

**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

	<b>RECOMMENDATION FROM PEER TEAM</b>	<b>RESPONSE/ACTION FROM RBC</b>
1.	Take a strategic/corporate approach to programme and project management, building on and aligning with your existing corporate performance management function.	The Officer Leadership Team is reviewing the Council's project management framework and will consider this recommendation in that process. This will include looking at restructuring existing staff so that a central team reports directly to the Chief Executive.
2.	Build up your future, annual or mid-term, light-touch corporate strategy refreshes from community level to best understand and respond to your communities' needs and aspirations for the future.	The Corporate Strategy will be reviewed annually by Corporate Overview Group. The first review is expected in July 2024.  We will conduct an enhanced mid-term review (2025), with more comprehensive community engagement activities.
3.	Create further time, space, resource and capacity with your strategic partners to identify what could be needed in future regarding changes in the landscape that affect you and your communities, notably the East Midlands Mayoral County Combined Authority (EMMCCA), Development Corporation and Freeport.	A joint Cabinet and Executive Management Team workshop will be held in summer 2024 to consider this in more detail.  The Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive will take active role in devolution meetings wherever possible. The Leader is Board Member of the Freeport.
4.	Use your respected position with all your partners to deliver further defined outcomes across the whole council – you are already using your environmental partnerships to lever in additional funding to support delivery... You should therefore maximise financial potential via these partnership routes.	This directly links to the development of the Council's Economic Growth Strategy, the development of which will be central to the Council making bids to any future external funding pots, mirroring the work done to enhance our profile and success with access to environment funding.
5.	Invest further in staff and councillor training; ensure councillors in particular take up mandatory, essential and other training, including that on councillor/officer roles,	This is on-going work, overseen by Member Development Group and the Council's Strategic HR Manager and Service Manager for Corporate Services.

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	political awareness, code of conduct and other internal processes.	
<b>6.</b>	Further develop and align your capital programme with your economic growth strategy once you have agreed the latter for 2024/25, with clear outcomes for both.	The Economic Growth Strategy is currently in development. It will need to be completed prior to any decisions being made about changes to the capital programme and aligned to the Council's TFS (there may also be revenue implications) and other competing priorities. Many financial implications are already covered in the MTFS linked to Economic Growth such as the DevCo and Freeport Reserve. The Council will aim to use the strategy to lever in external funding wherever possible.
<b>7.</b>	Reduce the number of RBC values, eg to a maximum of five, working with your employee liaison group and trade unions.	This work will be undertaken by the Council's Employee Liaison Group. Consultation process with all staff to be included.
<b>8.</b>	Explore options through your climate change action plan to maximise delivery of environmental outcomes across your strategic development and growth sites.	We are already working on our Design Code, our approach to Biodiversity Net Gains, a Supplementary Planning Document for Gamston and have promoted developments with additional environmental outcomes, such as the former depot site at Abbey Road which will include EPC A-rated properties. We will continue to seek new opportunities as they arise.
<b>9.</b>	Integrate climate change ambitions in all your service areas.	The Council's Carbon Management Action Plan Part A has a range of actions from across the Council with champions identified from within specific teams/areas. Any actions or activities of scale are incorporated into Service Plans to ensure appropriate management and oversight.  Overall progress is monitored and driven via a quarterly Carbon Management Action Plan meeting which is chaired by the Director Neighbourhoods and this brings together

		<p>managers from across the organisation to ensure that climate change remains a priority across all service areas. Updates on progress with Council’s plan are provided on an annual basis to the Communities Scrutiny Group and financial reporting on the climate change reserve takes place quarterly.</p> <p>Financial implications of climate change ambition have to be balanced along with other Council priorities and are already integrated with the Council’s MTFS.</p>
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**ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS:**

