



**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CABINET**

**TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2019**

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

**PRESENT:**

Councillors S J Robinson (Chairman), A Edyvean, R Inglis, G Moore and  
R Upton

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors B Gray, R Mallender

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

D Banks	Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods
C Caven-Atack	Service Manager - Finance and Corporate Services
P Linfield	Executive Manager - Finance and Corporate Services
K Marriott	Chief Executive
S Sull	Monitoring Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor D Mason

**16 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**17 Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9 July 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9 July 2019 were declared a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

**18 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions**

Question from Councillor B Gray to Councillor S Robinson.

“Given that the contents of the reports presented tonight take weeks, and possibly months to prepare, it would be fantastic to be able to take the time to read them. Along with some of the background information available to ourselves as councillors and the general public, to better understand them, and to scrutinise them.

Does the Cabinet believe that it represents a good opportunity for healthy challenge that Opposition Leaders are typically given around two days to read,

digest and come up with pertinent questions on these reports? Especially since the Cabinet are given over six full days to read, digest and come up with pertinent answers to these short questions.”

Councillor Robinson responded by stating that he understood the concerns raised by Councillor Gray and proposed a 24hour extension to the deadline for both Opposition Leaders’ Questions and Citizens’ Questions to provide them with a greater length of time to consider reports after they had been published. He pointed out that on occasion it may be necessary to supply a written response to a question if it were very complex and took longer than the time available to prepare.

Councillor B Gray asked a supplementary question to Councillor S Robinson.

“Can the Cabinet consider whether there are any other ways in which participation and interest in Cabinet business can be improved?”

Councillor Robinson responded by advising that Cabinet and Council agendas, and their associated public speaking deadlines, are advertised on the Council’s social media sites, with further information on the website, and that this topic has been covered in Rushcliffe Reports in the past. However, given the importance of the subject, Councillor Robinson agreed to consult with the Chief Executive to see if there are any other ways of raising the profile of Cabinet and Council meetings.

## 19 **Citizens' Questions**

The following question was submitted by Ms Deirdre Scott:

“Why do single household occupants only get a 25% discount on their council tax as opposed to a 50% one?”

In the absence of Ms Scott, the question was asked by the Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Moore provided the following response.

“The calculation of the charge level for each property is mandated by the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Each billing authority has no discretion on the level of discount they may award and must administer the scheme in accordance with legislation which in this scenario is to award a 25% discount.”

## 20 **Use of Capital Funding for Affordable Homes**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing presented the report of the Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods providing information about the Council’s current use of the £1.6m affordable housing capital budget. This has been formed over the years from historical receipts from the sale of the Council’s housing stock and s106 contributions from developers in lieu of on-site provision. This funding has mainly been used in the past to support provision where no other funding sources exist and is currently used to fund the development of garage and amenity sites by social housing providers. However, there are now other

sources of funding to support this work and provision of this kind is becoming more self-sustaining. Councillor Upton informed the Cabinet that the report made some alternative recommendations for the use of this capital funding which would further support the development of affordable housing in the Borough.

The recommendations were seconded by Councillor Moore who believed that these proposals make the most of opportunities that arise to increase the number of new affordable homes in the Borough.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

a) the principle that the following new options, indicated below and set out in Appendix A, be considered for allocation of capital support from the Affordable Housing capital budget:

- i) Acquisition of open market property
- ii) Acquisition of empty property
- iii) Loans to property owners of empty properties for refurbishment and letting
- iv) Loans to third parties to support the provision of affordable housing
- v) Support to ensure council led schemes are policy compliant in respect of the provision of affordable housing

b) any chosen option be subject to the approval of both the Section 151 Officer and Finance Portfolio Holder;

c) a revised Disposal and Acquisition Policy for Land and Buildings be brought to Cabinet (and then Council), particularly to consider delegated authority for the acquisition of housing property.

**Reasons for Decision**

The opportunities for the allocation of the affordable housing budget through traditional avenues have reduced due to a range of external factors and, as such, the Council needs to review its strategy to allocate these funds for purposes for which they are held. These additional options provide the Council with the opportunity to react with greater flexibility in respect of meeting local housing needs and achieving the best return from its capital budget.

21 **Corporate Strategy**

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough Wide Leadership presented the report of the Chief Executive outlining a new Corporate Strategy for the Council covering the period 2019-2023. Although there is still a full year covered by the 2016-2020 strategy, it was felt that the majority of the identified projects had been delivered and that the local government landscape and, as a

consequence, the priorities of the Council had changed since 2016. In presenting the draft strategy, Councillor Robinson drew Cabinet's attention to the highlighted achievements since 2016, and the four new corporate priorities which he saw as a strong tool for moving the Council forward over the next four years. He advised the Cabinet that this would be a living strategy which would adapt and evolve over the next four years in line with the fluid environment the Council now operated in. Councillor Robinson stated that the draft document would be revised to include a time-bound statement within the introduction in relation to the number of homes built to date.

Councillor Edyvean seconded the recommendation and stated that he believed the document demonstrated the successful path so far and clearly outlined the Council's priorities for the next four years.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

The Corporate Strategy 2019-23 be endorsed and recommended to Council for approval.

**Reasons for Decision**

The current Corporate Strategy expires at the end of March 2020. Significant progress has been made towards the goals outlined in that Strategy and an updated, more forward-looking strategy is required to guide the future direction of the Council.

**22 Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2019/20 - Financial Update**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Contracts presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services providing information to the Cabinet on the Council's financial position at the end of the first quarter of the current year. He stated that the report had been discussed at the last Corporate Overview Group and no concerns were raised. The report currently predicts a £285,000 efficiency saving at the year-end but, at this early point of the year, this was liable to change. He drew Cabinet's attention to the £22,000 adverse variance in relation to Edwalton Golf Courses and informed the group that this was in relation to the waiving of the management fee this year and that an update report would be brought to Cabinet in the future. He urged all Councillors to consider the £29m capital budget which demonstrated the scale of the Council's ambition.

Councillor Inglis seconded the recommendation and stated that despite the fact that there were undoubtedly uncertain times ahead he felt confident that the hard work of the financial services team had put the Council in a positive position to deal with any unforeseen events in the future.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- a) the projected revenue position for the year with a minor -2.48% variation (£285k) in the revenue position (mostly due to the expected business

rates position and planning income); and

- b) the capital underspend of £15.326m as a result of sums no longer required and planned programme slippage be noted.

### **Reasons for Decision**

To demonstrate good governance in terms of scrutinising the Council's on-going financial position and compliance with Council Financial Regulations.

The meeting closed at 7.22 pm.

CHAIRMAN