

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 2023

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors N Clarke (Chair), A Brennan (Vice-Chair), R Inglis, R Upton, D Viridi
and J Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Birch, Ellis and J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
G Dennis	Monitoring Officer
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
K Marriott	Chief Executive
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

Councillor Clarke referred to the recent devastating, tragic events that had taken place in Nottingham city centre earlier today and stated that he was sure that everyone would join with him in sending sincere condolences and thoughts to everyone involved, and specifically the three people who had died, and those who have been injured, and he called for a moment of reflection.

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 March 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 March 2023 were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

3 Citizens' Questions

Question from Mr Jon Greenwood to Councillor Viridi. Mr Greenwood was unable to attend the meeting, so his question was read out by the Chair.

“Having read the minutes from April it is unclear how much of the Council budget goes towards the cost of energy. Please can you confirm the annual total of the budget that is spent on electricity and gas, what the total was three years previously and what steps have been taken to reduce future consumption?”

Councillor Virdi responded by stating that the 2023/24 budget for gas was £132,500 (£34,900 in 2020/21) and electricity £475,700 (£98,500 in 2020/21). There were a number of reasons for this not least recent significant price increases, and also the newly opened crematorium. The Council had a Carbon Reduction Plan and was actively using alternative energy sources such as solar panels on its buildings, heat pumps at its leisure centres and on its own estate the use of electrical charging points for vehicles.

4 **Opposition Group Leaders' Questions**

Question from Councillor Birch to Councillor Brennan.

“Bingham, East Leake, Fairham, Radcliffe on Trent, and West Bridgford all have huge potential for improvement. Does the Cabinet believe that the Growth Boards are achieving enough positive outcomes for residents?”

Councillor Brennan responded by stating that as the report to Cabinet to be considered later this evening outlined, the Growth Boards first started meeting in 2015 and had been reviewed twice since then, and with the impact of Covid and the current cost of living pressures it was timely to review the Boards again, to ensure that they were for purpose. It was always intended for the Boards to be action focused to ensure they delivered outcomes, and as the report set out, it was considered that they had achieved a great deal. Councillor Brennan highlighted some including:

- Brilliant Bingham Masterplan
- Radcliffe on Trent Economic Masterplan
- Retail reviews in all Growth Boards areas to help inform action plans and areas of focus
- Engagement of Severn Trent Water in East Leake
- West Bridgford Commissioners report and supporting action plan
- Establishment of West Bridgford Way website
- Shop Front Improvement Grant scheme providing financial support to approximately 30 high street businesses
- High Street Digital Grant
- Public realm and Grange grounds improvements in Radcliffe on Trent
- Appointment of a Town Centre Manager to deliver events.

Councillor Brennan advised that subject to Cabinet approval this evening, the plan would be to engage with those who had been involved in Growth Boards to get their views on their effectiveness and ideas for the future. Engagement with other relevant stakeholders would take place, including Ward Councillors, who might not have been previously involved. The intention was to take a report to Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in October, so members had the opportunity to consider some options.

Councillor Brennan referred to the question posed and stated that she could not address the issue of what huge potential for improvement there was, as the question did not clarify what specific area it was talking about. However, it was vital that the Growth Boards remained effective, some might have run their course, and new ones might be required, so a review was necessary to ensure

that they continued to deliver positive outcomes for residents.

Councillor Birch asked a supplementary question to Councillor Brennan.

“Do you think it is acceptable that Bingham’s residents still do not have adequate parking provision considering that it was identified as the primary problem in Bingham in the 2018 Bingham Masterplan?”

Councillor Brennan responded by stating that there were many reasons why the parking issues had yet to be resolved, as the situation was very complex, and the Growth Board only formed a small part of that. It was essential that this parking was delivered, with all partners playing a full role, and it was hoped as part of the new Action Plan that this would be achieved.

5 **Process for Developing the Corporate Strategy 2023-2027**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke, presented the report of the Chief Executive, which outlined the process for developing the Corporate Strategy for 2023-2027.

Before presenting the report, Councillor Clarke referred to recommendation a) and stated that it should say 2023-2027, rather than 2019-2023 as written in the report. Cabinet was advised that this was the start of the process, which would include extensive discussion and consultation. Councillor Clarke referred to recommendation b), which asked Cabinet to recognise performance against the Corporate Strategy and highlighted four big Council projects; the Chapel Lane site being delivered in Bingham, which included the Leisure Centre and the very successful Business Centre; the Crematorium; the support offered by the Council with the post Covid recovery; and the successful relocation of Streetwise. In conclusion, Councillor Clarke referred to recommendation c) and stated that it was important that scrutiny was involved in having an input into the policy development of the Corporate Strategy, with the Corporate Overview Group having the opportunity to look at the draft document before being submitted to Cabinet.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan welcomed both the paper and the process outlined and referred to paragraph 4.5 of the report, which highlighted the various ways that stakeholders, customers, clients, and partners would be engaged with to create an inclusive, strategic plan going forward. Councillor Brennan was pleased that a variety of different media formats would be used to engage with everyone and that the Corporate Overview Group would be reviewing the document too.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the proposed approach to developing the Council’s Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 be endorsed;
- b) performance against the Corporate Strategy 2019-2023 be recognised; and
- c) the Corporate Overview Group be requested to input into the

development of the Corporate Strategy and review a draft before it returned to Cabinet.

