

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET
TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2024**

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

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
K Marriott	Chief Executive
S Pregon	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

15 Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 September 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 10 September 2024 were agreed
as a true record and signed by the Chair.

16 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizens' questions.

17 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Brennan.

"Ambition 7 in the Economic Growth Strategy states it will provide support for
business infrastructure to provide easy access for customers, suppliers and
employees" as well as an ambition 8, to support residents who want to work
but, face barriers to working. Despite these statements there is no stated action
of how the Council will help accessibility needs in the document. Has Cabinet
considered how all residents access the local economy and made serious
consideration as to how they will satisfy these aims as part of their business
support?"

Councillor Brennan thanked Councillor Walker for her question, referred to the
importance of accessibility to businesses and detailed what the Strategy and

Action Plan covered and that it would be regularly reviewed by the Strategic Growth Board. Councillor Brennan referred to her recent meeting with Councillor Walker, a local resident, and Access Able, a company that provided information on accessibility, where it had been agreed that the actions would be reviewed, and the Council would seek funding. It was noted that commercial buildings had to be accessible by law where that was possible, although it was recognised that more could be done, and that information was not always available to users. Councillor Brennan advised that the previous Government had provided funding, including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF); however, that was no longer available, and it was hoped that new funding would come from the Labour Government. In respect of ambition 8, the UKSPF was already being utilised to help those furthest from the labour market back into employment or training, and if that work was to carry on after March 2025, additional funding would be required.

Councillor Walker asked a supplementary question of Councillor Brennan.

“How actively does the Council engage with accessibility groups and those people who are marginalised, and would they be engaged with as part of the implementation of the Strategy.”

Councillor Brennan advised that this particular Strategy focused on economic impact and referred to the economic benefit to businesses of ensuring that they were accessible. Whether those specific accessibility issues sat within the Plan would be open to future discussions, although Councillor Brennan thought that there were some elements that did, and by looking at the Action Plan and identified priorities, cross over areas could be identified. It was noted that there were limited resources, and if any new initiatives were pursued, accessibility groups would be involved.

Question from Councillor Birch to Councillor Brennan. Councillor Birch was unable to attend the meeting, so his question was read out by the Leader.

"The consultation feedback highlights concerns about the focus on Central Avenue in West Bridgford. How does the Conservative Council plan to ensure that other town centres and villages across the Borough, such as Bingham, Cotgrave, East Leake, Keyworth, and Radcliffe, receive adequate attention and investment to support balanced economic growth?"

Councillor Brennan confirmed that vibrant town and village centres were a key ambition of the Council, work was already underway with partners and would remain a priority. Councillor Brennan did not feel that there was significant feedback from the consultation, which stated that too much emphasis was being given to West Bridgford and stated that West Bridgford was a major settlement, with Central Avenue having a very high footfall, and it would be remiss of the Council not to ensure its continued vibrancy. Significant investment had also been undertaken in other areas, including Cotgrave, Bingham, and Radcliffe on Trent, with retail reviews carried out across all town centres. Given funding was limited, where the Council did not own land or property, work had to be undertaken with local stakeholders to support delivery.

The Leader asked Councillor Brennan if she agreed that it would be appropriate to further publicise the investment made in other areas across the Borough and she agreed, advising that it was hoped that an item looking at the health of town centres would be considered by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in January 2025, and that might be the appropriate time.

18 **Economic Growth Strategy**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Brennan, presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, outlining the Economic Growth Strategy.

Councillor Brennan stated that she was pleased to present the Council's first ever Economic Growth Strategy and referred to its timeliness, given the establishment of the new East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), and its emphasis on regional growth. Councillor Brennan referred to the key challenge of supporting economic growth, with the Strategy highlighting where the Council could take direct action, work with partners and where it could advocate for growth with other stakeholders. The Strategy set out the Council's vision and had been subject to significant consultation, and it was hoped that it would protect and enhance the Borough and the quality of life for residents.

Councillor Brennan stated that the Council's vision and three key themes were set out in paragraphs 4.6 and 4.7 to the report and referred to the huge opportunities presented by the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station site, flowing down to smaller industrial units throughout the Borough. Councillor Brennan referred to EMCCA's focus on regional growth, and it was hoped that its creation would enable the region to speak with one voice and raise its profile. It was important that EMCCA did not lose sight of Rushcliffe, and that the Borough continued to receive investment to help ensure that its businesses were supported. Councillor Brennan concluded by thanking the Economic Development Team for its hard work and confirmed that this would be a living document, continually reviewed by the Growth Board.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor J Wheeler stated that the Strategy highlighted how much work the Council was doing; and that focus would continue and should include working in partnership with the many successful sporting venues in the Borough. Councillor Wheeler stated that it was really pleasing to see that local centres were all doing well, with very few empty units and it was hoped that the Strategy would show the Council's commitment to business going forward.

In endorsing the report, Councillor Upton stated that the Strategy set a plan and a vision going forward based on economic growth.

Councillor Viridi reiterated that endorsement and advised that although there were no direct costs, it should be noted going forward that sometimes investment was required, with any future plans carefully considered.

The Leader reiterated that Rushcliffe was very supportive of business and employment opportunities, so that hopefully residents can find local employment, to reduce travelling and increase carbon reduction.

It was RESOLVED that the Economic Growth Strategy be endorsed for publication.

19 **The Future of the East Midlands Development Corporation Programme**

The Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke presented the report of the Chief Executive outlining the future of the East Midlands Development Corporation (DevCo) Programme.

The Leader highlighted the history of DevCo following its establishment in May 2021. It was noted that the cancellation of HS2 to the area, was a factor in no longer requiring DevCo, together with the emergence of other power supplies, as this included the Ratcliffe on Soar site, with the emergence of West Burton and STEP fusion now being the preferred option for power generation. The creation of the East Midlands Freeport had continued to develop, which had resulted in overlapping memberships, and the establishment of EMCCA had added to that. The Leader stated that DevCo had undertaken some useful work, including the East Midlands Stations Growth Strategy; however, given that the governance landscape was crowded, it was now time for it to be dissolved.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan agreed that DevCo had served its purpose, it was important that there were not too many organisations trying to achieve the same goals, which historically had led to confusion for potential investors, and the creation of EMCCA should be supported to allow it to be the single voice for the region. Councillor Brennan stated that a legacy programme was in place to hand over work that had already been done to EMCCA, and it was now a good time to dissolve it.

Councillor Upton welcomed this and stated that it was a step in the right direction, to allow a focus on EMCCA and on future regeneration.

The Leader reiterated that governance arrangements were crowded and this would be a positive step forward.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the necessary steps being taken by the Board of Directors to bring forward the voluntary dissolution of EM DevCo Limited be supported; and
- b) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer, be granted delegated authority to consent and sign the resolutions to enable the dissolution of EM DevCo Limited.

The meeting closed at 7.28 pm.

CHAIR