



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 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, D Simms
and L Way

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack

Assistant Director of Corporate
Services

K Brennan

Finance Business Partner

T Coop

Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors L Plant

16 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

17 Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2025 were approved and were signed by the Chair.

18 Financial and Performance Management

The Senior Finance Business Partner presented the Q2 financial monitoring for 2025/26 and advised the Group that the Council continues to face significant financial challenges around rising costs, increased demand on Council services and the need to balance budgets while maintaining service quality.

The Group were asked to note the projected net revenue efficiency of £0.810m and the significant variances highlighted in Table 1 in the report. The variances are proposed to be earmarked for additional cost pressures and financial challenges which were provided in Appendix A of the report and mainly support LGR and simpler recycling.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services presented the Q2 performance monitoring for 2025/26 of the Corporate Strategy and advised the Group that out of the 14 original strategic tasks 4 have been completed and the majority of the remaining tasks are at least 50% complete suggesting they are on target for completion by the end of the strategy period.

The Group were informed that 8 of the performance measures have not met target this quarter.

These are:

- Cumulative number of fly tipping cases
- Percentage of household was sent to reuse, recycling and composting
- Cumulative number of successful homelessness prevention outcomes
- Number of leisure centre users – public
- Percentage usage of community facilities
- Percentage of expected Councillors attending in-person training events this municipal year
- Percentage of Councillors completing e-learning modules this municipal year
- Income generated from community buildings

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services advised the Group that a midpoint review of the Corporate Strategy is underway and would be reported to Corporate Overview Group at its meeting in February 2026 and provides the opportunity to align the Corporate Strategy with Local Government Reorganisation.

The Group did not raise any questions or concerns with either the Finance or Performance reports for Q2.

The Chair thanked officers for their comprehensive reports, adding the Finance report would be picked up in more detail at the Governance Scrutiny Group in December.

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

- a) The projected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £0.810m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures in Appendix A and paragraph 4.1
- b) The projected capital budget efficiencies of 31.466m including the budget changes in Appendix D
- c) The projected overspend on Special Expenses of £19k (paragraph 4.7)
- d) For performance exceptions, to judge whether further information is required

19 **Annual Customer Feedback**

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services presented the Annual Customer Feedback report which provided comparisons to previous performance. The key points included:

- 64 complaints overall at stage 1 of the process (the highest in the last five years)

- 28% escalation to stage 2 of the Council's complaints process
- No investigations or decisions from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
- The Council received 196 compliments about its services in 2024/25. These were more focused on visible services such as refuse collection and street cleaning

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services informed the Group that the Council had already received the same number of complaints as for 2024/25 in the first 6 months of 2025/26. She added that whilst some complaints had escalated to the Ombudsman, none had yet been investigated or decided upon.

The Group were asked to note this should be seen as a positive and that residents are finding our customer feedback process more accessible and should be considered to be a healthy sign of engagement.

Councillor Parekh was pleased to see a good number of compliments, however with regards to complaints she asked if there were any particular service areas or themes for complaints. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services advised that there has been an increase in complaints around Council Tax and enforcement in particular. She added, that whilst she understood Councillors concerns about the increase of complaints in relation to Council Tax, none of these complaints had been upheld by the Council or the Ombudsman and that scrutiny around this issue has been proposed and accepted for Communities Scrutiny Group next year.

Councillor Combellack referred to vexatious complaints and how these are dealt with in the process and whether vexatious complaints have increased. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services explained that the Council has a policy in place to address vexatious complaints and remain open and honest when dealing with such complaints.

Councillor Combellack asked how Rushcliffe compares with other authorities in respect of complaints. It was noted there is currently no benchmarking.

Councillor Simms asked a specific question around the percentage of complaints that escalate to the Local Government Ombudsman and how many complaints were upheld. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services advised that she could recall only one complaint that had occurred four years ago that had been upheld.

Councillor Gaunt commented that it was positive to see an increase in the number of complaints and that this shows the complaints procedure is working, adding that this provides the Council with opportunities to improve its services in the long term. In addition, the Chair advised that there had been an upgrade to the Council's website making it easier for residents to find where to raise a complaint. He also asked whether Councillors are provided with any feedback from complaints in their wards. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services advised that most complaints are dealt with by officers in the relevant service area. However, there had been one complaint around asylum dispersal where the ward Councillors has got involved and a Scrutiny request has been

submitted for approval.