6 Rushcliffe Growth Boards Review Process

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Brennan, presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, which outlined the process for reviewing the Rushcliffe Growth Boards.

Councillor Brennan referred to the history of the Growth Boards as highlighted in the report and confirmed that it was now timely to review them to ensure that they remained fit for purpose. Cabinet noted that the report set out the proposed process for that review, some background information, including the original objectives, work already undertaken and the proposed next steps. The impact of the Covid pandemic had been significant on all aspects of life, and the impact of housing growth in many areas had also been keenly felt, and Councillor Brennan stated that it was right to review the existing structure, membership, and objectives, to ensure that they would deliver going forward. Details of the background to the setting up of the Boards, and the makeup of the Boards themselves were highlighted in paragraph 4.1 onwards of the report. Councillor Brennan advised that the remit and focus of each of the Boards varied slightly depending on identified priorities for each particular area; however, the overarching priority was to proactively plan and manage growth, to maximise opportunities and to look at the impacts on local infrastructure. Paragraph 4.15 of the report highlighted key achievements over the past eight years. Cabinet noted that membership of the local Boards was largely similar as detailed in paragraphs 4.12 and 4.13 of the report. Councillor Brennan referred to the difficulty in securing business representation in many cases, and that an important element of the review would be to try to understand the reasons for that and address them. Paragraph 4.16 of the report detailed the context for the Growth Boards going forward, including UKSPF funding and the East Midlands Airport development, together with the creation of some new community groups.

In conclusion, Councillor Brennan stated that it was important to consider the views of the many stakeholders involved over the past eight years, and subject to Cabinet's approval, future options would be considered by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group, before coming back to Cabinet later in the year.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Upton stated that as the former Chair of the West Bridgford Growth Board, and a current member of the Ratcliffe on Trent Growth Board, he considered that they had achieved a great deal by working in partnership. Councillor Upton agreed that there had been considerable change, which continued, and it was appropriate to review them to ensure that they were fit for purpose and in the right areas.

Councillor Clarke agreed that it was important to check that the Boards had the correct focus and were fit for purpose.

Councillor J Wheeler reiterated the comments made by Councillor Upton and stated that as a long serving member of the West Bridgford Growth Board, he had seen the impact that the Growth Boards had had across the Borough, and

it was pleasing to see new businesses opening and thriving in many areas. Cabinet was reminded that this would not be the first review; however, having scrutiny involvement highlighted the commitment to seeking wider views, to ensure that the Boards continued to be fit for purpose and that the strategic sites across the Borough had the maximum impact for residents.

Councillor Clarke stated that when the Boards were first established, the idea was that they would be streamlined to ensure that work was completed.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the work of the Growth Boards be endorsed to date;
- b) the proposal to take a report to Growth and Development Scrutiny Group to review options and identify a new approach be adopted; and
- c) a further report be brought to Cabinet in November 2023, detailing the outcome of the review and the Scrutiny Group discussions.

7 LGA Debate Not Hate Campaign

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transformation, Leisure and Wellbeing, Councillor J Wheeler, presented the report of the Monitoring Officer, which set out the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate Campaign.

Councillor Wheeler stated that the purpose of the campaign was not only to highlight the issue of abuse being directed towards councillors but to propose measures to help combat the abuse and to put in place more support. Councillor Wheeler considered that this would be a benefit for councillors and provide support for future candidates, who might be put off standing for election at all levels after seeing abuse taking place without any consequences and referred to the hard work of officers in supporting councillors, which was appreciated.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis stated that it was pleasing that this widespread problem had been researched and challenged by the Local Government Association with this campaign statement aimed at protecting all councillors from unacceptable behaviour. Such behaviour was widespread from extreme instances such as the murder of MPs, to snide comments and personal attacks, particularly on social media platforms. The suggestion of a specialist single point of contact should be investigated, and Councillor Inglis was confident that locally there was already excellent Police support in place, if required. Cabinet was reminded that fortunately concerns were at the lower end of the scale in Rushcliffe; although that should not make anyone complacent. Councillor Inglis concluded by imploring social media site providers to follow this example.

Councillor Upton stated that it was great to share different opinions and have a democracy to express them without becoming abusive, and it was hoped that this campaign would help, as overall things appeared to be getting worse, which was a shame.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends that Council endorses and supports the Local Government Association (LGA) campaign by signing the online LGA Debate not Hate public statement.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

CHAIR