

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 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 G Williams (Chair), M Gaunt, H Parekh and D Simms

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack	Head of Corporate Services
S Whittaker	Head of Finance
C Evans	Head of Economic Growth and Property
E Palmer	Communications and Customer Services Manager
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors T Combellack, L Plant and L Way

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025 were agreed as an accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Update and Diversity Annual Report 2024 to 2025

The Head of Economic Growth and Property presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme Update and Diversity Annual Report 2024 to 2025 to the Group and provided an overview of the key aspects of the report.

The Head of Economic Growth and Property confirmed that this report was brought to the Group on an annual basis and as such some statistical data, for example about ethnicity and age had not significantly changed since it was last presented to the Group. She noted that applications for vacancies were higher than they had been historically and that some posts had received a high number of applications, but it was expected that Local Government Reform would have some impact on staffing in the future.

In relation to EDI Maturity Assessment, the Head of Economic Growth and Property explained that the Council had asked BDO, the Council's Internal

Auditors, to carry out this assessment to review the Council's approach and governance arrangements and training schedule and she highlighted some of the strengths and recommendations made by them. She informed that Group that the Council's EDI Steering Group met on a quarterly basis, that the Council had introduced a new Equality Impact Assessment process, that its website was Shaw Trust accredited, that it had achieved Carer Friendly Accreditation and that it coordinated the joint membership for partners within the primary care network to the Sunflower Hidden Disabilities campaign.

The Head of Economic Growth and Property provided an overview of projects completed through the previous year, including adopting a Rushcliffe Borough Council Play Strategy, with a focus on disability and inclusion and space for girls, making inclusive play improvements at a number of the parks within the Borough, providing UKSPF grants to parish councils to provide inclusive play equipment in their local parks, making public realm improvements in West Bridgford, providing grant funding to the Framework Knitters, holding a number of events, such as the Lunar New Year event, and providing support for local residents to improve their employment skills and help them get back into work.

Looking forward to 2025/26, the Head of Economic Growth and Property said that the Council would carry out a refresh of its EDI scheme, would work with Nottinghamshire County Council regarding Community Cohesion Networks, deliver a women and girls golf and cricket programme, establish links with various community groups such as Hong Kong Notts, deliver another Lunar New Year event, continue to enhance play areas within the Borough and support businesses with a focus on accessibility and benchmark its application process and employment offer.

Councillor Simms asked how much of the work being out by the Council was legislative and how much of it was gold standard and whether it was possible to define how much the Council spent on EDI work. The Head of Economic Growth and Property said that the Council had an equality duty to assess how its policies and procedures affected people protected under the Equality Act but that the Council did not have a specific equality and inclusion Officer and rather incorporated this consideration into its work across the Council as an enhancement rather than at a significant cost.

Councillor Simms asked whether it would be possible to identify the cost of extra time spent time, including attendance at meetings, by Officers on EDI focussed work. The Head of Economic Growth and Property said that it would be possible to make an estimate of Officer time but said that much was work which Officers would be carrying out anyway and much work carried out by Officers and the Council had been funded through grants.

Councillor Gaunt asked about grants for businesses and the Head of Economic Growth and Property said that high street grants were currently available with a focus on enhancing accessibility and how to better communicate what your business offered in terms of accessibility. The Council also funded a business advisor and linked in with the Careers and Enterprise Company.

Councillor Parekh asked about UKSPF funding for events for ethnic minority groups and asked whether there was any benchmarking or criteria that was

used to determine allocation. The Head of Economic Growth and Property said that there weren't any criteria and whilst there was often a target community group for events such as for the Lunar festival, they were open to everyone. She said that a focus had been on new groups coming to the local area and supporting them establishing a community and making connections within the area, but that the Council was thinking about future resourcing and if there were other groups that wished to hold events, linking into community cohesion networks and working with other colleagues.

The Chair commented how well attended the Lunar festival had been and asked if there were any other resources available to support the Hong Kong community and other ethnic groups. The Head of Economic Growth said East Midlands Council had received some funding to support Hong Kong Notts activities with engagement and access to services and the Council would look to work with them. The Communications and Customer Services Manager added that the Council had circulated recycling leaflets translated into Mandarin to primary schools and local centres to meet a specific need and was also listening to try to meet the wider community needs.

The Chair asked about the Council's support for women and girls in sport, noting that women's participation in sport had greatly increased. The Head of Economic Growth and Property said that she would take this away and provide an update to the Group.

