

**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP  
TUESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 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 T Combellack (Chair), A Edyvean, P Matthews, L Plant, D Polenta  
and L Way

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
E Palmer	Communications and Customer Services Manager
K Brennan	Finance Business Partner
C Douglas	Emergency Planning Officer
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor G Williams

**19 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**20 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chairman.

The Group noted the completed actions that were raised at the previous meeting.

**21 Business Continuity Strategy**

The Emergency Planning Officer presented the Council's Business Continuity Strategy for 2024-2027 which provided the Group with a broad understanding of the Council's arrangements to provide critical functions and services in the face of a significant disruptive incident.

The Emergency Planning Officer explained the Business Continuity Strategy provides an operational framework for the Council's response to incidents that may cause significant disruption to Council business and its services, providing good resilience to both employees, residents and third-party partnerships, such as Parkwood.

The Group noted the aims and objectives of the Business Continuity Strategy

and the ability of the Council to anticipate, mitigate and where possible minimise any disruption caused by an unplanned disruptive event.

With regards to risk and the impact on business continuity the Group were advised that the strategy considers the Council's Risk Management review process and ensures the Council's Business Continuity Planning remains up to date and aligned with the latest organisational priorities and each department are required to meet with the Emergency Planning Officer to review and update its Business Impact Analysis and relevant documentation.

The Emergency Planning Officer advised that regular training is provided to all members of the Executive Emergency Team and all staff are informed of the process and further training is made available if and when required. Councillors are also provided with training to ensure they understand what may be required of them to assist the Council in the continuity and recovery process. The Group were asked to note that further communication, training and awareness campaigns are expected to be delivered January/February 2025.

The Emergency Planning Officer explained the Strategy is improved continuously by established mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and reviewing of the strategy's effectiveness through audits and staff feedback and lessons learned from incidents and exercises. In addition, the Group were advised that there is a clear governance structure in place which meets legal, regulatory and industry standards.

Councillor Plant commented on the communication and coordination protocols and highlighted how crucial it was that Councillors are kept informed and are provided with up-to-date information. The Emergency Planning Officer advised that training sessions are provided annually for both officers and staff and the response roles they may be required to assist with. The Director for Finance and Corporate Services suggested that a link to Emergency Planning for Councillors be made available via the Councillor's Portal on the intranet and would be shared with all Councillors.

Councillor Polenta asked a specific question in relation to monitoring and review and lessons learned and how this is fed into the plan for future reference. The Emergency Planning Officer explained that there are a number of reporting processes from various internal and external agencies that are then fed into the plan and where critical services or communities have been affected.

Councillor Matthews commended the Council's Emergency Planning response to the past year's storms and flooding events and thanked officers and staff on the frontline for listening to communities and residents and for the Council's well executed response to their needs.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Corporate Overview Group scrutinised and provided comment on the Business Continuity Strategy.

## 22 Customer Feedback Annual Report

The Communications and Customer Service Manager provided a short presentation to support the Annual Customer Feedback Report 2023/24, that was circulated with the agenda. The presentation provided comparisons to previous year's performances and those of other local authorities in the East Midlands.

The Communications and Customer Service Manager highlighted some of the headlines as follows:

- 48 complaints were received, a slight decrease compared with last year and typical of recent yearly trends of around 40-50 per year
- A decrease in the percentage of complaints escalated past stage 1 at 27%, from the previous reporting period at 36%
- Consistency in handling complaints has remained high, as has the number of complaints responded to within target
- Out of the 28 complaints received, 79.2% were unjustified, which shows a significant increase from 66% in the previous year
- Expectation levels appear to be rising indicated by some of the resident survey results
- 203 complaints were received on services – 26 more than previous year.

With regards to the escalation of complaints the Communications and Customer Service Manager explained that around 75% of complaints received on the webform were for minor service issues and were resolved the same day or soon after. 15 out of the 48 complaints received were escalated to stage 2 the issues being around: Environmental Health (4), Planning (4), Housing Allocation (2), Insurance Claim (1), online payments (1), waste collection (1) and Licensing Application (1).

