

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY, 9 JUNE 2020**

Held virtually at 2.00 pm and live streamed on
the Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors S J Robinson (Chairman), D Mason (Vice-Chairman), A Edyvean,
R Inglis, G Moore and R Upton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors B Buschman, N Clarke, B Gray, R Jones, S Mallender, J
Stockwood, C Thomas, J Walker and J Wheeler

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore
P Linfield

Executive Manager - Transformation
Executive Manager - Finance and
Corporate Services
Chief Executive
Executive Manager - Communities
Monitoring Officer
Democratic Services Manager

K Marriott
D Mitchell
S Sull
H Tambini

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies.

66 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

67 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 May 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 12 May 2020 were declared a
true record and signed by the Chairman.

68 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor Gray to Councillor Robinson.

“As we have previously discussed Rushcliffe is in a far healthier financial state
than many councils. With the current government support only covering 32% of
what the council has paid out during this crisis what calls will this Council be
making to government to make sure the shortfall is made up?”

Councillor Robinson responded by confirming that there was currently a severe
deficit, which reflected the current crisis. He advised that both he and the Chief
Executive were in regular contact with the District Councils' Network (DCN), the
Local Government Association (LGA) and East Midlands Councils. On 22 May,

he and the Chief Executive had taken part in a meeting with the Secretary of State, Robert Jenrick MP, and discussed the deficit and the measures the Government was considering to cover it. He confirmed that the Council had attained significantly more funding from the second tranche compared to the first tranche, which was in excess of £1m; however, a deficit remained. The Council's Section 151 Officer was in regular dialogue and provided updates to the Government regarding the Council's finances. The Council was in a strong financial position; however, it would continue to use its links with the DCN, the LGA and other authorities to impress upon the Government the importance of managing the deficit. A revised budget, which would reflect the Council's current financial position would be taken to Council in September 2020. Two Budget Workshops had been arranged for all Councillors before that meeting.

Question from Councillor Thomas to Councillor Edyvean.

"How will the grant mentioned in 4.5.2 of the Budget Update be publicised and allocated to ensure that high streets and commercial areas across the whole borough will be supported in reopening safely?"

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that the Council would be looking at how this European grant could be used across the whole Borough to minimise risk and maximise safe environments for everyone as businesses reopened. It was also hoped that Town and Parish Councils would have a role to play in supporting their local communities. It would also be discussed at the Growth Boards over the next few weeks. It was reiterated that the grant was not directly available to businesses and would be used to aid businesses.

Councillor Thomas asked a supplementary question to Councillor Edyvean.

"Do you have any idea what sort of things you will be looking for to aid businesses if Rushcliffe is actually spending the money?"

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that the European grant had multiple restrictions and it was likely to be used for creating safe environments and the Council was considering its best use.

69 **Citizens' Questions**

There were no questions.

70 **Chapel Lane Development**

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation presented the report of the Executive Manager – Communities providing an update on the next stage of development of a leisure centre, community hall and office buildings at Chapel Lane, Bingham.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation clarified that the Cabinet report had been published prior to the last meeting of the Bingham Leisure Centre Member Working Group. The Member Working Group was advised that any views it had would be considered when the report was discussed at Cabinet. He advised that the recommendation would be amended to reflect the views of the Member Working Group and those would be detailed with the

proposals for the recommendation.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation stated that notwithstanding any impact of Covid-19, it was recognised that the new facilities were an important part of the infrastructure of an expanding community. The Council was eager to continue to deliver major projects; however, it should be recognised that questions continued to be raised on the office market of the future. At this stage the Council was looking to approve the step of a detailed tender based on approved RIBA stage 4 designs and cost plans. Some costs had risen; although the overall costs were still in line with the original budget of £20m. Variations to forecast costs were detailed in the report. The recommendations also covered the advice given by the Council's outside consultants to consider when the tender was issued, taking into account cost uncertainties in the short term as the building industry stabilised. It also covered the agreement of the Member working Group that the preferred procurement route should be through the Procurement Partnerships Framework as opposed to the traditional 'Official Journal of the European Union' (OJEU) procurement process. It was recommended that a Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) was entered into with Network Rail, which was standard practice to protect both parties when work was being undertaken in proximity to a railway line.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation proposed the recommendation as outlined in the report, subject to the following amendments to parts c) and e) to reflect the views of the Member Working Group:

- c) responsibility for proceeding to tender be delegated to the Executive Manager for Communities in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation and the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

- e) negotiation and completion of the Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) with Network Rail be delegated to the Executive Manager for Communities in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation and the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

In seconding the recommendation, including the amendments to recommendations c) and e), Councillor Inglis acknowledged the hard work undertaken by everyone involved in the project, and stated the importance for Bingham and its catchment area to have good leisure facilities as the current leisure centre was no longer fit for purpose. The proposal would provide a valuable community asset, not just for sport, with the inclusion of office space and a large community hall receiving major funding from the Bingham Community Chest and Section 106 contributions. The Council was mindful of the economic impact of Covid-19; however, it was committed to providing new indoor leisure facilities supported by the excellent relationship with the Toothill Academy for the continued use of the outdoor sports amenities there. The report highlighted the work already achieved and the continued positivity and agreement at all levels to move forward. As with all major projects there were risks, some manageable, with others highlighted as unforeseen; however, options to revise the design were in place to meet any emerging factors.

