

Corporate Overview Group

Chair's Foreword

This annual report summarises the main work undertaken by the Corporate Overview Group during 2025/26 focusing on the impact of scrutiny. The Corporate Overview Group oversees the Council's other scrutiny group work programmes based on concerns highlighted by quarterly financial and performance monitoring reports, as well as items on the Cabinet Forward Plan and priorities within the Corporate Strategy.

The Corporate Overview Group have ensured that the executive be held to account by approving topics to be discussed at scrutiny groups. Additionally, the Group have scrutinised financial and performance management reports on a quarterly basis to ensure the smooth running of the Council.

Councillor Gareth Williams
Chair



What we are responsible for?

The Corporate Overview Group responsibilities include:

- Implementing identified improvements to scrutiny including training of scrutiny members, construction of new work programmes and reporting methods.
- Creating and receiving feedback on work programmes for the Growth and Development, Communities and Governance Scrutiny Groups based on the Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Investment Strategy and Economic Growth Strategy.
- Scrutinising financial and performance management reports on a quarterly basis to ensure the smooth running of the Council and delegate any necessary investigations into concerning elements of these reports to the most appropriate scrutiny group via their work programme.
- Reviewing reports in respect of health and safety, diversity and customer feedback to ensure the Council is meeting its statutory duties.

Our work this year

During this year, the Group considered many service areas and issues within its scrutiny role, particularly:

- Consideration of Scrutiny Work Programmes at each meeting.
- Finance and Performance Management at each meeting.
- Diversity Annual Report and update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme update.
- Annual Update on Strategic Tasks.
- Health and Safety Annual Report.
- Annual Customer Feedback Report 2024/25.
- Local Government Reorganisation, Decision Making and Governance.
- Mid-Point Review of the Corporate Strategy.

Consideration of Scrutiny Work Programmes

In line with the Terms of Reference, at every meeting the Group's members considered topics for scrutiny that had been put forward by Councillors and Officers. Following discussion, the following items were added to the work programmes of scrutiny groups for the year 2025/26:

- East Midlands Freeport.
- Rushcliffe Flood Risk Update.
- Asset Management Strategy and Acquisitions and Disposal Policy.
- Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation including HMO's.
- Shared Ownership and Other Affordable Housing.
- Carbon Management Plan.
- West Bridgford Contact Point.

Due to no scrutiny requests being submitted for Growth and Development Scrutiny Group, the meeting of this Group in October 2025 was cancelled.

In relation to Shared Ownership and Other Affordable Housing Councillor scrutiny request, an amended version was submitted by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Neighbourhoods, suggesting a briefing note be provided to expedite Councillors understanding of the topic and to resolve some of the identified issues in advance of its scrutiny being timetabled. Following debate of both versions of the request, it was agreed that the Councillors version would go forward for scrutiny and that a briefing note would also be provided in advance of its scrutiny.

In relation to Asylum Dispersal and Contingency Accommodation scrutiny there was agreement within the Group that this topic was in need of scrutiny however, concerns were raised about its scope and key lines of enquiry. A revised request amended by Officers and reviewed by the Councillor submitting the original request was accepted for scrutiny.

A tabletop review of scrutiny was undertaken and the findings reported back to the Corporate Overview Group in September 2025. A range of scrutiny-based training materials and guides on the Councillors' Portal were readvertised, specific training for Chairs and Vice Chairs was held in March 2026 and a refresher session on the Council's scrutiny request process held on 5 May 2026.

Quarterly Finance and Performance Management

A report focusing on the Council's finances and performance was delivered at each meeting by officers. Officers provided a summary of the key points in the meeting and the Group was able to discuss any concerns.

Over the course of this year, the following issues have been discussed:

- Impacts from changes in interest rates on costs, investment balances and underspend.
- The Council's revenue outturn position.
- Employers National Insurance contributions.
- West Bridgford Special Expenses Budget.
- Disabled Facilities Grants.
- Security improvements at Bridgford Park.
- The scope and timeline of the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar power station site.
- Capital contingency budget for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).
- Asylum Dispersal Grant.
- Warm Home grants cost and benefits to residents.
- Salary savings at Streetwise following the insource of the business back in the Council's control.
- Councillor Training Programme and e-learning.
- Waste recycling and communication campaigns around the new recycling measures for glass collection and food waste.
- Household waste recycling percentages and increases contamination.
- Performance of the Council's Community facilities and improvements to Sir Julien Cahn facility.