	<b>OBSERVATION FROM PEER TEAM</b>	<b>RESPONSE FROM RBC</b>
	<b>FINANCE</b>	
1.	RBC could invest in renewable energy regeneration by way of financial investment, helping deliver its net zero agenda and substantially advance its other priorities.	<p>We are open-minded on this and open to exploring further, however experiences from Councils elsewhere (solar farms, energy companies etc) have shown this can be problematic as it does not reflect the core business of the Council. Furthermore and as with any use of resources any decisions will be based on a sound business case along with financial implications, understanding risks and rewards.</p> <p>A more relevant priority for the Council is its ongoing investment in solar PV, air source heat pumps and renewables to reduce its running costs. Due to the nature of our business, we are unlikely to produce a surplus to our running costs (5 swimming pools and a crematorium). All this work is greatly helping the Council to become carbon neutral in our own operations by 2030.</p>

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<p>2.</p>	<p>RBC could build in regular constructive, supportive challenge of its income generation and financial plans, and commission an external, independent review of its assets and their future commercial potential</p>	<p>We have a strategic task in our Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 which sets out our intention to conduct a review of all of our assets. The Council has the in-house expertise to conduct the reviews but will seek external expert advice when needed.</p> <p>We also take a report to Governance Group bi-annually which focuses on the Council's commercial properties and the upside and downside risks surrounding these which takes into account professional advice from both property and financial services. A recent review has demonstrated income compares favourably to market values.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>The Council should work with its councillors and officers now to test and develop their appetite to take on future debt if there is a strong business case to do so</p>	<p>We are willing to borrow if necessary. Such decisions have to be properly reported through the Council's Treasury Strategy and Cabinet or Full Council dependent on the level of risk supported by a business case.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>The peer team heard and would advise against using revised budgets as standard practice.</p>	<p>Feedback noted, our current practices work for RBC and we have no issues with budget monitoring with our stakeholders and a clean bill of health from both internal and external audit in this regard.</p>
<p><b>Governance/Performance/Culture</b></p>		
<p>5.</p>	<p>RBC should continue monitoring and enhancing planning service and its resources to ensure it remains fit for purpose. This includes developing staff as needed to support delivery of RBC's significant strategic sites including Ratcliffe-on-Soar and facilitating joint working to address gaps in provision such as infrastructure.</p>	<p>Agree. This is already happening. Recent examples include staff allocated to Ratcliffe on Soar LDO work and creation of Major Projects Officer role for Planning, an Agents' Forum and Newsletters have been set up. A programme of work to review processes and continue the journey of improvement is in place.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>The corporate performance management function should review, co-ordinate, remove, enhance and/or replace council</p>	<p>Agree. This piece of work is underway. KPIs are reviewed regularly. There have been no issues with performance</p>

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	performance indicators as required, so remaining indicators align with RBC's key priorities, related outcomes, and are fit for purpose.	management in terms of any 'surprises' arising from the Council not looking at the right things or something not identified from the range of information available.
7.	RBC should consider undertaking a comprehensive review of its scrutiny function, the role and number of overview and scrutiny groups, processes and procedures, aligned with progressing RBC's corporate strategy, with councillor engagement at its core	<p>A comprehensive review of the Council's Scrutiny function was undertaken by Centre for Governance and Scrutiny in 2018. Suggest that training on current structures may be useful rather than a review.</p> <p>Scrutiny has improved in that a better, more diverse range of topics are now considered compared to previous regime.</p>
8.	RBC should strengthen the 'golden thread' to individual level. Following the council adopting its refreshed corporate strategy in December, individual appraisals are happening until the end of April, which should take account of the strategy and enhance its link to the individual level.	Agree. The Corporate Strategy was adopted in December 2023. This process will take place through staff appraisals in March/April 2024.
9.	RBC should be clear which risks are to be managed at corporate and service levels, ensure corporate risks in particular are clearly identified, prioritised, strategic, fewer in number with robust mitigations, and then manage those risks – both at corporate and service levels	Agree, but risks shouldn't be limited by a fixed number. The main point is that risks are being identified and mitigated where we can. There is no evidence that any key risks have not been identified and our auditors are satisfied with our approach. As per point 6. This piece of work is underway. Risks are reviewed regularly.
<b>Environment</b>		
10.	The council should also consider partnering with developers to explore how together they could create sustainable heat networks – for which government capital grants funds are available - for new and existing Communities. There may be further opportunities for RBC to consider an affordable housing programme and potential housing revenue account as part of all this	<p>There is currently no political appetite from leading group to pursue setting up an HRA.</p> <p>In 2022/23 we had an independent review to assess the viability of the Council developing an HRA and/or other housing delivery models. That review concluded that it</p>

