



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2020**

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

PRESENT:

Councillors T Combellack (Chairman), B Bansal, A Brennan, N Clarke,
F Purdue-Horan, J Walker and J Wheeler

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack

Service Manager - Finance and
Corporate Services

P Linfield

Executive Manager - Finance and
Corporate Services

L Webb

Democratic Services Officer

S Whittaker

Financial Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors

25 Apologies for Absence

26 Declarations of Interest

27 Minutes of the meeting 19 November 2019

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true record and were signed by the Chairman.

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services explained to the Group that scrutiny in its current form would be reviewed from September 2020 and that a recommendation would be put forward to Council in March 2021 which would determine the future of the scrutiny process at the Council from May 2021 onwards.

The Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services explained that the Scrutiny Matrix was not made to be a barrier for the Councillors to suggest topics to be scrutinised and that recommendations from Councillors would be welcome to amend the matrix.

28 Options for Public Engagement in Scrutiny

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services delivered a

presentation to the Group which provided options into what methods could be introduced to incorporate public engagement in scrutiny meetings. It was noted that a project was undertaken by Nottingham Trent University student Annika Weinmann who researched the public engagement policies of other Council's across the country.

The Group were informed that ways in which other Council's involved public engagement in scrutiny were:

- Asking the public to suggest topics for the scrutiny work programme
- Informal meetings where members of the scrutiny group would meet with members of the community and talk directly to residents which would enable Councillors to formulate evidence for scrutiny topics
- Feedback surveys on scrutiny topics
- Public speaking which would bring the topic alive during the meeting
- Co-opt members of the public onto the scrutiny group so that they can have an input in the decision making process.

It was suggested that the scrutiny groups could meet with members of the community such as small business owners and employees or ask tenants of community halls to answer surveys.

The Group were informed that the Council's constitution would allow certain methods of public engagement to take place in scrutiny. For example, each scrutiny committee or sub-committee could appoint up to two non-voting co-optees. Scrutiny groups could also arrange site visits, conduct public surveys or hold public meetings to inform their deliberations.

Following the presentation the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services suggested that the Group should consider these methods to increase public engagement in scrutiny when suggesting topics to be discussed by scrutiny groups. The Group also suggested that our communications strategy should be scrutinised so that councillors could find out more about how the Council engage with the public.

It was RESOLVED that

- a) The current public engagement methods in the constitution be considered for future scrutiny topics

29 **Implementation of Change**

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services noted that the current changes in scrutiny would be reviewed from September 2020

30 **Feedback from Scrutiny Chairman**

The Chairman of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group noted that the business support offered by the Council was sufficient and the data relating to the health of the high streets in Rushcliffe and the support the Council provided

to them ensured that businesses continued to thrive.

The Chairman of the Communities Scrutiny Group informed the Group that Councillors were provided with an update on community facilities in West Bridgford including their current usage, income and expenditure. It was noted that some community facilities were running at a loss due to low occupancy and high running costs. The Chairman of the Communities Scrutiny Group was pleased to note it would be recommended to Council that that as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy £1 million be transferred from the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve to a new Climate Change Action Reserve. It was also stated that an officer working group who were delivering the carbon management action plan would provide a progress report to the Group in 12 months time.

The Chairman of Governance Scrutiny Group informed the Group that the Council had recently instructed BDO as their auditors. The Chairman was also pleased that the Council's treasury management strategy had grown over the years and demonstrated that the Council were financially sound.

31 Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes

The Chairman noted that the purpose of scrutiny was to make recommendations to the Cabinet, raise the concerns of residents, and monitor the progress of the corporate strategy and to hold the executive to account.

It was suggested that corporate sickness be scrutinised as it was identified by the Personnel Committee at Nottinghamshire County Council that Rushcliffe Borough Council's corporate sickness had increased. The Group were keen to look into approaches to improve the wellbeing of its officers. The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services advised that the scrutiny matrix should be completed before it be considered for scrutiny and that the Group should consider whether the topic was considered as an exception in the performance management agenda item which was due to be discussed later in the meeting.

It was noted that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group would be unable to meet the developer for the Abbey Road site as contracts had not yet been signed. It was also stated that the Communities Scrutiny Group were waiting on government proposals on local authorities' approach to waste and the financial implications that the Council could face.

Potential topics for scrutiny which were considered included:

- Dog Fouling: It was agreed that this topic would be scrutinised by the Communities Scrutiny Group and would be discussed over two meetings with similar topics such as fly tipping and littering. It was suggested that this could be an opportunity to introduce public engagement to scrutiny such as surveys so that the Group could identify 'hot spots' for dog fouling, littering and fly tipping.
- The Management of Open Spaces: It was noted that this topic was

suggested by Councillor Lesley Way who explained that residents who were paying a management fee to developers were confused about the rights of others using open spaces which was causing conflicts in the area. It was agreed that the topic would be discussed over two meetings by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group.

- **Flooding assessment and drainage:** It was noted that over 100 houses had become flooded over the last six months which meant that this topic was a high level of public concern. The Group agreed that the Council should be more proactive instead of reactive and should question why new developments were being built on flood plains. It was suggested that the Council’s partners should be invited to scrutiny to be held accountable such as the drainage board and the environment agency.

