The Chair asked a specific question relating to the security improvements at Bridgford Park and who was providing the extra security patrols. The Head of Corporate Services advised that a private company has been deployed, and this is being paid for by the Police and Crime Commissioner's office.

Councillor Gaunt commented on the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar site and requested that further information be provided on its progress, to include a better understanding of the scope and timeline of the development. The Head of Corporate Services advised she would need to check with the relevant officers and report back to the Group.

Councillor Parekh commented on the Councillor Training Plan and what was on the programme. The Head of Corporate Services advised that a there is a plan in progress, and this will be circulated in due course.

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

- a) The projected budget efficiency for the year of £0.637m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures given in Appendix A and paragraph 4.1
- b) The projected capital budget efficiencies of £0.681m including the budget the budget changes in Appendix D

- c) The project overspend on Special Expenses of £11.3k (paragraph 4.7)
- d) The performance exceptions to judge whether further information is required.

13 Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen

Councillor Combella, Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group provided feedback from the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group held on the 16 July 2025, where the Group were presented a report on the East Midlands Freeport development. Councillor Combella reported there had been very little progress and felt the presentation and update the Group received was underwhelming. She added that there had been some discussion around the remodelling of J24 on the M1 and asked whether the Freeport could be brought back to Growth and Development as an update as she felt that questions Councillors had raised had not been addressed.

Councillor Plant had attended the Growth and Development Scrutiny meeting in July, adding that she felt there had been with very little movement or evidence of a solid direction with the Freeport.

Councillor Parekh, Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group provided feedback from the last meeting of Communities Scrutiny Group held on 24 July 2025, where the Group were presented a report on Metropolitan Trent Valley Housing (MTVH). Councillor Parekh reported that MTVH had provided an update on its performance. However, she felt the Councillors discussion and questions that followed had not been addressed by MTVH and she didn't feel reassured by their responses. Councillor Parekh felt that MTVH were very defensive in their responses and unwilling to accept responsibility or take any action. The Group had requested the item return next year to ensure Councillor feedback had been acted upon.

The Head of Corporate Services explained that in the Terms of Reference for Corporate Overview Group, scrutiny items are not normally accepted within a 2-year period which will prevent the same scrutiny request being accepted.

The Chair suggested that Councillor Parekh and members of Communities Scrutiny Group look at where the item may be explored further in order for it to be brought forward again for scrutiny.

Councillor Simms, Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group provided feedback from the Governance Scrutiny Group meeting held on 19 June 2025, where the Group discussed the Council's Internal Audit Progress and Internal Audit Plan, Annual Fraud Report, External Audit Plan, Annual Governance Statement and the Capital and Investment Strategy.

Councillor Simms highlighted his concern over an anomaly that had been discovered in relation to licencing that had not been picked up for a number of years. He added that he had agreed for the auditors to investigate it for now but was not reassured that lessons had been learnt. He expressed his intention to bring the matter up again at the next meeting of Governance Scrutiny Group.

With regards to Scrutiny, all Chairs and Vice-Chairs raised concerns about the feedback that was being provided after the meetings and whether officers were taking action on the views expressed by Councillors at the meetings.

All members of the Group were keen to remove the '2-year rule' which currently prevents the same scrutiny request being accepted within a 2-year period. Councillor Simms, Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group proposed to look at the terms of reference for Scrutiny Groups as part of the Governance Scrutiny Group's Constitution Annual Review.

14 **Feedback from Lead Officers**

The Head of Corporate Services highlighted an action from the recent Corporate Peer Challenge which had suggested the Council review its scrutiny process. She referenced the number of requests sent to Councillors in relation to the review seeking their feedback and input. She reported that only a small amount of feedback had been received and that if this remained the position after a final call for feedback this week then it was possible that the review would be reprioritised.

15 **Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes**

The Chair confirmed that five scrutiny requests had been submitted for consideration (with one topic being submitted by both Councillors and Officers).

