



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL
THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER 2017**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillor L B Cooper- Mayor
Councillor Mrs M Stockwood - Deputy Mayor

Councillors S P Bailey, K P Beardsall, N A Brown, M Buckle, B Buschman, R L Butler, H A Chewings, J N Clarke, T Combellack, J E Cottee, G Davidson, A M Dickinson, J Donoghue, M J Edwards, A J Edyvean, J E Greenwood, S J Hull, R A Inglis, Mrs C E M Jeffreys, R M Jones, N C Lawrence, E J Lungley, A MacInnes, Mrs M M Males, G R Mallender, S E Mallender, D J Mason, S C Matthews, G S Moore, A Phillips, E A Plant, F A Purdue-Horan, S J Robinson, Mrs J A Smith, J A Stockwood, J E Thurman, R G Upton, D G Wheeler, J G A Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

6 members of the public

OFFICERS PRESENT:

D Banks	Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods
M Elliott	Constitutional Services Team Leader
A Graham	Chief Executive
P Linfield	Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services
D Mitchell	Executive Manager – Communities
G O'Connell	Monitoring Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors R A Adair and K A Khan

OPENING PRAYER

The Meeting was led in prayer by the Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Chris Hodder.

The Mayor advised that this meeting would be the Reverend Chris Hodder's last Council meeting as Mayor's Chaplain as Reverend Hodder would be leaving his post at St Paul's, West Bridgford to take up a post as a chaplain in the RAF. The Mayor thanked Reverend Hodder for his support during his time as Mayor and wished him and his family well for the future. The Mayor advised that Reverend Andrew Stewart from St Paul's would be taking over as Mayor's Chaplain.

31. Declarations of Interest

The Monitoring Officer declared an interest in Item 7 (Arrangements for the Monitoring Officer Role).

32. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21 September 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

33. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor referred to the following Mayoral engagements:

- Attending the Recognising Rushcliffe Community Awards and the Rushcliffe Sports Awards events;
- Hosting a joint reception with Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council at Trent Bridge to celebrate the achievements of Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club during the 2017 season;
- Switching on the Christmas Lights in West Bridgford.

The Mayor also provided an update on his fundraising activities and advised that his recent concert evening had raised £2,700.

34. Leader's Announcements

The Leader advised with sadness that he had attended the funeral of Wendy Fearnside who had been the winner of the Good Neighbour Award in recognition of her outstanding contribution to her local community in East Leake at the recent Rushcliffe Community Awards.

The Leader also referred to:

- The success of the new business units at Cotgrave which would be fully occupied from January, 2018 and would provide £125,000 a year income for the Council;
- How he was proud and flattered that Broxtowe Borough Council had announced significant investment in Beeston to make it as desirable a place to live in as West Bridgford;
- Rushcliffe's high placing in the Social Mobility Index which ranked authorities on the prospects of disadvantaged young people growing up in their areas, and noted the positive impact that the YouNG and Positive Futures programmes made to young people in the Borough.

The Leader also wished Councillors and Officers a Happy Christmas and thanked them for their hard work throughout the last year.

35. Chief Executive's Announcements

The Chief Executive thanked Councillors for their support and sponsorship for his participation in the "Big Sleep Out" event in October which had raised over £1,500 for homelessness charities.

The Chief Executive also noted that the episode of the BBC2 programme "Employable Me" which had been filmed at the Council earlier in the year was scheduled to be shown on Monday 18 December.

The Chief Executive advised that the Council had been shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle Entrepreneurial Council Award, with the awards taking place on 21 March, 2018.

Mr Glen O'Connell, the Monitoring Officer, who had declared an interest in the following item left the meeting at this point.

36. Arrangements for the Role of Monitoring Officer

The Leader presented the report of the Chief Executive seeking approval for proposals for the ongoing and future designation of the Monitoring Officer role. The current temporary arrangement, where Mr Glen O'Connell had been fulfilling the Monitoring Officer role was now due for review after Council had resolved on 29 June, 2017 to appoint Mr O'Connell for a second period of six months. It had also been resolved at that meeting that a further report on the ongoing and future designation of the Monitoring Officer role be brought to Council by December, 2017 (Minute No.19, 2017/18).

The report proposed that Mr O'Connell be designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer for further maximum period of 6 months in which he would coach, support and mentor Mr Julian Crowle, who had recently joined the Council's legal team in the Monitoring Officer role. The report noted that Mr Crowle while having significant experience in local government, had not previously acted a designated Monitoring Officer. It was proposed that, subject to Mr O'Connell being satisfied that Mr Crowle had met the standards required to fulfil the role of Monitoring Officer, Mr Crowle be designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer from 1 June, 2018, or sooner if Mr O'Connell felt that it was appropriate.