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

- a) Scrutinised and commented on the data provided in relation to customer feedback on 2024/25
- b) Considered whether the data in specific areas requires further investigation or scrutiny

20 **Local Government Reorganisation: Decision-Making and Governance**

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services presented the Local Government Reorganisation: Decision-Making and Governance report, which was circulated with the agenda. She explained the Group were not being asked to discuss the options and that the purpose of the report is to provide the Overview and Scrutiny Group with a brief update on the process of developing the submission proposal and the governance arrangements for scrutiny approval prior to submission. This includes consulting with the Corporate Overview Group on the invocation of the Urgency Provisions in the Council's Constitution to suspend Call-In in respect of the decision to be taken at Cabinet on 25 November 2025.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services explained that as LGR is a matter of Borough-wide significance, it is a Key Decision and has to be published as such on the Council's Forward Plan. Ordinarily this would mean the suspension of any activity following this decision for a period of seven days following the Council meeting to allow for the decision to be Called-In.

However, the Group were advised that there are circumstances where a Call-in needs to be suspended and the Constitution allows for this by consulting the Leader, the relevant Cabinet Member and the Chair of the most relevant scrutiny committee (being Corporate Overview Group).

The Group noted that in the case of LGR, Call-in needs to be suspended to enable the Chief Executive to submit the Greater Nottinghamshire Proposal for LGR to the Government by 28 November 2025. Failure to submit the proposal by the deadline risks the Council's proposal not being considered by Government.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services explained the report has been brought to Corporate Overview Group this evening to enable a consultation with all scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs.

The Group were reminded that of the opportunities Councillors have been given to engage in the process and a decision was also taken to call an Extraordinary meeting of Full Council on Thursday 20 November to enable all Councillors to debate the proposal document allowing for much wider scrutiny.

In concluding the Assistant Director for Corporate Services asked the Group for support to create a Member Working Group moving forward to provide more opportunities for engagement as the Council moves into the transitional phases

of LGR.

Councillor Simms expressed his concerns that as this relates to governance issues the report should have been considered by Governance Scrutiny Group and felt the process had been rushed and not been given enough time for it to be scrutinised.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services explained that this was a procedural matter on how the Council makes decisions in respect of LGR going forward. In addition, she added that the Corporate Overview Group meeting was already scheduled in the Council's committee calendar, and it was felt appropriate to consult with all scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs.

Councillor Gaunt referred to p7.1 in the report regarding establishing a cross-party member working group and requested that the group membership be increased to allow for greater a representation from the opposition groups.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services advised that this is possible to do and would look into this and report back to the Group.

Councillor Guant commented on p4.1 and expressed how he felt the process did not reflect a cross-party decision and Council's working independently of each other to achieve what's best for their areas. He also commented on 4.1 f) and asked whether there were any plans to support West Bridgford with it not having a neighbourhood parish and for it to meet the criteria in f) to enable a stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services advised that Nottinghamshire councils have been working collaboratively since March time pooling information around finance, services and common issues, adding that by July Rushcliffe and County Council favoured the 1b option and other Districts favoured 1e option and the City developed its own idea. The Group noted that all three options will be submitted to Government on 28 November 2025.

Councillor Way expressed her support for the working group membership to be increased.

Councillor Combella also supported this recommendation for a larger working group, adding that the process had been inclusive thus far and to ensure all areas of the Borough are represented.

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

- a) Accepts the update on local Government Reorganisation including the opportunities for Member engagement provided so far;
- b) Acknowledges that, for the reasons given in the report, the decision of Cabinet to submit the Council's proposal to central Government by 28 November 2025 is a Key Decision to which the Urgency Provisions exempting it from the Call-In procedure apply;

- c) Recommends to Cabinet that a new larger Member Working Group is constituted to provide oversight of the next phase of the LGR Programme.

21 Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen

Councillor Parekh, Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group provided feedback from the Communities Scrutiny Group meeting held on 16 October 2025, where the Group were presented a report on Flood Risk. Councillor Parekh advised that a presentation had been received from Nottinghamshire County Council the lead flood authority who clarified the responsibilities in relation to flooding including the Environment Agency (rivers and water courses) and Severn Trent Water (Sewerage). She added the Group had scrutinised risk management and a flood management plan and advised the meeting had been very positive. However, the Group had raised their concerns and frustration around communication issues contacting Severn Trent Water resulting in an action for the Director – Neighbourhoods to send a formal letter outlining these concerns.