The Group noted that out of 55 complaints 51 were answered within the target time (stage1 and 2). However, there were a few cases where there were unavoidable delays in responding to complaints and that complainants had been informed. With regards to the complaints being justified, there were 10 out of the 48 (20.8%) which is lower than the previous year (34%).

In concluding, the Communications and Customer Services Manager highlighted the compliments that had been received from residents up from 177 in the previous year to 203 in 2023/24.

Both Councillor Edyvean and Councillor Matthews provided an observational comment that the number of complaints are incredibly low for a local authority with a good set of statistics to be proud off.

Councillor Plant asked how easy it is for residents to complain, citing some members of the community can't or don't have access to email and could a

person contact about a complaint by telephone. Councillor Plant also asked about referring complaints to the Ombudsman. The Communication and Customer Services Manager advised that an ombudsman recommendation where a complaint is upheld will usually be of a more complex nature, such as planning and what we can and can't do legally. Sometimes such complaints are of a national nature and can only be changed by lobbying government. The Director for Finance and Corporate Services added, officers deal with complaints and the ombudsman route is the last resort for the complainant.

Councillor Polenta commented on the legality challenges around the planning service and the planning framework and processes in place and what a typical planning complaint might consist of. The Communications and Customer Services Manger explained that complaints can range from a disagreement with the officer process, the planning framework itself, i.e. what we can do, how we do it and officer skills and pre-planning advice.

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

- a) Scrutinised and commented on the customer feedback for 2023/24
- b) Endorses the Rushcliffe Complaints Policy 2024 (Appendix 2)

## 23 **Financial and Performance Management**

### **Finance Monitoring**

The Senior Finance Business Partner presented the Q2 Financial Monitoring report for 2024/25 which informed the Group that the financial climate was beginning to show some signs of improvement, however the recent high inflation has impacted on cost pressures for the Council's budget.

The Senior Finance Business Partner advised the Group that there were predicted net revenue efficiencies and significant variances as highlighted at table 1 and table 2 in the covering report. These represent variances against budgeted Net Service Expenditure, which is proposed to be earmarked for additional cost pressures and financial challenges as discussed in the report.

The Group were advised of an underspend of the original Capital Programme and the rephasing of some of the 2024/25 schemes into 2025/26. The Senior Finance Business Partner Explained that the remaining underspend was due to no site being identified for a traveller's site acquisition and some of this being released back into reserves and reallocated towards Carbon Offsetting. The Group also noted there had also been savings around Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium and Bingham Leisure Centre.

The Senior Finance Business Parter highlighted that the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) budgets were fully committed and that the Council recognises the need to support some of the most vulnerable in the community, adding that following on from the discussions at the recent joint Communities and Growth and Development Scrutiny Group meeting it is proposed that £200,000 be committed to DFG's from the in-year budget efficiencies in the short term.

The Group noted that the current projected monitoring means that any borrowing requirement can be met from internal resources with no need for external borrowing in this financial year.

In concluding the Senior Finance Business Partner informed the Group that the Council's revenue position remains relatively healthy largely due to higher interest returns as a result of interest rates remaining higher for longer, whilst emphasising this position can quickly change, as pressures on budgets and challenges around the Council's environmental objectives and economic growth objectives increase. The Council continues to keep a tight control over its expenditure, identifies changing income streams, maintains progress against its Transformation Strategy and retains a good reserves position to help manage risk.

Councillor Plant commented on the traveller's site, raising concerns that this has moved to a future financial year and asked whether it was a statutory requirement to provide adequate traveller sites and what can be done to achieve this. The Senior Finance Business Partner explained that the Council along with an agent is actively looking for suitable sites to acquire. The Director for Finance and Corporate Services added that the Council, as part of its local plan provision, does have to provide its quota in respect of numbers. An update would be provided to the Group. Councillor Edyvean highlighted that landowners are not interested in providing such sites making it challenging for the Council to acquire land for this purpose, he added that there is provision for traveller pitches at the Fairham development which is progressing well.

