

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West
Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors J Wheeler (Chairman), N Clarke, J Murray, D Viridi and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack	Service Manager - Corporate Services
S Whittaker	Service Manager - Finance
E Palmer	Communications and Customer Services Manager
J Wilkinson	Safety and Risk Management Advisor
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors J Cottee and P Gowland

6 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

7 Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

8 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Strategic HR Manager delivered a presentation that summarised the Council's occupational health and safety performance during the period 1 April 2021 to end March 2022 which complimented the Health and Safety Annual report circulated with the agenda.

It was noted that the Annual Report is structured in such away as to reflect the Health and Safety Executive guidance, including health and safety policies, procedures and activities which have taken place over the year and sets out training programmes delivered, providing statistical data and the proposed health and safety objectives for 2022/23.

The Strategic HR Manager provided an overview of activities and performance in relation to health and safety, with the response to the Covid pandemic remaining a key priority.

The Strategic HR Manager provided data on staff training and explained why there had been dips in training completion due to the administrative system, adding that a system upgrade is due to be launched in the next 6 to 8 weeks which will enable automatic re-enrolment once refresher training is due which is expected to have a positive impact on course completions.

The Group were advised that the number of accidents to employees had increased slightly compared to last year, but remains consistent with previous years and included slip, trips and fall accidents and manual handling accidents. It was noted that at the Group's request an Incidence Rate had been added to the reporting figures.

In respect of days lost due to absence or injury, the Strategic HR Manager advised that this remains low in comparison to previous years, with only 4 accidents resulting in time off work, and out of those four only one accident needing to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive.

The Strategic HR Manager informed the Group that a Health and Safety audit by BDO the Council's internal auditors had been completed in March 2022. The conclusion from the report was as follows:

'Our review noted that there are a number of good areas of practice at the Council regarding health and safety, these areas include the reviewing of health and safety policies, the defining of roles and responsibilities in the management framework and the clear reporting groups for health and safety.'

The audit revealed that areas for improvement included improved training rates for e-learning and more consistent processes for reviewing risk assessments in Pentana. The Strategic HR Manager advised that there had been a review and update of all health and safety policies, that there are plans to complete a health and safety audit at Fountain Court, and that significant activities continue to take place to deliver the workplace health initiatives in line with the Workplace Health Gold award.

The Strategic HR Manager advised the Group that in April 2022 the Council had engaged with Bolsover District Council to support with some aspects of the Health and Safety work at Rushcliffe.

In concluding the Group were advised of the objectives for 2022/23 including:

- Review and update the Violence at Work Policy
- Health & Safety audit of Streetwise
- Improvements to the e-learning compliance rates
- Ensure risk assessments are reviewed by managers in a more timely manner
- Continue to deliver appropriate workplace health initiatives

Members asked specific questions relating to the take up of fire safety e-learning and what HR officers had in place to improve staff uptake and achieve targets, highlighting the fire at County Hall and the importance of fire awareness and safety. The Strategic HR Manager explained that e-learning

courses were not the primary source for training, adding that more complimentary training is provided at regular intervals for staff who have been assigned as fire marshals, including Facilities and Business Support Officers. The Strategic HR Manager also advised that all staff are provided with fire safety training at their induction.

Councillors were also advised that complimentary training is also provided for asbestos and legionella awareness.

The Chairman questioned the rational of the Health and Safety Service Level Agreement with Bolsover District Council and whether there was any risk with this provision being provided on an 'as an when required' basis. The Strategic HR Manager explained that due to her recent promotion and additional work, her capacity to deliver the Health and Safety functions had reduced, adding that the Council had allocated a budget for external support and had reached out to other authorities within the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Health and Safety Advisory Group to explore if there was any capacity for other authorities support, to which Bolsover was the only responder.

The Group commented on the risk assessment review and the audit recommendation for assessments to be kept in a central location. The Strategic HR Manager advised that a more consistent process for reviewing risk assessments had been implemented and reports were being logged in 'Pentana', the Council's Performance Management System.