- **Strategic employment sites:** It was suggested that if this topic was scrutinised, more information needed to be provided from the D2N2 LEP and that they be asked what support they provided to small businesses and whether the services they were providing were required. It was agreed that a new matrix be developed and that the D2N2 LEP be considered for a future topic of scrutiny.

- It was agreed that due to concerns from residents, the process of planning enforcement would be scrutinised by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group.

- It was agreed that the topic of the vibrancy of town centres be scrutinised again in 12 months and that the topic of the availability of cash points in the Borough be discussed at the next Town and Parish Forum and would be reviewed by scrutiny if an issue was raised.

It was RESOLVED that the work programmes set out below be delivered for 2019/20-2020/21.

Work Programme 2019-20 and 2020-21 – Corporate Overview Group

		Items / Reports
Thursday February	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation of Change – Scrutiny ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programme ○ Consideration of Requests for Scrutiny from Council

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial and Performance Management ○ Options for Public Engagement in Scrutiny ● Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○
June 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation of Change – Scrutiny ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Consideration of Requests for Scrutiny from Councillors ○ Financial and Performance Management ● Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Health and Safety Annual Report
September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation of Change – Scrutiny ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Consideration of Requests for Scrutiny from Councillors ○ Financial and Performance Management ○ Consideration of Future of Scrutiny ● Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer Feedback Annual Report
December 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation of Change – Scrutiny ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Consideration of Requests for Scrutiny from Councillors ○ Financial and Performance Management ● Rolling Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversity Annual Report
March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standing Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implementation of Change – Scrutiny

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen ○ Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes ○ Consideration of Requests for Scrutiny from Councillors ○ Financial and Performance Management ● Rolling Items ○
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Draft Work Programme 2019-20 and 2020-21 – Governance Scrutiny Group

	Items / Reports
Thursday 13 May POSTPONED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal Audit Progress Report Q4 ● Internal Audit Annual Report ● Risk Management ● Annual Asset and Investment Strategy Report ● Annual Governance Statement ● Constitution Updates
July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Statement of Accounts ● Treasury Management Outturn ● Asset and Investment Outturn 2018/19 ● Fraud Annual Report
October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal Audit Progress Report Q1 ● Annual Audit Letter
February 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal Audit Progress Report Q2 ● Treasury Management – update ● Risk Management
May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Internal Audit Progress Report Q3 ● Treasury Management Strategy ● Internal Audit Strategy ● External Audit Plan

Work Programme 2019-20 and 2020-21 – Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

	Items / Reports
Tuesday 17 March POSTPONED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of open spaces in new development: one • Customer service and digital transformation
July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbey Road Developer Presentation • Planning Enforcement Policy – part one
October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of open spaces in new development: two • Planning Enforcement Policy – part two
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centres Update
April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Work Programme 2019-20 and 2020-21 – Communities Scrutiny Group

	Items / Reports
Thursday 19 March POSTPONED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog Fouling, Littering and Fly Tipping – part one • Resources and Waste Strategy – An update
July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Future of Edwalton Golf Courses • Fireworks
October 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog Fouling, Littering and Fly Tipping – part two • Flooding and Drainage
January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon management Plan
April 2021	

32 Finance and Performance Management

The Financial Services Manager presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services which highlighted the quarter three position of the Council in terms of financial and performance management. The Financial Services Manager was pleased to note that the overall financial position for the year was positive, with overall service revenue efficiencies of £525,000 and business rates providing an additional £354k. It was stated that despite there being sufficient revenue efficiencies, such funding would be required given the significant risks in relation to future business income

streams and ensuring the delivery of the carbon management action plan. It was explained that there was a net expenditure efficiency position of £17.807m which was primarily due to planning delays and schemes commencing in 2020/21.

The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services noted that at the end of quarter three tasks were performing well including the relocation of R2Go service and Streetwise complete and the relocation of the Rushcliffe Community Contact Centre also complete as of February 2020. It was explained that there were two strategic task exceptions which were LICO64 – number of pavilion, community hall and playing field users and LINS24 – number of affordable homes delivered. Other operational exceptions included the number of domestic burglaries per 1000 households and the percentage of calls answered in 40 seconds. The Service Manager explained that it was important to look at both the strategic and operational tasks together as for example, operational planning performance could be viewed as poor; however, the strategic indicators, and arguably more important, in terms of the Council meeting its stated goals, are performing very strongly.

The Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services explained that a call back service had been introduced to those who did not have their calls answered by the customer services team within 40 seconds and was pleased to note that even though the percentage of calls answered in this time period had dropped, customer satisfaction still remained high. The Executive Manager also asked the Group to consider whether corporate sickness needed to be scrutinised despite the small size of the organisation. It was agreed that a separate report be circulated to the Group but that it would not be scrutinised.

It was RESOLVED that

- a) The report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Corporate Services be noted.
- b) The projected revenue position for the year with £0.906m of budget efficiencies be noted
- c) The Capital underspend of £17.807m as a result of projects no longer preceding or planning delays.
- d) The finance and performance exceptions be identified and noted
- e) The Group be circulated a report regarding corporate sickness detailing whether long term sickness was something beyond the Council's control.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified.

CHAIRMAN