Comments were made around the Council acquiring land for carbon offsetting and whether this was in accordance with the Council's Corporate Strategy. Questions were raised about increasing biodiversity on land already owned by the Council rather than having to acquire land for the purpose of carbon offsetting, how will this effect planning applications and the increased housing development at the strategic sites the Council has committed to and whether Carbon offsetting is a government policy. Members of the Group asked whether Councillors would be consulted and allowed to comment on the Council's Carbon Offsetting strategy and objectives. The Director for Finance and Corporate Services advised that a report went to Cabinet in May with no comment from other Councillors and provision for acquiring the land had been factored into the budget as presented to this Group in the budget update and being presented to December Cabinet. There is clear transparency and accountability on this issue enhanced further by reports to Scrutiny. The annual Carbon Management Review in April at Communities Scrutiny Group is such an example.

The Group commented on the Disabled Facility Grants, praising finance officers for allocating an additional £200,000 for this service. However, Councillor Plant asked a specific question relating to slippage and delays in work being completed, she commented on the delay in funding and stated if this had been applied earlier in the year more residents would have benefited from it sooner, adding why was the process not work more efficiently thus leaving residents waiting a long time before they get the support they need. The Senior Finance Business Partner explained that in the first instance any discretionary funding that had been allocated is for work that has had the

scoping for and there is no further discretionary funding other than for those already in the pipeline. The proposed extra £200,000 from the in-year budget efficiencies is to support the mandatory funding in the short term and would be carried forward to 2025/26. However, it was noted that a more affordable and sustainable longer term funding solution is required as both demand and cost for the service rise and this requires changes at both County and national level in terms of the funding formula.

## **Performance Monitoring**

The Communications and Customer Services Manager presented the Performance Monitoring Scorecards paying regard to the Council's Corporate Strategy 2024-27. This is the second report of the new Strategy and performance will be monitored by theme. The full corporate scorecard was provided in appendix F circulated with the agenda.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager advised that the Council was still experiencing high levels of demand for some of its services. However, performance was stable and above target in general.

The Group were guided through the performance indicators and in particular those that had not met their target.

With regards to Environment three of the seven indicators under this theme had not met their target. These included:

**Cumulative number of fly tipping cases (against cumulative monthly comparison for last year)** - The Council and the Contractors WISE continue to proactively address fly-tipping with fixed penalty notices and education and publicity to residents to combat the rise.

**Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting** - The Council has recently introduced a new Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) collection service for small electrical items. However, the bigger simpler recycling changes for both glass (late 2025) and food (late 2027) should see a significant uplift in the Council's recycling percentages.

**Percentage recycling contamination rate** - The Council will continue to monitor and support residents and focus on the hard-to-reach communities and communal bin areas which often lead to increased contamination, this includes social media campaigns and working with collection crews.

With regards to the Quality-of-Life performance indicators there was only one exception as follows:

**Percentage usage of community facilities** - Usage for Q2 is 40.4%. Promotion of venues continues via social media and actively contacting new and existing customers. Staff training has also been increased to help transfer enquiries into bookings which is ongoing.

With regards to Sustainable Growth there were no exceptions.

With regards to Efficient Services this was discussed under the previous item, Customer Feedback Annual Report.

The Chairman commented on the recycling of small electrical items stating this had been welcomed by residents and has clearly been a great success in its first few weeks.

With regards to the Council's community facilities the Chairman commented on the Council's engagement with younger residents and perhaps researching what other Council's offer. The Chairman also commented on youth groups being incredibly difficult to attract as they are often run by volunteers. The Communications and Customer Services Manager explained that this may be due to the Council owned community facilities being mainly in West Bridgford and perhaps close to what the Nottingham City has to offer.

Councillor Plant informed the Group that the Communities Scrutiny Group had received a comprehensive report on the Council's community facilities, including a programme of refurbishments and enhancements at some of the Council's community buildings and the new booking system. In addition, Councillor Plant explained that bookings may not be as vibrant as they were pre-covid, but with this additional programme of work and officer and community engagement there are lots of possibilities going forward.

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

- a) The expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £1.786m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures given (paragraph 4.6 and table 2)
- b) The projected capital budget efficiencies of £3.598m including reprofiling of provisions totalling £1.435m (paragraph 4.9 and table 3)
- c) The proposed removal of £1m from the capital programme for the travellers site acquisition and £1.5m to be added in relation to carbon offsetting land acquisition for the 2024/25 programme going forward (paragraph 4.10)
- d) The expected largely balanced outturn position for special expenses (paragraph 4.7)
- e) Exceptions to judge whether further information was required.