		<p>wasn't advisable. This was discussed by Scrutiny in October 2023.</p> <p>Sustainable heat networks – could be considered as part of Gamston scheme.</p>
<b>11.</b>	<p>Identify additional land for carbon offsetting, as reception sites for BNG credits and so forth, when developers cannot provide increased biodiversity on their sites. RBC however, as a predominantly rural council, has a range of potential tree planting, agricultural land.</p>	<p>Agree. There is a report going to April Cabinet on developing a strategy for this area of work.</p>
<b>12.</b>	<p>The council could also consider further education and engagement activity with its communities in the lead up to the introduction of food waste collection in March 2026, such as the Food Savvy campaign, which could decrease such waste from the outset.</p>	<p>Agree. This will be introduced in October 2027 for Nottinghamshire. We are working as part of the Notts Joint Waste Mgt Committee and will consider education and engagement activity as part of this.</p>
<b>13.</b>	<p>Clarify and promote what communities and businesses can do to contribute and incorporate those contributions into the co-ordination work suggested above [net zero agenda].</p>	<p>Agree. This is something we are working on and committed to. The Green Rewards App is a great example of this – educating residents and encouraging them to play their part in achieving net zero.</p> <p>The Big Business Carbon Club is also an example of this work. We also engage with SMEs (who make up the majority of the business community in Rushcliffe) on the green agenda via the Rushcliffe Business Partnership.</p> <p>The Council has taken the opportunity to use some of its allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Funding to commission low carbon business support via East Midlands Chamber. In</p>

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		addition from April 2024 residents will be able to access green skills training.
14.	Consider developing a co-ordinated plan with partners to enhance energy efficiency of all these assets together, possibly through the One Public Estate programme	Agree, we are already engaged in the One Public Estate programme.  We undertake joint procurement re energy efficiency wherever possible.
15.	Once the council has developed and agreed its economic growth strategy for 2024/25, RBC could work more closely with its green businesses through that strategy to also support the council's environmental goals.	Agree, sustainability will be a key element of the economic growth strategy.
16.	The council could explore delivery models such as a housing company that allow it to showcase exemplar net zero homes that it builds.	It hasn't yet been a priority as business case hasn't looked favourable. Abbey Road development (former RBC depot site) has been developed as net zero homes (EPC rating A) and we will showcase this when completed.
<b>Communications/Engagement/Vision</b>		
17.	With so many high-profile sites, it is important the council develops a clear narrative about its role in supporting good place making as developments come forward.	Agree, we have set up community growth and development boards for key sites which are central to developing a clear narrative about our role and the role of partners.
18.	The council provides a range of good support to, and engages strongly with, its parish and town councils - RBC could usefully develop a public strategy or master framework that brings and presents all this work together. This would enable the council to monitor and co-ordinate this work in the round to make it even more effective.	Agree. Not sure a separate strategy is necessary, we have a 'partnership with the parishes' document which could be refreshed. As part of new community and development boards, there will be a regular schedule of meetings with the main Town and Parish Councils.

<b>19.</b>	The council could also make the most of funding across council and sub-regional priorities, for example by developing and delivering with partners a shared vision for growth and combining work and deliverables around new and related housing, skills and environmental agendas.	Agree. We work across the sub-region and housing market area on these priorities. These are picked up through the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan, the devolution work and will be included in the Economic Growth Strategy.
<b>20.</b>	RBC does not have an engagement strategy but having one would help the council understand and address its communities' immediate and future needs and aspirations. It would also enable more residents to provide feedback and inform council and sub-regional approaches and get involved in council activities. An engagement strategy could also inform and contribute to the council's annual or mid-term, light-touch corporate strategy refreshes from the community level.	Agree. We will look at including engagement in the next iteration of our Communication Strategy.