- Positive performance of Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium.
- Leisure centre usage and temporary closures at Cotgrave and Keyworth due to their refurbishment.
- The handover of East Leake Leisure Centre when the current provider contract comes to an end.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme Update and Diversity Annual Report 2024-2025

At the Corporate Overview meeting in June 2025 the Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Property presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Scheme update and Diversity Annual Report 2024/2025, which included diversity information in relation to Officers, Councillors and job applicants.

In relation to applications for vacancies this was higher than they had historically and that some posts had received a high number of applications, and it was expected that Local Government Reorganisation is likely to impact on staffing in the future.

In relation to EDI the Group were informed the Council had introduced a new Equality Impact Assessment process, that the website had been Shaw Trust Accredited, that it had achieved Carer Friendly Accreditation and that it co-ordinated the joint membership for partners within the primary care network to the Sunflower Hidden Disabilities Campaign.

The Group were provided an overview of projects completed, 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 parks within the Borough and providing UKSPF funding to support parish council’s to provide inclusive play equipment in their parks and to make public realm improvements in West Bridgford and to provide grant funding for particular groups of the local community for events and to provide support for residents to improve their employment skills. Looking forward the Council will carry out a refresh of its EDI scheme and work with Nottinghamshire County Council to establish Community Cohesion Networks to deliver women and girls golf and cricket programmes.

The Group asked questions relating to:

- Identifying Officer time spent on EDI work and any costs incurred by the Council.
- Grants for businesses and accessibility to funding.
- Information on UKSPF funding for ethnic minority events.
- Comments around how successful the Lunar festival had been within the Hong Kong community and other ethnic groups.
- Positive comments on the opportunities for women and girl’s sport.

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2026:
Consider and endorse the information provided for the diversity annual report	The Group scrutinised and asked questions and provided feedback on the information within the report

Review the action taken so far as a part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Scheme action plan and make suggestions for future action or areas of focus	No suggestions for further areas of investigation were suggested
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Review of Strategic Tasks

At the meeting in June 2025 the Assistant Director of Corporate Services presented the Review of Strategic Tasks and reminded the Group 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 be presented to the Corporate Overview Group annually.

The Group asked questions relating to:

- The availability of grant funding for residents living in older properties to make improvements to their properties.
- Potential areas where the Council had not made progress as expected, where tasks were harder to deliver at pace.

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2026:
Review the progress reported against each strategic task in the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy	The Group scrutinised and asked questions and provided feedback on the information within the report
Consider any potential areas for scrutiny during the coming year	None identified as a result of this report

Health and Safety Annual Report

At the Corporate Overview Group meeting in September 2025 the Strategic HR Manager presented the Health and Safety Annual report for the period of April 2024 to March 2025 which provided an overview of the health and safety risk profile and health and safety provision for the Council and about key activities that had taken place over the last twelve months, including the annual review of Health and Safety policies.

A summarised targeted visit of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in relation to an employee diagnosed with vibration white finger which took place on the 30 January 2025. The HSE Inspector returned to the Streetwise Depot in February 2025 to complete a full inspection on site was completed in relation to RIDDOR which concluded there had been no material breaches.

The Strategic HR Manager also confirmed the appointment of a new Health and Safety Advisor increasing the hours previously set from 18.5 to 26 hours per week.

The Group asked specific questions relating to:

- Employee occupational health pre-checks which may have prevented the HSE visit.
- Role of the Health and Safety Advisor and what had prompted the increase in officer hours.
- Work days lost to accidents and injury and asked if these were due to the nature of the work they do.
- The role of the Workplace Health Champions.
- Staff concessions at the Council's Leisure Centres.
- Health and Safety arrangements in the event of a red-light incident and whether a professional body should be considered to audit the Council's Health and Safety arrangements.
- Self-regulation and evidence of detailed risk assessments and training.