Councillor Simms, Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group provided his feedback from the Governance Scrutiny Group meeting held on 25 September 2025, where the Group were presented with both the external and Internal audit progress including the Statement of Accounts for 2024/25. Councillor Simms added, the meeting had been productive and there were no concerns with the audits, the Council was in a good position moving forward. However, the Group had raised concerns around the increasing costs for auditing which officers had stated was to be reviewed. The Group also discussed the Councils risk management and new emerging risks around the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

Councillor Combella, Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group advised that the last meeting scheduled for 22 October had been cancelled due to lack of items coming forward for scrutiny. However, the Group were advised that officers had received a written report from the Freeport Board intended to address the issues raised at the Growth and Development meeting in July 2025. Councillor Combella expressed she still had concerns around the timeline around the Freeport work and remained concerned that interested parties would lose interest and take their business elsewhere, adding that she would like to propose the Freeport is brought back later next year for the Group to receive an update on its progress.

Councillor Combella also requested that the Shared Ownership and Other Affordable Housing scrutiny item going to Growth and Development Scrutiny Group on 25 March 2026 includes park homes, as residents living in these properties in her ward have raised similar concerns.

22 Feedback from Lead Officers

There was nothing to report from lead officers.

23 Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes

Two scrutiny requests had been submitted for consideration.

The first was a revised request submitted by Councillor Phillips on the topic of Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation including Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO's) and their impact on the Borough and its residents.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services explained Councillor Phillips had been given the opportunity to review the revised request made by officers which he accepted.

The Group had previously earmarked the request to go to Communities Scrutiny Group on 22 January 2026 which they confirmed.

The second request had been made by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Planning and Economic Growth on the topic of Asset Management Strategy and Acquisitions and Disposal Policy.

The Group agreed for this request to come forward for scrutiny and for it to be programmed into the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group work programme on 28 January 2026.

With regards to the recent scrutiny review Councillor Way was surprised by the lack of feedback and engagement provided by Councillors and the frustration with the way scrutiny operates. The Group were advised that with regards to training materials and previously circulated resources will be included in Councillors' Connections. In addition, training for current chairs and vice chairs will be organised and delivered in early 2026.

Councillor Gaunt asked a specific question regarding the make-up of the scrutiny groups and suggested a review of the Terms of Reference across the groups and asked for examples of what could be brought to the groups.

The Group discussed the constitution preventing updates on issues that have previously been scrutinised and the challenge of the 2 year rule for reconsidering scrutiny requests.

The Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group referred to the Metropolitan Trent Valley Housing (MTVH) report that had been scrutinised in June of this year and the Group's request to bring this back, as some of the issues raised had not been resolved. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services suggested the Chair tries a different approach to get the answers on anything outstanding.

Councillor Gaunt raised concerns that MTVH's actions can impact on resident's lives and felt that they should be asked back more frequently to address Councillors concerns and to provide some accountability for their actions.

Councillor Simms suggested that the Corporate Overview Group oversee the scrutiny process and that it should be up to this Group to recommend whether an item is brought back.

It was RESOLVED that the Corporate Overview Group:

a) Consider 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 (appendix one)

- b) e any 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) review the current work programme for each of the scrutiny groups (Appendix Three)
- d) recirculate links to scrutiny training already delivered and resources already circulated through Councillors' Connections in the next few weeks
- e) organise training in the New Year for current chairs and vice chairs of scrutiny and extend this invitation to any prospective chairs.

Work Programme 2025/26 – Corporate Overview Group

24 February 2026	<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"> ○ Midpoint review of the Corporate Strategy
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Work Programme 2025/26 Governance Scrutiny Group

4 December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report Q2 • RIPA Review • Capital and Investment Strategy Update Q2
5 February 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit Progress Report Q3 • Internal Audit Strategy • Risk Management Update • Risk Management Strategy • Capital and Investment Strategy Update Q3 • External Annual Audit Plan • Asset Management Plan • Capital and Investment Strategy 2026/27

Work Programme 2025/26 Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

28 January 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management Strategy and Acquisitions and Disposal Policy
25 March 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared Ownership and Other Affordable Housing including Park Homes

Work Programme 2025/26 – Communities Scrutiny Group

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	
xx October 2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of Debt collection agents by RBC in line with the outcomes of the Government's consultation on Council Tax and Enforcement

Actions 18 November 2025

Minute No.	Action	Officer Responsible
19	As a result of an increase in complaints, the Chair requested whether a comparison with other local authorities could be provided for future feedback to the Group	Assistant Director of Corporate Services
23	The Chair of Corporate Overview to check with the Monitoring Officer if the MTVH item can be brought back to scrutiny for an update within the restricted 2 years as referenced in the Terms of Reference for Scrutiny	

The meeting closed at 8.32 pm.

CHAIR