

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 11 MARCH 2025

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:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
A Hill	Chief Executive
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
S Pregon	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

50 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

51 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 February 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 11 February 2025 were agreed
as a true record and signed by the Chair.

52 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizens' questions.

53 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Brennan.

"Another year of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is welcome, as is the new inclusion of 'accessibility' to the High Street Grants section of this report. Would Cabinet, once again, consider the support from Access Able as a way of connecting not only our civic buildings but also our high streets and local businesses to those who require information on accessibility to live, work and visit Rushcliffe? Meeting a need both for residents, visitors and businesses struggling to understand how they can best accommodate people with different needs."

Councillor Brennan referred to the meeting last year with Councillor Walker, Access Able and a local resident. That meeting had been useful to reflect on the economic benefits of ensuring that premises were accessible, with suitably trained staff to provide support above the legal requirement, and a priority was added to the Economic Growth Plan, although it was mentioned at the time that no resources were available. She confirmed that UKSPF now included accessibility issues, with potential funding available to support businesses in looking to accommodate specific access needs. Councillor Brennan stated that the appointment of any business or provider to deliver such a programme would need to follow the Council's procurement process, or they could bid for funding from the UKSPF grant pot.

Councillor Walker asked as a supplementary question if the bidding process would be linked to UKSPF or if it would be done separately?

Councillor Brennan confirmed that subject to approval tonight, the grant pots would be launched over the next few days for bidding to start.

54 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2024/25 - Financial Update Quarter 3

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 31 December 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 and referred to the Extraordinary Council meeting on 20 March 2025, which would discuss Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

In respect of revenue, Councillor Virdi confirmed that there was a projected net revenue efficiency of £2.164m, which was highlighted at Appendix A to the report, with a summary of the variances detailed in Table 1, Paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4. and Appendix B. The favourable projected budget position allowed the Council to mitigate its risks in this challenging financial environment and carry forward balances to replenish and create new reserves. Table 2 highlighted how the underspend had been used, including £0.2m to enhance the Council's Organisation Stabilisation Reserve, to mitigate any unforeseen costs related to LGR. Councillor Virdi referred to the overspend on West Bridgford Special Expenses, details of which were highlighted in Paragraph 4.6 and Appendix E.

In respect of the Capital Programme, Councillor Virdi referred to Paragraphs 4.7 to 4.10 and Appendices C and D, which detailed an underspend of £4.440m, with £0.556m rephased into next year, as shown in Table 3, which left £3.884m, with Paragraph 4.9 detailing reasons for the remaining underspend.

Councillor Virdi referred to the Labour Group's alternative budget discussed at Council, proposing additional funding for Disabled Facilities Grants, and in

acknowledging the increased demands, he advised that due to in year efficiencies, a further £0.2m had been allocated, and would be carried forward into 2025/26. Nevertheless, it was felt that a more prudent, longer term, sustainable solution would be required and the Council would continue to lobby Government for additional funding and neighbouring authorities for ways to redistribute funds. Councillor Viridi also advised that in February, a further grant allocation of £113,594 was received, which would also be carried forward.

Councillor Viridi concluded by stating that whilst the financial position remained healthy, the situation could change quickly, including uncertainty related to LGR; however, the Council's current reserves remained healthy, allowing it to manage risks and maximise opportunities, whilst continuing to provide excellent services

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor J Wheeler welcomed the Council's ongoing priority to find efficiencies where possible, whilst delivering excellent services and investing elsewhere. The Council was committed to investing in its Community facilities to improve them for residents and attract more income.

The Leader stated that this report demonstrated how well officers looked after the Council's finances, to ensure that it could continue to provide great services and keep the Council Tax low.

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

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £2.164m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures given at Paragraph 4.5 and Table 2 to the report;
- b) the projected capital budget efficiencies of £4.440m including the reprofiling of provisions totalling £0.556m at Paragraph 4.8 and Table 3 to the report; and
- c) the overspend of £46.3k on special expenses at Paragraph 4.6 to the report.

55 UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme 2025/26

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Brennan, presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, which detailed the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme for 2025/26.

Councillor Brennan stated that she was delighted to bring an update on the delivery of the previous allocation of UKSPF and Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF), and to confirm the further allocation of UKSPF funding for 2025/26. She advised that the new allocation was slightly reduced, with the funds now channelled through the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), which would be taking some funding for regional-wide initiatives, as detailed in Paragraph 4.13 of the report. The new allocation was just over £1m, and Councillor Brennan stated that the Government had now confirmed that REPF would continue.

Cabinet noted that the report set out plans for both direct delivery and commissioning for the next year. The outputs from last year's allocation were listed in Paragraph 4.2 and Appendix A, and she stated that it had been an extremely popular fund, with both strategically commissioned projects and grant pots, which had allowed local groups to bring projects forward. There had been a few changes to the allowed interventions, highlighted in the Table at 4.7, and the three themes, together with details of proposed strategically commissioned projects were listed in the Table at 4.9. The list was intended to provide a balance and had to deliver Government outputs, which had to be reported to EMCCA. Councillor Brennan confirmed that £200k had been allocated to businesses and £200k for communities as grant pots and were detailed in the Table at 4.15. She also confirmed that the very popular High Street Grant Scheme would continue and reminded Cabinet that this was match funded. Grants schemes were available for Community and Place, Community Wellbeing and Business Support Grants, and subject to Cabinet approval, those schemes would be launched on 12 March. Councillor Brennan confirmed that as UKSPF could not roll over, it was vital that all projects were deliverable within the timescales.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis was pleased that further funding would be available and referred to Paragraph 4.2, which outlined the wide range of community enhancements that had been delivered and thanked the Head of Economic Growth and Property and her team for their hard work in delivering this scheme. He felt that the new allocation would again directly benefit residents and businesses, and fully endorsed the projects outlined in Paragraph 4.9.

Councillor J Wheeler welcomed the report and referred to the real difference the funding had made but expressed disappointment that EMCCA had chosen to take some funding and hoped in future that this would not happen.

The Leader agreed that the funding had been extremely successful and the positive outcomes could be seen, including across high streets around the Borough and he knew that this support was welcomed.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) UKSPF activity delivered in 2024/25 be recognised;
- b) the proposals for UKSPF in 2025/26 be endorsed;
- c) sign-off of refinements to proposals for 2024/25 be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and S151 Officer, with both revenue and capital implications reported in future financial reports to Cabinet and the Medium Term Financial Strategy to Full Council;
- d) the proposals as outlined in the report for UKSPF grant pots be supported; and
- e) sign off of grant awards and reallocation of grant funding between priorities (Business Support and Communities and Place) for UKSPF and

REPF be delegated to the S151 Officer and Director – Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, following officer recommendations based on assessment of applications and moderation.

The meeting closed at 7.22 pm.

CHAIR