Councillor Robinson in moving the recommendations noted the vital role that the Monitoring Officer played at Council and that it was therefore essential to have the best person for the role in the position. Councillor Robinson noted and thanked Mr O'Connell for all the work he had done at Rushcliffe since his appointment, especially in the work he had done reviewing the Council's Constitution with the Constitution Review Group. Councillor Robinson also noted that Mr Crowle would only be appointed to the role when Mr O'Connell, an experienced Monitoring Officer, was fully satisfied and confident that he could fulfil the requirements of the role. The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Mason.

Councillor MacInnes welcomed the recommendations and the reintegration of the Monitoring Officer role into the Council's establishment and supported the

planned mentoring role for Mr O'Connell. Councillor MacInnes also noted the excellent manner in which Mr O'Connell had carried out his role. Councillor Davidson concurred with these comments.

It was RESOLVED that

- a) Mr Glen O'Connell be appointed and designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer for a further period of six months.
- b) Mr Crowle be appointed the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 1 June 2018, or sooner, if appropriate, subject to written confirmation to all Political Leaders that Mr O'Connell is satisfied that Mr Crowle has met the standards required to fulfil the role of Monitoring Officer.

37. Notices of Motion

Mr O'Connell re-joined the meeting at this point.

a) The following motion was moved by Councillor Robinson and seconded by Councillor Jonathan Wheeler.

"This Council wishes to strongly express its frustration and disappointment in the commissioning by Nottingham City Council and Derby City Council of the recently released Metro Strategy, without involvement or dialogue with representatives of Rushcliffe Borough Council

and,

that as a Council, we welcome full engagement and discussions with Upper Tier Authorities on the reorganisation of Local Government on the strict understanding, any reorganisation must not negatively impact Growth in the Borough and the focus on delivering the highest quality of services to our residents."

Councillor Robinson in moving the motion stated that the economic case cited in the strategy was a smoke screen and that the proposed Metro area was in actual fact a land grab of high performing areas outside of the current city boundaries. Councillor Robinson expressed his frustration that the County and District Councils had not been consulted at in the preparation of the strategy, especially as authorities across the region currently worked together with D2N2 and the Midlands Engine, and strongly objected to Rushcliffe and other areas outside of the city boundaries being described as "hinterlands". Councillor Robinson noted that Rushcliffe Borough Council was supportive of discussions on local government reorganisation but that any changes made must positively benefit residents and businesses in the Borough.

Councillor Jonathan Wheeler in seconding the motion concurred with the points made by Councillor Robinson and agreed that it was the way in which Rushcliffe Borough Council, along with other District Councils had not been consulted in the production of the strategy, rather than any consideration of local government reorganisation that he was opposed to.

Councillor MacInnes stated his support for the motion and noted that the motion struck a positive tone in that it stated that the Council was open to discussions on local government reorganisation, but that any changes made must be for the positive benefit of residents. Councillor MacInnes advised however that Nottinghamshire County Council had not been forthcoming in their position on local government reorganisation and noted that this could be due to the Conservative administration at County Hall being propped up by four Mansfield Independent Forum Councillors who he thought unlikely to be supportive of any changes that could see Mansfield District Council, which they controlled, disappear. Councillor MacInnes also noted that Nottinghamshire County Council's aspirations for reorganisation and the objectives of the Metro area were unlikely to be reconciled.

Councillor Davidson noted that local government reorganisation had been discussed sporadically for many years and had been up for discussion when he had been first elected to the Council over 20 years ago. Councillor Davidson agreed with Councillor Robinson that while local government reorganisation was something that needed to be discussed, it needed to be discussed in an open and transparent way and involving all stakeholders.

Councillor Buckle noted that the Metro Strategy document stated that all stakeholders had been consulted in its preparation, but Rushcliffe Borough Council had not been in fact not been consulted with at all. Councillor Buckle also noted that local residents would expect the Council to defend their best interests, however the objectives of the proposed Metro area seemed to promote Nottingham and Derby City areas, with Rushcliffe having only been mentioned three times in the entire document. Councillor Richard Mallender noted the previous local government reorganisation plans that had been rejected and that stated that while attempts to work together, to create efficiencies and benefit residents were laudable, any changes made must benefit local residents, and local residents must be consulted on any changes that would affect them and their area.

