

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 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 A Brennan (Vice-Chair), R Inglis, R Upton, D Viridi and J Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors Birch and J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

P Linfield

Director – Finance and Corporate
Services

K Marriott

Chief Executive

S Pregon

Monitoring Officer

H Tambini

Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillor N Clarke

27 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

28 Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 November 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 12 November 2024 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Vice-Chair.

29 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizens' questions.

30 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor Thomas to Councillor Brennan. Councillor Thomas was unable to attend the meeting, so her question was read out by Councillor Brennan.

"In addition to the identified nine key recommendations from the peer challenge, there were also 20 other "additional observations" of items to be considered, and there are comments in the Appendix B on only four of these. Are you able to update members of these remaining 16 items? These include:

- investing in renewable energy
- reviewing KPIs
- comprehensive review of scrutiny
- creating sustainable heat networks
- affordable housing programme and potential housing revenue account
- identifying land for BNG credits
- engagement into the lead up to food waste collection.”

Councillor Brennan advised that the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) team was primarily concerned with the nine main recommendations, and an update would be provided in the substantive agenda item. The additional observations made by the team were largely still relevant and were being worked on, as listed in Appendix B, and she confirmed that a review of scrutiny was scheduled for 2025/26.

Question from Councillor Birch to Inglis.

“For the purposes of informing residents, please can you explain whether any money has been allocated by the Conservative-led administration at Rushcliffe Borough Council to building a new car park in Bingham.”

Councillor Inglis referred to the Cabinet report from April 2024, regarding improvements to car parking in Bingham, in line with the Council’s Off-Street Car Parking Policy. He advised that no money had been allocated for a new car park, although a new one had been built for the Bingham Arena and was included in the recently implemented car parking changes. Councillor Inglis confirmed that early feedback regarding those changes had been very positive, and due to those changes, a long stay car park might not be needed, but this project was being led by Bingham Town Council.

Councillor Birch asked a supplementary question to Councillor Inglis.

“For the purposes of informing residents, how much money has the Conservative-led Council allocated to Bingham’s new car park in the medium term, that is to say in the next five years?”

Councillor Inglis confirmed that he would provide specific details in a written response.

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Brennan.

“People are already actively engaged in their local economy as business owners and consumers. There is an easy link to be made between the Economic Strategy and our Peer Review's recommendation to engage more effectively with our residents. Has Cabinet sought the opinions of groups on the local economy, such as our disabled residents, as part of its draft Engagement Strategy?”

Councillor Brennan confirmed that significant consultation was undertaken with a wide range of groups, organisations and stakeholders. Although she could not specifically recall if that included disability groups, Councillor Brennan agreed that the Engagement Strategy, linked to the Peer Review Challenge put

forward a series of options, to improve consultation. The Engagement Strategy would be developed in the New Year and that “bottom up” approach would be developed to ensure that all groups could take part in the process.

Councillor Walker asked a supplementary question of Councillor Brennan.

“Are consultations as they stand an effective approach to engagement?”

Councillor Brennan stated that a recommendation from the Peer Review Challenge was to consider the Council’s broader Engagement Strategy, and whilst the Council was satisfied that consultations reached as many residents as possible, the CPC team felt that it was not statistically sound as people tended to be self-selecting. Councillor Brennan stated that she was confident that the recommendations put forward by officers would address those concerns and improvements would continue.

31 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Financial Update Quarter 2

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, Transformation and Governance, Councillor Virdi, presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, which set out the budget position for revenue and capital as at 30 September 2024.

Councillor Virdi stated that whilst the overall position remained positive, financial challenges made it imperative that the Council continued to drive forward improvement and efficiencies.

In respect of revenue, Councillor Virdi confirmed that there was a projected net revenue efficiency of £1.786m, with the significant variances highlighted in Table 1 and Appendix B, together with the reasons for those variances detailed in Paragraph 4.3 of the report. Councillor Virdi referred to Table 2, which summarised how the underspend would be used and focused in particular on areas of risk and opportunities for economic growth, including a proposal to create a West Bridgford Town Centre Reserve, with the largest addition to Table 2 for potential land acquisition for carbon offsetting, which amounted to £0.698m. Councillor Virdi confirmed that those funds, combined with funds detailed in Paragraph 4.10 would allow £1.5m to be earmarked to help achieve the Council’s carbon offsetting targets. It was noted that Appendix E detailed a minor overspend on the Special Expenses Budget.

In respect of the Capital Programme, Councillor Virdi referred to Appendices C and D, which detailed an underspend of £3.598m, with £1.435m rephased into next year, as highlighted in Table 3, and Paragraph 4.10 detailed reasons for the remaining underspend. Councillor Virdi referred to the Disabled Facilities Grants and confirmed that an additional £0.2m had been allocated, although he acknowledged that this was not a permanent situation and a more prudent, long term solution would be required.

Councillor Virdi concluded by stating that whilst the financial position remained healthy, the situation could change quickly, with the Council’s current reserves allowing it to manage risks and maximise opportunities, whilst continuing to

deliver excellent services and support economic growth.

In seconding the recommendation Councillor J Wheeler was pleased that the Council continued to invest, with savings being reinvested and he specifically thanked the Communities Team for their work in maximising bookings. The Council continued to invest in services, had no external debt, and other councils were envious of Rushcliffe's situation.

Councillor Brennan agreed that the Council was still facing various external pressures and it was pleasing to see that those efficiencies were giving flexibility to provide support across the Borough when required.

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

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £1.786m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures at Paragraph 4.6 and Table 2 to the report;
- b) the projected capital budget efficiencies of £3.598m including the reprofiling of schemes totalling £1.435m at Paragraph 4.9 and Table 3 to the report;
- c) the removal of £1m from the Capital Programme for travellers site acquisition and £1.5m to be added in relation to carbon offsetting land acquisitions for the 2024/25 programme going forward at Paragraph 4.10 to the report; and
- d) the expected largely balanced outturn position for special expenses at Paragraph 4.7 to the report.

32 **LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Brennan, presented the report of the Chief Executive, outlining the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge progress review, following the examination in January 2024.

Councillor Brennan thanked members of the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) team for their constructive and challenging visit and the positive way that they engaged with everyone. Councillor Brennan confirmed that the Council had completed or progressed all nine core recommendations made, details of which were highlighted in Paragraph 4.4 and Appendix A to the report. Cabinet noted that the CPC feedback to the Council's follow-up work had been very positive, recognising the speed and breadth of the Council's response, with that feedback detailed in Paragraph 4.8 and Appendix A. Councillor Brennan referred to Paragraph 4.9, which outlined comments on the other recommendations. The Council was very pleased to see the recognition by the CPC team regarding progress made, and the Council's willingness to embrace change and improvement, together with recognition for the hard working staff, and Councillor Brennan added her thanks. It was recognised that improvement was a continuous process and the Council would continue to look at the additional observations that were made.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Upton referred to the benefits of this review, as it was a highly valued improvement and assurance tool, which helped councils to meet their best value duty.

Councillor J Wheeler stated that it was good to see that the CPC team had acknowledged improvements to the training programme for Councillors.

Councillor Viridi stated that progress had been made due to the great relationship between Councillors and the Executive Management Team.

It was RESOLVED that the Local Government Association's feedback report as presented in Appendix A to the report be accepted.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm.

CHAIR