The first was submitted by Councillor's C Thomas, L Way, J Billin, A Brown and R Walker relating to **Shared Ownership and Other Affordable Housing**. An amended version of the request was submitted by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods suggesting a briefing note be provided to expedite Councillors understanding of the topic and potentially resolve some identified issues in advance of scrutiny being timetabled.

Councillor Thomas addressed the Group and explained briefly the complexity of developers providing affordable housing and the different government initiatives and schemes that have been rolled out across the Borough. Councillor Thomas expressed the need for the Council to take the opportunity to ask questions of the process for delivering affordable housing. Following debate of both versions of the request, the Group agreed for the Councillors version of the request to come forward for scrutiny and for it to be programmed into the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group for 25 March 2026.

The second request was submitted by Councillor Phillips relating to **Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation**. Councillor Phillips addressed the Group and highlighted his concerns around the unsuitability of properties in Rushcliffe being converted to houses of multiple occupancy (HMO's) to house Asylum seekers and the issues raised by local residents around antisocial behaviour, noise and illegal working. There was agreement within the Group that the topic was in need of scrutiny however, concerns were raised about the scope of the request and identified Key Lines of Enquiry. Therefore, the request was agreed in principle and scheduled for Communities Scrutiny Group for 22 January 2026 but a revised scrutiny request would be developed

in conjunction with members of the Group for final agreement at the next meeting.

The third and fourth requests were submitted by Councillor J Chaplain and related to **Debt Collection Agents used by Rushcliffe** in line with the outcome of the Government consultation on Council Tax and Enforcement and **West Bridgford Customer Contact Point**.

The Group agreed for both these requests to come forward for scrutiny and for them to be programmed into the Communities Scrutiny Group work programme for 2 April 2026 (WBCP) and October 2026 (Debt Collection Agents).

The Head of Corporate Services highlighted that there was nothing on the Growth and Development Group programme for October 2025 and proposed to cancel the meeting. This was agreed by the Group.

It was **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 and Efficiency Programme/Productivity Plan (appendix one)
- b) Determined and additional topics to be included in a scrutiny group work programme for 2025/26 for each of the scrutiny groups as presented on newly submitted scrutiny requests (Appendix two)
- c) Reviewed the current work programme for each of the scrutiny groups (Appendix Three)

Work Programme 2025/26 – Corporate Overview Group

18 November 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standing Items<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairs○ 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
24 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standing Items<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairs○ Feedback from Lead Officer○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes○ Financial and Performance Management• Rolling Items<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Mid-point Review of the Corporate Strategy

Work Programme 2025/26 – Governance Scrutiny Group

25 September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Management Update • Going Concern • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • Internal Audit Progress Report • Statement of Accounts • External Audit Completion Report
4 December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Annual Audit Letter and Value for Money Conclusion • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • RIPA Review
5 February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report • Internal Audit Strategy • Risk Management Update • Risk Management Strategy • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • External Annual Audit Plan • Asset Management Plan • Capital and Investment Strategy 2026/27

Work Programme 2025/26 – Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

	Items/Reports
22 October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEETING CANCELLED
28 January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
25 March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Ownership and Other Affordable Housing

Work Programme 2005/26 – Communities Scrutiny Group

	Items/Reports
16 October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rushcliffe Flood Risk Update
22 January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation including HMO's
2 April 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Management Plan Update • West Bridgford Contact Point
XX July 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
XX October 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of debt collection agents by RBC in line with the outcome of the Government's consultation on Council Tax and Enforcement

ACTIONS:

Minute No.	Action	Officer Responsible
11	Councillors have no knowledge of what to do in the event of a fire whilst in the building. They would	Strategic HR Manager

	like information and a fire drill.	
12	The Group requested a progress report and indicative timeline of development for the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station	Head of Corporate Services
15	Councillors and Officers to redraft the Scrutiny Request for Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation including HMOs	Head of Corporate Services
15	Cancel Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in October	Head of Corporate Services - Completed

The meeting closed at 9.46 pm.

CHAIR