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

- a) Considered the detailed information contained within the annual Health and Safety Report
- b) Endorsed the proposed health and safety objectives for 2022/23 as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

9 **Finance and Performance Management Q4 2021-2022**

The Group were presented the Q4 Finance and Performance report for 2021/22, which outlines the Council's position in terms of financial and performance monitoring.

It was noted that the statutory deadline for approval of the accounts had been extended and the publication of the draft Statement of Accounts had been prepared and published on 31 July 2022, with the approval of the audited statements due by 30 November 2022.

The Service Manager - Finance advised the Group of the financial monitoring in respect of the net revenue position which showed a transfer to reserves of £1.452m a significant net increase of £6.2m, adding that as reported throughout the year financial performance has been resilient in face of ongoing financial challenges, which had resulted in a surplus in the year due to in-year savings and service efficiencies. Details of the main variances were provided and noted by the Group.

The Service Manager Finance explained that service efficiencies and prudential budgeting for Covid losses had mitigated the overall impact and the improved outturn position enables the Council to continue to achieve its corporate objectives. It was noted that a number of transfers had been agreed by Cabinet with any surplus being transferred to the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve to support future financial pressures.

In respect of Capital monitoring the Service Manager - Finance reported that at the year-end the Capital Programme provision totalled £27.222m, the actual expenditure being £16.276m, giving rise to a variance of £10.946m, £10.710m of which is to be carried forward. It was noted that significant commitments had been made with regard to the Bingham Hub and Crematorium.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager delivered the Q4 Performance Monitoring Report giving reference to the Strategic Scorecard in the appendices provided with the report.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager highlighted the number of performance exceptions which is higher this year primarily due to the results of the residents' satisfaction survey, and whilst the impact of the covid pandemic had a significant impact on the everyday life of our residents, we were able to maintain Council services.

It was noted that usage of leisure and community facilities was returning to pre-pandemic levels and whilst the year end targets were not met, it does provide positive signs that the next financial year will show an improvement.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager explained that the Corporate Strategy is a living document that is adapted to changing priorities, allowing the Council to take advantage of emerging opportunities and tasks are removed once completed.

The Group were advised that one strategic task had been completed and removed from monitoring:

ST1923_21 Support the Local Businesses and communities from the impact of Covid.

No new strategic tasks have been added to the reporting for this year.

Councillors asked specific questions in relation to the Council's leisure provision and whether the opening of new non-Council run facilities posed a risk on the Arena and the Council's current leisure provider. The Financial Services Manager explained that there had been no real impact so far and that the privately run facilities were offering different provision and customer base. It was also noted that the rise in cost of living is more likely to have an impact in the future.

The Group questioned the reported satisfaction levels in respect of the cleanliness of parks and open space, slightly lower than target and whether the council just relies on residents' perceptions. The Communications and

Customer Services Manager explained that other sources for monitoring this area includes WISE, the Council's enforcement contractor, social media and customer complaints.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group noted:

- a) the 2021/22 revenue position and efficiencies identified in **Table 1**, the variances in **Table 2** and the carry forwards and appropriations to reserves in **Appendix E**;
- b) the other changes to the earmarked reserves as set out at **Appendix B**;
- c) the re-profiled position on capital and the capital carry forwards outlined in **Appendix C**;
- d) the updates on the Special Expenses outturn at paragraph 4.12 and in **Appendix D**; and
- e) considers whether scrutiny is required for identified performance exceptions.

10 **Finance and Performance Management Q1 2022/23**

The Group were presented the Q1 Finance and Performance Report 2022/23, which outlines the Council's position in terms of financial and performance monitoring.