Councillor Jones agreed that he could see benefits of Nottingham and Derby working together but agreed with other Councillors that the Council should have been consulted with during the preparation of the strategy. Councillor Jones noted that it was good for Councils to work together in order to make economies of scale, but that bigger did not always mean better and that any changes to local government should not be made at the cost of democratic accountability to residents. Councillor Clarke shared others frustration at the lack of consultation with Rushcliffe Borough Council and the other District Councils that would be included in the proposed Metro area, but noted that for the area to develop and grow it was essential for Councils to work together in order to benefit their communities and the local economy.

Councillor Robinson thanked Councillors for their support and stated it was essential that Rushcliffe Borough Council sent a clear message that while the Council was open to, and positive about discussions on change, any changes that had a negative effect on growth and prosperity would not be accepted.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

b) The following motion was moved by Councillor Robinson and seconded by Councillor Bailey.

“This Council welcomes and fully supports the Governments recent statements regarding penalising developers who choose not to implement and deliver the required housing following the receipt of planning permission. This Council will work with Government officials to investigate how this can best be achieved.”

Councillor Robinson in moving the motion advised of his frustration with regard to the difficulties in getting houses built after planning permission had been granted and gave the example of the former ambulance station site in West Bridgford where there was permission for thirty houses to be built but that development had not started. Councillor Robinson noted that he looked forward to working with the Government on practical measures to get developments started.

Councillor Bailey in seconding the motion noted that with pressure from Government on local authorities to have a demonstrable supply of housing it was essential that the Council used all its available powers to ensure sites with planning permission got built. Councillor Bailey also noted the problems of land banking and developers doing the absolute minimum to show that development had started.

Councillor Edwards in supporting the motion noted that the Local Government Association (LGA) was adamant that planning was not a barrier to growth and that the LGA had called for Councils to have the powers to ensure sites with permission got developed. Councillor Edwards noted the sites at Sharphill and the former RAF Newton where building had only started several years after planning permission had been granted. Councillor Edwards expressed his frustration where developers had used viability claims to get the number of affordable homes on a site reduced after permission had been granted and stated that the methods used to do this without not having to disclose viability studies were not acceptable. In supporting the motion Councillor Edwards requested that Rushcliffe Borough Council put forward vigorous proposals to end land banking and other practices, especially with regard to viability studies that delayed developments starting.

Councillor Beardsall noted that it was developers and not local authorities who were the blockers of developments and that a failure to address this issue would negatively impact on residents who were struggling to find a home in the Borough. Councillor Sue Mallender noted her support for the motion and agreed with Councillor Edwards' points with regard to the use of viability studies by developers and noted that unbuilt properties should be liable for Council Tax to encourage building. Councillor Sue Mallender also noted the huge problem of long term empty properties in the Borough and thought that drastic action was needed to address this ongoing problem.

Councillor Jones also supported the motion and noted that the Government should learn from both the past and from other countries where local authorities could buy land at values without planning permission for

development, and that this, and other radical solutions were needed to address the housing shortage.

Councillor Lawrence noted that while it was important for affordable houses to be built the Council should not make demands on developers to deliver unrealistic levels of affordable housing and that essential infrastructure created as part of developments were paid for by houses sold at the full market rate. Councillor Clarke noted that nationally there were 470,000 permissions for development that had not yet been implemented and that developers who do not start building should receive penalties, and that it was essential that there was better communication with the public to demonstrate that it was developers who were delaying building, not local authorities. Councillor Clarke stated that there were no easy solutions to this problem but that it was essential that local authorities received the powers to get more developments started.

Councillor Robinson in responding to the issues raised in the debate noted that there was no easy solution in getting more approved developments started and that with regards to viability studies, viability was a very subjective matter. Councillor Robinson noted the success of the Council in getting homes built but agreed that more needed to be done to encourage developers to start building after permission had been granted, but with all local authorities agreeing that this was a problem, this would send a powerful message to the Government.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

c) The following motion was moved by Councillor Sue Mallender and seconded by Councillor Richard Mallender.

