

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2020

Held virtually at 7.00 pm and live streamed on the
Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

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

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore
P Linfield

K Marriott
S Sull
H Tambini

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

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies

18 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

19 Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 8 September 2020 were
declared a true record and signed by the Chairman.

20 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

There were no questions.

21 Citizens' Questions

There were no questions.

**22 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2020/21 - Financial and Covid
Update Quarter 2**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report of the Executive Manager
– Finance and Corporate Services outlining the budget position for revenue
and capital at 30 September 2020.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that a great deal had occurred during
this reporting period and whilst the report highlighted an improving picture
since the last quarter, the figures remained fluid and continued to be dictated

by national events. It was noted that the anticipated budget gap had improved since the last quarter from £422k to £244k, with the difference being derived from Covid -19 pressures being offset by in house efficiencies and Government funding. Cabinet was advised that projections would continue to change, as the impact of the latest lockdown was understood. Support for leisure facilities continued to be significant, and that had been further exacerbated with leisure centre closures due to lockdown, and it was hoped that facilities would be able to open again soon. In respect of repayments for the outstanding internal loan for the Arena development, it was reiterated that the Council had the opportunity to reduce those repayments; however, it was suggested that this was unlikely to be required this year. The report highlighted that the Capital Programme was continuing as scheduled, although it had been slightly delayed due to Covid. It was noted that collection rates for Council Tax had been reduced by 1%, which equated to £796k. The Government had announced that the deficit could now be spread over three years, which should reduce the burden each year, although it would still remain. In respect of Discretionary Grants, it was noted that a new scheme had been introduced and it was hoped that payments would begin to be made by the start of next week. Officers were again thanked for their hard work in ensuring the rapid implementation of the scheme. Reference was made to the request by the Communities Scrutiny Group that the Council should look at how Enviro-Crime enforcement, particularly fly-tipping was resourced and it was noted that a cost neutral solution had been agreed by using an external company, which would recover costs through issuing fixed penalty notices. The arrangement would be reviewed in six months and reported to the Communities Scrutiny Group. In respect of the Development Corporation, Cabinet was advised that the budget had been adjusted to cover this commitment. The report highlighted some positive progress; however, the fluidity of the situation was reiterated and it was important that the Council continued to maintain a tight control over its finances, expenditure and reserves.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Edyvean referred to the importance of ensuring that the Council maintained a well-managed budget and thanked the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services and his team for their continued hard work. It was a testament to the entire Council that during such difficult times, it had remained open for business and continued to look forward and face the challenges ahead.

The Leader reiterated the thanks given to all officers for their hard work and diligence during this difficult time, together with the importance of continuing to support local businesses financially through the grants payments. It was also pleasing to note that the Council remained focused and ambitious in respect of moving forward with its Capital Programme.

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

- a) the projected net effect of in-year efficiencies (£0.497m) and Covid-19 pressures (£2.355m) and Covid Government funding (£1.614m) resulting in an expected net revenue deficit for the year of £0.244m;
- b) a projected £3.017m net surplus on Business Rates as a result of additional S31 reliefs to be transferred to the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve to offset the expected Collection Fund deficit in later years;

- c) the £0.723m receipts be transferred to reserves as follows - £0.523m to Organisation Stabilisation and £0.2m to the Development Corporation Reserve;
- d) the capital underspend of £23.8m of which £18.465m to be carried forward: £17.965m to 2021/22 Capital Programme and £500k to 2022/23 Capital Programme;
- e) the projected Special Expenses position with a projected deficit of £0.082m for the year to be financed by a loan from the Council as agreed by the West Bridgford CIL and Special Expenses Group; and
- f) the six-month trial to engage Waste Investigations Support and Enforcement to deliver enforcement of environmental crimes (following on from Communities Scrutiny Group discussions).

23 Development Corporation

The Leader presented the report of the Chief Executive providing an update on the East Midlands Development Corporation Programme since Cabinet had been updated in February 2020.

The Leader advised that the Council continued to support the Development Corporation as a whole, with a particular interest in the Ratcliffe on Soar power station site, given its significant strategic importance to the Borough. The power station would be decommissioned in 2025, and it was therefore vital that the Borough led on the future of that site. The importance of encouraging external investment into the Borough to ensure economic growth and employment was acknowledged. Currently the Alchemy Board, which had representatives from the three directly affected districts, the County Council and private partners was overseeing the Development Corporation. It was noted that a detailed Business Case was being prepared and it was anticipated that it would be submitted to the Government in March 2021. The report highlighted that an interim vehicle would be established and incorporated in January 2021, with the Borough represented on that body. Cabinet was advised that the Development Corporation had applied to the Government for funding during this interim period, and once a response had been received, the Council would be aware of the financial contribution required to support that interim vehicle.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Upton referred to the significant impact that the closure of the power station would have on the Borough, given the substantial loss in business rates and the impact of having a potentially very large derelict site in this key location and the Council needed to take action now. Reference was made to the significant time that the parliamentary process could take and the establishment of an interim vehicle was the appropriate step to take, as was the suggested financial contribution to support it.

The Leader reiterated that both he and the Chief Executive would be looking very carefully at the agreement once the final details were known. It was hoped that the interim period would not be too long and that the Development

Corporation would be fully established soon. The significant loss in business rates should not be underestimated and it was essential that the Council supported this programme to ensure continued economic growth and employment.

Councillor Edyvean referred to the importance of supporting both the interim vehicle and the future Development Corporation, to ensure the future ambition for the site, which would be significant in terms of contributing towards a carbon neutral economy.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the progress made to date of the East Midlands Development Corporation Programme, and the establishment of an interim vehicle be noted;
- b) the principle of making a financial contribution to support the interim vehicle over the next three years be approved, subject to further negotiation and agreement by Council and subject to match funding from other affected local authorities and Government and, thereafter, the funding arrangements to be included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 onwards;
- c) the Chief Executive be requested to prepare a report including further detail on the Interim Vehicle and Rushcliffe Borough Council's involvement in it, to be ratified by Full Council in December 2020; and
- d) the Council entering into the Members' Agreement and participating in the incorporation of the Interim Vehicle Company Limited by Guarantee be approved in principle, and delegated authority be granted to the Leader and Chief Executive for agreeing the final form of the Members' Agreement and Articles of Association subject to agreement by Council.

24 **Acquisitions and Disposal Policy**

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation presented the report of the Executive Manger – Transformation providing an update on the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy 2020-2025.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Transformation confirmed that the Council already had an Asset Management Strategy, which had recently been updated. As part of the process for managing acquisitions and disposals, the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy set out the parameters that were required to undertake any transactions. The Council's assets were diverse and multi-faceted and the Policy outlined the guidelines that should be followed to fulfil the Council's corporate objectives. It was noted that the Policy had been updated to include reference to properties bought to house the homeless, together with the future provision of affordable housing.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan referred to the Council's diverse asset base and stated that it was important that the Council had a clear Policy setting out the key principles to consider when purchasing or selling an asset, to ensure that the Council's corporate objectives were met. The

importance of open and transparent decision-making was reiterated, to ensure that the Policy was appropriately managed, continuously reviewed and supported the delivery of the Council's services.

The Leader reiterated the importance of maintaining a balanced and diverse portfolio of assets, particularly as the Council moved forward through the pandemic, during challenging financial times, where an appropriate balance of assets could provide both revenue and local residents with important facilities. It was pleasing to note that over the years the Council had managed to accumulate this balance of assets and that needed to be maintained.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy 2020-2025 be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm.

CHAIRMAN