Councillor Robinson reiterated the thanks given to the cross-party Member Working Group, which had been regularly meeting for the past 12 months and the input of all consultees had been particularly valuable. Whilst the current financial situation was difficult, the Council was making a big statement and commitment to continue with the project and provide the best facilities for local residents in Bingham and the surrounding areas.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the RIBA stage 4 design and cost plan recommended by the Member Group as detailed in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report, which is in line with the approved budget be approved;
- b) the Procurement Strategy as recommended by the Member Group to use the Procurement Partnerships Framework be approved;
- c) responsibility for proceeding to tender be delegated to the Executive Manager for Communities in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation and the Portfolio Holder for Finance.
- d) a report be brought back to Cabinet with the outcome of any tender exercise to seek approval for any phasing of the build, the procurement timetable and to appoint a construction contractor; and
- e) negotiation and completion of the Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) with Network Rail be delegated to the Executive Manager for Communities in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation and the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

71 Finance Update

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services providing an update on the budget position reported to Cabinet on 12 May 2020 of the projected impact of Covid-19.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that this was the second report on the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's budget and as expected figures were constantly changing, although not significantly. Continued uncertainty was anticipated in relation to a possible second spike and to the speed of economic recovery. Local policy decisions would also have a bearing on the budget, particularly the reintroduction of car parking charges and the reopening of leisure centres. The Cabinet would continue to be updated at each meeting, with a revised budget reported to the Council meeting in September 2020. Everyone was aware of the graveness of the situation, particularly for local businesses and communities and it was important that everyone worked together to ensure Rushcliffe's remained a great place to live and work.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance welcomed the Central Government funding of £1.23m; however, it was clear even in the short term that it would be insufficient to meet the budget shortfall. The budget gap was expected to be at least £2.87m, with the funding covering 43% of that. In respect of Revenue

Budget pressures, the loss of car parking income was highlighted, it was hoped that car parks would be reopened soon; although future usage could be impacted, particularly in the short term. The report noted the loss of income from Development Control, Building Control and community events over the past four months, together with a loss of rental income from the Council's tenants. £1.45m costs had been incurred mainly from supporting Parkwood Leisure, the use of agency staff to support waste collection and additional accommodation to support the homeless. Ongoing discussions were taking place with Parkwood on the short to medium term impact on the leisure position and the budget impact. In respect of capital receipts, the timing and expected amount would differ from that anticipated before Covid-19. The viability of existing projects would need to be reassessed, including the impact of the leisure contract and potential timings for the Bingham Hub. There was ongoing uncertainty regarding the construction market; however it was hoped to have greater understanding of market conditions when the Council went out to tender for the Bingham Hub. As of 24 May 2020, Council Tax receipts were reduced by £880k, which would cause a deficit in the collection fund, which would need to be recovered over the next two financial years. Business Rates had been largely unaffected because of the significant relief granted to the sector; however, the situation would continue to change and need to be monitored. The Council had reacted quickly to ensure that over £17m in Business Grants had been paid out to 88% of eligible businesses. On 1 June 2020, the Council had launched its discretionary scheme, with 67 applications received and considered for a fund of £972k. Given its discretionary nature, the scheme had created challenges in development and implementation, and staff were thanked for their hard work and dedication in dealing with this additional workload, which had been welcomed by the local business community. The report referred to the work of the Council and its approach to assisting the recovery of the economy in Rushcliffe, and a report on business support and economic recovery would be submitted to the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group. The Council had managed its resources well and held a healthy level of reserves, which enabled it to deal in the short to medium term with the economic crisis; however, the Council's financial resilience going forward would be severely tested and would require a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to deliver its corporate objectives, with a report planned for Council in September 2020.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Mason referred to the uncertain and challenging times ahead and the difficult decisions that would have to be made. The Council was committed to moving forward and responding both quickly and flexibly to the evolving situation.

Councillor Robinson reiterated previous comments and emphasised the importance of continued Government support for Councils and their partners in such unprecedented times. As the revised budget would be considered in September 2020, it was hoped that by then income streams would have returned and be revitalised, along with capital receipts. The Executive Manager for Finance and Corporate Services and his team were thanked for their hard work during such challenging times, and it was a great testament to the Council that it had faced the Covid-19 crisis in such a strong financial position. The next few months would be crucial for the Council, with difficult decisions to be made and it was hoped to see some positive signs going forward as the Council continued to support local communities and businesses.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the revised financial impact of Covid-19 on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the inclusion of these estimates and use of reserves and balances in the revised budget due be taken to full Council be noted; and
- b) a report on business support and economic recovery be considered by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group.

Exclusion of Public

It was resolved that under Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, 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.

72 Abbey Road Update

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation presented the report of the Executive Manager – Transformation providing an update on the Abbey Road Depot redevelopment.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the disposal of the former Abbey Road depot land for the revised offer for the development of 76 new homes, with at least 30% affordable and in accordance with the Design Code and Masterplan be authorised; and
- b) the revised expected capital receipt and the impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to be reflected in the revised MTFS to be presented to Full Council in September 2020 be noted.

The meeting closed at 2.37 pm.

CHAIRMAN