“Rushcliffe Borough Council resolves that in response to growing global concerns about single use plastics an item be placed on the Community Development Group scrutiny work programme for 2018 to consider the following objectives

- a. Assess the current use and feasibility of reducing single use plastic in relation to Council activities
- b. Consider the provision of Council advice and information on single use plastic for local residents and businesses
- c. Make any recommendations for consideration by Cabinet for inclusion in the Council’s Waste and Recycling Action Plan which supports the Waste Strategy 2016 – 2020”

Councillor Sue Mallender in moving the motion stated that each year in the UK five million tonnes of single use plastic was used, however only 24% of this was recycled which was hugely wasteful. Councillor Mallender advised that the huge amount of plastic disposed was creating pollution to both land and marine environments, and that plastics when disposed of took tens if not hundreds of years to degrade and in doing so produced greenhouse gases that contributed to climate change. Councillor Mallender highlighted the problem of plastic debris in the sea and the damage that this was causing to

marine life, as recently shown on the BBC programme “Blue Planet II”, and advised that there were around five trillion pieces of plastic in the sea, and that by 2050 it had been estimated that there would be more pieces of plastic in the sea than fish. Councillor Mallender advised that the plastic in the sea, as well as harming marine life physically, also introduced carcinogenic toxins into the sea which were ingested by fish which then entered the human food chain, impacting on the health of people worldwide.

Councillor Mallender advised that it was not just the disposal of plastic that was a problem for the environment but also the huge amount that was produced as, unlike glass and cardboard which could be recycled repeatedly, plastic could only be recycled once, before having to be disposed of reused. Councillor Mallender noted that due to the need for the numerous different types of plastic to be separated before being recycled many people found this confusing and difficult, leading to high amounts of contamination in recycling bins and waste that could have been recycled having to go to landfill sites.

Councillor Mallender stated that the only way to stop the environmental problems caused by single use plastics was to stop using them, and that it was essential that Rushcliffe Borough Council must lead by example in reducing its own consumption of single use plastics as well as providing advice to residents of how to reduce their use, and that in order for this to be achieved the Council should have a strategy in place for reducing its, and residents of the Borough’s, use of single use plastics.

Councillor Richard Mallender seconded the motion, but reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Robinson thanked Councillor Sue Mallender for proposing the motion and advised that while he fully supported the motion and its aims, he wanted to propose an amendment to the motion. The amended motion was circulated to all Councillors as follows.

“Rushcliffe Borough Council resolves that in response to environmental concerns about single use plastics, and harm to farmers’ livestock, wildlife and the local environment by Chinese lanterns and helium balloons, an item be placed on the community development group scrutiny work programme for 2018 to consider and advise on the following objectives.

- a) Assess the current use and feasibility of reducing single use plastic in relation to Council activities
- b) Consider the mechanisms to ban the use of Chinese lanterns and helium balloons on Rushcliffe Borough Council land and open spaces.
- c) Consider the provision of Council advice and information on single use plastic, Chinese lanterns and helium balloons for local residents, Parish/Town Councils and businesses
- d) Make any recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.”

Councillor Robinson in moving the amendment to the motion noted that China, who currently took 25% of UK waste would be ceasing to do so in January,

2018 that it was essential that the amount of waste produced in the UK was reduced. Councillor Robinson noted the success of the 5p plastic bag levy which had reduced the use of single use carrier bags by 85% and also that positive action was being taken worldwide with Kenya banning single use plastic bags completely.

Councillor Robinson commended the motion of Councillor Sue Mallender and noted that his amendment added a commitment from Rushcliffe Borough Council to follow the lead of Nottinghamshire County Council and to ban the use of Chinese lanterns and helium balloons on Council owned land. Councillor Robinson noted the environmental damage that was caused by Chinese lanterns to wildlife as well as to livestock when they landed by causing fires and littering the countryside with metal and plastic debris.

Councillor Robinson noted the commitment of the Conservative group and the Council to improve the local environment and stated that in order to reduce the use of single use plastics across the Borough, and for a positive difference to be made to the local environment, the Council would work with Town and Parish Councils as well as residents to provide advice and guidance on practical measures to reduce the use of single use plastics. Councillor Mason seconded the amended motion, but reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Combella welcomed the original and the amended motion and noted the huge problem that single use plastics created for the environment and that the consequences of their use needed to be considered. Councillor Combella advised that she was pleased that the issues of single use plastics would be considered by the Community Development Group at their meeting in February, 2018. Councillor Chewings noted that the Labour Group fully supported the amended motion and that it was essential that the Council not only looked at how it used single use plastics, but that it also worked with its delivery partners, such as Parkwood, to find ways of reducing their use of single use plastics.