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2026:
Consider the detailed information contained within the Annual Health and Safety Report	The Group scrutinised and asked questions and provided feedback on the information within the report
Note that a new permanent Health and Safety Advisor has been appointed	The Group noted the permanent recruitment into the Health and Safety Advisor post and the increase in hours from 18.5 to 26 per week
Note the significant progress made against the health and safety goals and objectives previously agreed by Corporate Overview Group for the financial year 2024/25	The Group noted the significant progress made on the goals set for 2025/26 and endorsed the objectives proposed for 2025/26. An update Health and Safety Annual Report is scheduled to be presented to the Group at its September meeting
Endorse the proposed health and safety objectives for 2025/26 as set out in the report	

Customer Feedback Annual Report

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services presented the Annual Customer Feedback Report for 2024/25 which provided information about complaints and compliments received by the Council about the services that it delivered and also provided comparisons to previous year's performances and those of other local authorities in the East Midlands. The Assistant Director for Corporate Services summarised that there had been the same number of complaints as for all of 2024/25 in the first 6 months of 2025/26, but that this should be seen as a positive and that residents are finding the customer feedback process more accessible.

The Group asked specific questions relating to:

- The general theme of complaints in relation to Council Tax including the proposal for scrutiny around this issue.
- Process for dealing with vexatious requests.

- Comparison of complaints with other authorities and benchmarking.
- Percentage of complaints escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman.

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2026:
Scrutinise and comment on the customer feedback for 2023/24	The Group reviewed and asked questions and provided feedback on the information
Consider whether the data in specific areas requires further investigation or scrutiny	No specific areas for further investigation were identified

Local Government Reorganisation, Decision Making and Governance

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services presented the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR): Decision-Making and Governance report which provided the Group with a brief update on the process of developing the submission proposal and the governance arrangements for scrutiny approval prior to submission. This included consulting the Corporate Overview Group on the invocation of the Urgency Provisions in the Council’s Constitution to suspend Call-In in respect of the decision to be taken at Cabinet in November 2025.

The Group noted the Call-in needed to be suspended to enable the Chief Executive to submit the Greater Nottinghamshire proposal for LGR to the Government by 28 November 2025 and that failure to submit the proposal by this deadline risked the Council’s proposal being considered.

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services asked the Group for their support to create a Member Working Group to provide opportunities for Councillor engagement as the Council moves into the transitional phases of LGR.

The Group asked specific questions relating to:

- Governance Scrutiny.
- A larger cross-party working group to ensure all areas of the Borough are represented.
- West Bridgford having a neighbourhood parish.

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2026:
Accept the update on LGR including the opportunities for Member engagement provided so far	The content of the report was considered and discussed by the Group
Acknowledge the reasons given in the report for the decision of Cabinet to submit the Council’s proposal to central Government as a key decision to which Urgency Provisions exempting it from the Call-in procedure	The Group accepted the need to suspend call-in procedures

Recommend to Cabinet that a new larger member Working Group is constituted to provide oversight of the next phase of the LGR programme	A larger member working group was recommended to Cabinet
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Mid-Point Review of Corporate Strategy

The Assistant Director for Corporate Services presented the Mid-point Review of the Corporate Strategy 2024-2027, which provided updates on the progress of the strategic tasks within the Council's for key priorities. The Group noted the Council was now two-years through the delivery of the four-year Strategy and were asked to consider whether the objectives set by the Council in December 2023 remain relevant, achievable and desirable against the backdrop of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

The Group asked specific questions relating to:

- Amendments to the Strategy in respect of LGR.
- Review of the Council's assets, the asset Management Group and rules and governance around acquisitions and sale of assets.
- Ratcliffe on Soar Power Station and Community Leadership for the site's development.

The Group agreed to:	Progress Update – June 2026:
Consider the information provided outlining the Council's progress towards delivering the 2024-27 Corporate Strategy	The Group reviewed and asked questions and provided feedback on the information
Discuss whether the remaining Strategic Tasks in the 2024-2027 Corporate Strategy continue to be relevant, achievable and desirable to deliver	Following discussion, the Group concluded that the Strategic Tasks remain relevant and achievable
Highlight any additional Strategic Tasks that would be prudent to include in the Corporate Strategy for its remaining two years	No new tasks were added to the Corporate Strategy
Approve extending the life of the Corporate Strategy by an additional year to lead the authority through to Vesting Day under LGR	The Group agreed to extend the life of the Corporate Strategy through until Vesting Day

Member Panels

The Group recommended the establishment of a Member Working Task and Finish Group for Local Government Reorganisation. This became a Council constituted Task and Finish Group.

Call-ins

The Group did not discuss any call-ins this year.

Looking forward to the year ahead

Following a busy year for the Council's scrutiny functions, all members of the Corporate Overview Group are looking forward to developing comprehensive work programmes for the scrutiny groups in 2026/27.