The Service Manager - Finance informed the Group that for this financial year, the overall budget variance is expected to be an efficiency of £1.038m with proposals to utilise this for in-year pressures. The Group were advised that the budget has been set in anticipation of a rise in inflation and pay costs, adding that the Government are committed to employers paying the national living wage and the employers offer is to help meet this objective. It was noted that Cabinet at its meeting on 12 July 2022 approved additional allocations from 2021/22 underspends to mitigate the impact of the additional pressure.

It was noted that further risks remain in relation to cost pressures and it is therefore proposed to earmark £0.638m of the projected underspend to mitigate these risks. There have been unavoidable delays in the Bingham Leisure Hub and Crematorium giving way to delays in projected income streams.

The Service Manager – Finance highlighted the cost pressures associated with staff pay negotiations and inflation which is predicted to reach 15% later in the year, with significant risk cost to the Council and an impact on contracts that are index linked or due for renewal and on fuel and utilities. In addition, it was noted that this may have a knock-on effect on the collection rates for council Tax and Business Rates and on fees and charges as residents struggle with the increase in the cost of living.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager provided a summary of the progress of tasks and measures falling within each theme of the Corporate

Strategy. It was reported that performance in the first quarter is very good, which was particularly evident in the following performance indicators:

- **LIDEG40** Percentage of RBC owned industrial units occupied – occupation levels have recovered following a number of units becoming vacant during 2021/22.
- **LIFCS21** Percentage of Non-domestic Rates collected in year – collection rates are 10% ahead of target.
- **LIFCS62** Percentage increase in self-serve transactions – there are a number of factors, in particular impact of the energy rebate scheme, increased bids for Choice Based Lettings and use of the bin calendar as a result of bank holiday changes.
- **LINS51** Number of leisure centre users – public – although not reaching pre-pandemic levels at present, usage is increasing and above target levels.

It was noted that one new task has been added for this year, **ST1923_21** Delivery of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion scheme action plan.

Councillors asked specific questions in relation to the increasing energy and fuel costs and how much were officers able to predict these increases on the Council's finances. The Service Manager - Finance explained that economic factors were more challenging creating a more stringent budget setting for this year. In addition, the Service Manager - Finance advised that increases are factored into the budget setting process including fees and charges for Council services. It was also noted that reserves could be called upon to prevent the need for external borrowing.

In terms of looking ahead the Group asked what tolerances are acceptable in terms of investment balances and underspends in the Capital Programme and prolonged negative variances. The Service Manager - Finance explained that the Corporate Strategy is set on a four-year cycle, that is reassessed annually at every budget setting point. In respect of negative variances, the Group noted that regular reviews of the Transformation Programme and good reserves places the Council in a good position.

Councillors highlighted the positive results in relation to the number of fly-tipping cases and dog fouling coming down and wished to see this reported positively through Council communications.

In respect of new grants, Councillors questioned whether officers from other areas of the Council could be called upon to provide some resilience during busy periods. It was noted that this had been the case during the height of the Covid pandemic.

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

- a) The expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £1.038m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures;
- b) The capital budget efficiencies of £6.170m including the re-profiling of provisions totalling £1.465m to 2023/24 for Cotgrave Leisure Centre,

- Keyworth Leisure Centre, and West Park;
- c) The transfer of £0.15m from streetwise Loan Provision to Capital Contingency;
 - d) The expected outturn position for Special Expenses to be in line with the Budget;
 - e) The Council positively engaging in securing external funding with regards to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling-up and Safer Streets; and
 - f) Considers whether scrutiny is required for identified performance exceptions.

11 Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen

The Chairman of Governance Scrutiny Group advised that at its last meeting on the 30 June 2022 the Group were asked to consider seven substantive items. It was also noted that a Risk Management training session had been arranged before the meeting on 15 September 2022.

The Chairman of Communities Scrutiny Group advised that at its last meeting the Group were asked to consider the Council's Canal and River Trust Access Agreement and a presentation was delivered by the Canal and River Trust. The Group were also provided with an update on the Council's Sports Development function. The Chairman advised that at the next meeting scheduled for 6 October the Council's External Communication Strategy and Customer Access Strategy would be scrutinised.