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

- a) considered and endorsed the information provided for the diversity annual report
- b) reviewed the action taken so far as a part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme action plan and made suggestions for future action or areas of focus.

4 **Financial and Performance Management**

The Head of Finance presented the Q4 Financial Monitoring report for 2024/25 and took the Group through the key aspects of the report.

The Head of Finance said that the revenue budget had an overall revenue efficiency position of £2.4m as set out in Tables 1 and 2 and Appendix A, with some of the larger variances arising from planning income and appeals, housing support cost increases and favourable variances from income on investments and contractual savings. The Council had also experienced some variances in grant income and business rates. She said that the variances had been appropriated to reserves or future commitments or carried forward as identified at Appendix E.

The Head of Finance referred to movements in revenue reserves with most significant activity relating to the creation of a recycling reserve, land for carbon offsetting, West Bridgford Town Centre regeneration, Disabled Facilities Grant and Local Government Reorganisation.

In relation to Capital, the Head of Finance noted the overall underspend position of £5.109m of which the majority had been carried forward for future projects already committed.

In relation to Special Expenses, the Head of Finance said that there had been an overspend of circa £50k largely due to a loss of income

In relation to the Statement of Accounts, the Head of Finance said that they had been published on 11 June 2025

The Communications and Customer Services Manager presented the Performance Monitoring Scorecards and summarised that the Council had experienced high levels of demand but that performance was generally stable.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that there were eight indicators which hadn't reached target, including the percentage of household waste recycling and it was hoped that recycling measures being introduced by the Council, such as glass kerbside collections later in the year, and food waste collection in 2026, would help with this.

In relation to recycling contamination, the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that work to improve this was continuing with communications campaigns about recycling.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that whilst the target for usage of community facilities had not been met, progress was being made and the Council had recruited a new Facilities Manager and Facilities Supervisor and was installing a new meeting room AV system and making improvements at Sir Julian Cahn, all of which it was hoped would help increase external bookings. The Council was also promoting its facilities through social media to increase its audience. He added that there was high usage of playing fields and parks.

The Communications and Customer Services Manager referred to Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium and explained that there had been lower death rates over the year but that the Council was reaching out and listening to the requirements of the wider community and stakeholders to try to meet the local need. He said that the Crematorium had been shortlisted for an APSE Innovation Awards for sustainable memorialisation and had experienced a 36% increase in growth compared to the previous year.

In relation to Councillor e-learning, the Communications and Customer Services Manager said that this had improved over the past year and that introduction of the single sign on had made it easier for Councillors to access the training. E-learning would be reviewed in more depth at the next Member Development Group meeting scheduled for July 2025.

The Chair asked whether the recent dry weather had had any impact, such as from having to water pitches more often. The Communications and Customer Services Manager said that installation of 4G pitches had been to help mitigate against variances in the weather and he would feedback if there were any impacts that had been identified.

Councillor Gaunt said that he had attended a service at the Crematorium recently and commended the excellent facility and staff.

Councillor Gaunt asked about stalled s106 sites and the Head of Finance said that housing providers often had access to other grant funding which they would use before applying to the Council but that the Council was continuing to look at options.

The Chair asked about employers National Insurance and the Head of Finance said that the Council's grant funding had been confirmed and that it would be just under half of the anticipated costs.

The Chair referred to bookings for community buildings and community pitches and the Communications and Customer Services Manager confirmed that they could be booked separately and that the bookings would be counted separately.

It was RESOLVED that the Corporate Overview Group scrutinised:

- a) the 2024/25 revenue position and efficiencies identified in **Table 1**, the variances in **Table 2** (and **Appendix A**)
- b) the changes to the earmarked reserves as set out at **Appendix B** along with the carry forwards and appropriations to reserves in **Appendix E**
- c) the capital carry forwards outlined in **Appendix C** and summarised in **Appendix F**
- d) the update on the Special Expenses outturn at paragraph 4.17 and in **Appendix D**, and
- e) performance exceptions (detailed in paragraphs 4.22 to 4.27) to judge whether further scrutiny is required.

5 **Review of Strategic Tasks**

The Head of Corporate Services presented the Review of Strategic Tasks report to the Group and explained that the Council had adopted its current Corporate Strategy in December 2023 and as part of the adoption process, a review of progress against previous targets had been presented to this Group. She said that the Group had found the update to be helpful and had asked to receive future reviews, of which this was the first of those update reports.