## 24 **Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen**

The Chair of Governance Scrutiny Group reported that the last meeting on 19 September 2024 had received reports relating to The Council's Internal and External Audits, Statement of Accounts, Going Concern, Risk Management and a Capital and Investment Strategy update. The Chair advised that all reports were positive and that the Council was in a good financial position.

The Chair of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group reported that the last meeting had been a joint scrutiny meeting with the Communities Scrutiny Group, which had received a report on Accessible Housing including Disabled

Facility Grants. The Chair advised the meeting had been a lively debate, with a number of officer actions being taken away. The Vice Chair of Communities Scrutiny Group added that the joint meeting of a larger group was difficult to follow at times with lots of members wishing to have their say.

**25 Feedback from Lead Officers**

The Director for Finance and Corporate Services confirmed that there was no update from Lead Officers other than issues already discussed.

**26 Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes**

The Chairman confirmed that there were no new scrutiny requests for the Group to consider and stated this reflected a positive sign that the Council and its services were in good shape.

The Group did not raise any additional items for the scrutiny group work programmes and were reminded that officers were reviewing possible areas of work that could come forward for review.

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

- a) Considered any additional items for scrutiny from the current Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital and Investment Strategy and Transformation and Efficiency Programme/Productivity Plan (Appendix One)
- b) Reviewed the current work programme for each of the scrutiny groups (Appendix Two).

**Work Programme 2024/25 – Corporate Overview Group**

25 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing items               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen</li> <li>○ Feedback from Lead Officer</li> <li>○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes</li> <li>○ Financial and Performance Management</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Rolling Items               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ White Ribbon Action Plan</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
X June 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing items               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen</li> <li>○ Feedback from Lead Officer</li> <li>○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes</li> <li>○ Financial and Performance Management</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Rolling Items               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diversity Annual Report and Update on the Equality and Diversity Strategy</li> <li>○ Annual Update on Strategic Tasks</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



X September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen</li> <li>○ Feedback from Lead Officer</li> <li>○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes</li> <li>○ Financial and Performance Management</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Health and Safety Annual Report</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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### Work Programme 2024/25 – Governance Scrutiny Group

28 November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audit Progress Report</li> <li>• Redmond Review of Public Sector Audit Update</li> <li>• Capital and Investment Strategy Update</li> <li>• RIPA Review</li> </ul>
20 February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audit Progress Report</li> <li>• Internal Audit Strategy</li> <li>• Risk Management – Update</li> <li>• Capital and Investment Strategy Update</li> <li>• External annual Audit Plan</li> <li>• Asset Management Plan</li> <li>• Annual Audit Letter and Value for Money Conclusion</li> <li>• Capital and Investment Strategy 2024/25</li> </ul>
X May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal Audit Progress Report</li> <li>• Internal Audit Annual Report</li> <li>• Annual Fraud Report</li> <li>• Annual Governance Statement (AGS)</li> <li>• Capital and Investment Strategy Outturn</li> <li>• Constitution Update</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> </ul>
X September 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk Management Update</li> <li>• Going Concern</li> <li>• Capital and Investment Strategy Update</li> <li>• Internal Audit Progress Report</li> </ul>

### Work Programme 2024/25 – Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

29 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health of our Town and Village Centres</li> </ul>
26 March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management of Open Spaces on New Developments</li> </ul>
XX July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
XX October 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

### Work Programme 2024/25 – Communities Scrutiny Group

23 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents Survey</li> <li>• Nottinghamshire Local Nature Recovery/Strategy</li> </ul>
3 April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon Management Plan</li> </ul>
XX July 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

**Actions**

<b>Minute No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>
21	Link to Emergency Planning for Councillors on the Councillors Portal	A link to Emergency Planning information has been added to the top of the Cllrs Portal homepage
23	Councillor Plant requested details of the Council's current traveller site provision and what locations, within the local plan, were being considered for future traveller sites.	Information about traveller sites has been emailed to Members of the Group

The meeting closed at 8.13 pm.

CHAIR