Councillor Jones noted the success of the plastic bag levy and noted that practical measures were needed to deal with the problem of single use plastics which caused such enormous environmental damage. Councillor Jones stated that it was imperative that the use of single use plastics needed to be challenged and that a national effort was required to get people, as well as businesses, to change how plastic was consumed. Councillor Jones agreed with Councillor Chewings that it was important that the Council worked with its delivery partners to reduce the consumption of single use plastics. Councillor Davidson advised that he supported the amended motion and noted that it was important to preserve helium as it was a rare and finite resource. Councillor Mason noted the millions of small plastic items, such as straws in the sea and the need for alternatives to plastic to be used and welcomed that the Community Development Group would be looking at how the Council could contribute to reducing the use of single use plastics.

Councillor Robinson thanked Councillors for their comments and support and advised that he wanted Rushcliffe Borough Council to be an environmentally friendly authority, but that talk must lead to positive action. Councillor Robinson stated he was committed to making a positive difference to the environment in Rushcliffe but that in order to do this it was essential for the

Council to work with its delivery partners in order to make the required changes to practices happen. Councillor Sue Mallender noted her full support for the amended motion.

On being put the vote the amendment proposed by Councillor Robinson to the motion proposed by Councillor Sue Mallender was accepted by the meeting.

Councillor Richard Mallender noted his support for the amended motion and welcomed the addition of the commitment to stop the use of helium balloons and Chinese lanterns on Council land.

There was no further debate. On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

38. Questions submitted under Standing Order 11 (2)

a) Question from Councillor MacInnes to Councillor Upton

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Housing tell us how many affordable homes have been lost from the number required by Council Policies (Supplementary Document on Affordable Housing) over the last 5 years because of viability assessments?”

Councillor Upton responded that 4,818 new dwellings had been granted planning permission on qualifying sites for affordable housing over the last five years and that 1,091 new dwellings (23%) of the total number granted planning permission have been affordable dwellings. Councillor Upton noted that eight sites had been subject to viability assessments which has resulted in a reduction of 199 affordable homes (4%).

Supplementary question

Councillor MacInnes asked Councillor Upton whether it was possible, as Rushcliffe Borough Council had a policy of delivering affordable homes, for developments that did not offer any affordable homes to be refused planning permission.

Councillor Upton responded that while the Council always aimed to get 30% affordable homes on developments that it was recognised that this unfortunately was not always possible.

b) Question from Councillor Edwards to Councillor Robinson

“What provision is the Council planning for new burial sites as Wilford Hill cemetery will soon be full?”

Councillor Robinson responded that the Council was not planning any provision for new burial sites and that there were cemeteries available in various locations in Rushcliffe and surrounding areas as well as a natural burial ground in Cotgrave and that there was not statutory duty for the Council to provide burial sites. Councillor Robinson also noted that private organisations may set up burial grounds if were so minded.

Supplementary question

Councillor Edwards asked Councillor Robinson that as charges for internment at Wilford Hill, owned by Nottingham City Council, were higher for Rushcliffe residents than residents of the City, shouldn't Rushcliffe Borough Council look at providing its own burial sites.

Councillor Robinson advised that the service level agreement with Nottingham City Council with regard to Wilford Hill was scheduled for review and that all aspects of the agreement would be looked at as part of the review.

c) Question from Councillor Jones to Councillor Mason

"In Rushcliffe Reports in Autumn 2015 the Council stated that extra NOx monitoring points will be installed "where building new homes is proposed". Can you inform the Council where these have been placed?"

Councillor Mason responded that in accordance with the response provided to by the Chief Executive on 6 November 2015 on this matter, the Council would be monitoring the levels of Nitrogen Dioxide in relation to the new housing development on Melton Road near Wheatcroft Island. Councillor Mason added that it was expected that this would take place over the next 12 months once construction is finished and homes were being occupied

Supplementary question

Councillor Jones asked Councillor Mason that the inference in Rushcliffe Reports was that monitoring would be put into place before homes were occupied and asked which statement was correct.

Councillor Mason referred Councillor Jones to her previous response.

d) Question from Councillor Jones to Councillor Mason

"Will you change the car park charging arrangements in West Bridgford so that people wanting to park for under 30 minutes to do a quick shop are able to pay the same rate after 6.00 pm as they pay during the day?"

Councillor Mason responded that the Council would be reviewing its current car parking charges in West Bridgford as part of the emerging borough wide Car Parking Policy document and the annual budget setting process.

Supplementary question

Councillor Jones noted that this response had not answered his question and would the car park charging arrangements in West Bridgford be changed so that people wanting to park for under 30 minutes to do a quick shop are able to pay the same rate after 6.00 pm as they pay during the day.

Councillor Mason referred Councillor Jones to her previous response.

The meeting closed at 8:55 pm.

MAYOR