The Chairman of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group advised that at its last meeting the Group had scrutinised conservation areas and had added two additional recommendations in respect of Designated Heritage Assets and allowing residents to be involved with the review process for Heritage Assets. The Chairman advised that Sewerage Infrastructure and Discharge within the Borough and Covid 19 Business Recovery were on the agenda at the next meeting scheduled for 22 September 2022.

12 Feedback from Lead Officers

There was nothing to report for this item.

13 Scrutiny Witness Guide

The Group were asked to consider and approve the draft Scrutiny Witness Guide, which had been developed to draw attention to the provisions outlined in the Council's Constitution in relation to expert witnesses and Councillors contributing to scrutiny. It also sets the standards for involving witnesses in scrutiny to ensure that the different scrutiny groups are following the same procedures and the processes are transparent and easy for witnesses to follow.

The Service Manager – Corporate Services explained that the Guide aims to encourage expert witnesses to be more focused in the information presented to Scrutiny and the balance to be maintained between information provided and debate. In addition, the Scrutiny Witness Guide outlines how scrutiny works at Rushcliffe, who can speak at scrutiny and for how long, the nature of their involvement and what external speakers can expect both by way of support in advance of and during the meeting.

Councillors were complimentary of the proposals and expressed that the document provides a better understanding of who can be involved and sets out clear expectations for external speakers.

The Group suggested that provisions in case the technology fails should be considered in the guidance and that Chairmen be allowed some flexibility for effective scrutiny.

The Group noted that the Service Manager – Corporate Services would publicise the Scrutiny Witness Guide appropriately.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Corporate Overview Group approves the Scrutiny Witness Guide provided in Appendix One attached to the report.

14 **Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programme**

There were no new scrutiny matrices submitted in time for this meeting. The Service Manager Corporate Services advised this was not considered a concern as Governance and Communities Scrutiny both have substantive work programmes for the next twelve months. It was noted that Growth and Development had less coming up. However, officers were expecting to bring forward a review of Fairham Pastures and the first six months of the Crematorium development. Matrices for both would be brought to the next Corporate Overview meeting and Councillors were encouraged to consider if there are any community concerns that could be scrutinised at Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

It was **RESOLVED** that the work programmes outlined below be agreed.

Work Programme 2022-23 – Corporate Overview Group

15 November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ 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
21 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial and Performance Management ● Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of the 2019-2023 Strategic Tasks ○ Review of the draft Business Continuity Strategy
May 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Financial and Performance Management ● Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversity Annual Report and update on the Equality and Diversity Strategy

Work Programme 2022-23 – Governance Scrutiny Group

15 September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal Audit Progress Report ● Streetwise Annual Report ● Risk Management ● Going Concern ● Capital and Investment Strategy Q1 2022/23
24 September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal Audit Progress Report ● Annual Audit Report 2021/22 ● Statement of Accounts ● Capital and Investments – 6 monthly update ● Asset Management Plan
23 February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal Audit Progress Report ● Internal Audit Strategy ● Risk Management – 6 monthly update ● Capital and Asset Investments Strategy 2023/24
June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal Audit Progress Report ● Internal Audit Annual Report ● Annual Governance Statement (AGS) ● Capital and Investment – update ● Constitution Update ● Code of Conduct ● External Audit Annual Plan ● Annual Audit Letter and Value for Money Conclusion

Work Programme 2022-23 – Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

21 September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Covid-19 Business Recovery Update ● Sewerage Infrastructure and Discharge within Rushcliffe
4 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● UK Shared Prosperity Fund ●
8 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●

July 2023	•
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Work Programme 2022-23 -Communities Scrutiny Group

6 October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's External Communications Strategy • Customer Access Strategy
19 January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a Youth Council • Corporate Enforcement Policy
16 March 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon Management Plan • Environment Policy
July 2023	•

The meeting closed at 8.47 pm.

CHAIRMAN

DRAFT