The Head of Corporate Services explained that the report provided a summary of progress against twelve of the tasks within the Corporate Strategy over the past eighteen months and that the intention was to continue to provide an annual update to the Group hereafter which would reflect progress that had been made in that year.

Councillor Parekh asked about grants available for people who lived in older properties, for improvements such as insulation and solar panels and asked if it

was known how many properties had benefited within the Borough. The Head of Corporate Services said that she would provide an update to the Group.

Councillor Parekh asked if there were any areas where the Council had not made progress as expected. The Head of Corporate Services said that work was currently progressing as expected but that there were some tasks which were harder to deliver at pace, but that all had started and two had completed.

The Chair said that the report was very useful and would be helpful to look back in future years at what had been achieved.

It is **RESOLVED** that Corporate Overview Group:

- a) reviewed the progress reported against each strategic task set in the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy contained within Appendix One
- b) highlighted any potential areas for scrutiny during the coming year.

6 **Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen**

The Chair read a report submitted by Councillor Way in advance of the meeting as she was unable to attend, which reported that the main agenda item from the last Growth and Development Scrutiny Group meeting on 26 March 2025 had been Management of Open Spaces on New Developments and that a Good Practice Guide had been presented and discussed in detail by the Group.

There were no other updates as there were new Chairs in place for the other scrutiny groups and no meetings had been held as yet in this civic year.

7 **Feedback from Lead Officers**

The Head of Corporate Services referred to a suggestion from the last Corporate Peer Challenge review that the Council may wish to review its scrutiny process. As part of that, she asked Councillors to review other local authority scrutiny arrangements and report any which they thought were examples of good scrutiny to her so that the Council could review and learn from them.

8 **Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes**

The Chair confirmed that two scrutiny requests had been submitted. The first of which had been submitted by Councillor Combella relating to **Rushcliffe Flood Risk Update**. The Group agreed for this request to come forward and for it to be programmed for the Communities Scrutiny Group meeting on 16 October 2025.

The Chair confirmed that the second scrutiny request had been submitted by the Head of Economic Growth and Property in relation to **East Midlands Freeport (EMF)**. The Group agreed for this request to come forward and for it to be programmed for the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group meeting on 16 July 2025.

The Chair requested that Councillors and Officers put forward suggestions for any areas of work that they would like to scrutinise.

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) determined any additional topics to be included in a scrutiny group work programme for 2025/26 for each of the scrutiny groups as presented on newly submitted scrutiny requests (Appendix Two)
- c) reviewed the current work programme for each of the scrutiny groups (Appendix Three).

Work Programme 2025/26 – Corporate Overview Group

2 September 2025	• Standing Items ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairs ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items ○ Health and Safety Annual Report
18 November 2025	• Standing Items ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairs ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items ○ Customer Feedback Annual Report ○ Mid-point Review of the Corporate Strategy
24 February 2026	• Standing Items ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairs ○ Feedback from Lead Officer ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Financial and Performance Management • Rolling Items ○

Work Programme 2024/25 – Governance Scrutiny Group

19 June 2025	• Internal Audit Progress Report • Internal Audit Annual Report • Annual Fraud Report
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	• Annual Governance Statement (AGS) • Capital and Investment Strategy Outturn
25 September 2025	• Risk Management Update • Going Concern • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • Internal Audit Progress Report • Statement of Accounts • External Audit Completion Report
4 December 2025	• Internal Audit Progress Report • Annual Audit Letter and Value for Money Conclusion • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • RIPA Review
5 February 2026	• Internal Audit Progress Report • Internal Audit Strategy • Risk Management Update • Risk Management Strategy • Capital and Investment Strategy Update • External Annual Audit Plan • Asset Management Plan • Capital and Investment Strategy 2026/27

Work Programme 2025/26 – Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

	Items / Reports
16 July 2025	• East Midlands Freeport
22 October 2025	•
28 January 2026	•
25 March 2026	•

Work Programme 2025/26 – Communities Scrutiny Group

	Items / Reports
24 July 2025	• Performance of Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing
16 October 2025	• Rushcliffe Flood Risk Update
22 January 2026	•
2 April 2026	• Carbon Management Plan Update

Actions:

Minute No.	Action	Officer Responsible/ Update
3.	The Chair asked for information about the Council's support for women and girls in sport	Head of Head of Economic Growth and Property
5.	Councillor Parekh asked about grants available to people who	Head of Corporate Services

	live in older properties, for improvements such as insulation and solar panels, and asked if it was known how many properties had benefited within the Borough	
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The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

CHAIR