

**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CABINET  
TUESDAY, 14 JULY 2020**

Held virtually at 7.00 pm and live streamed on the  
Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

**PRESENT:**

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Councillors B Gray, R Jones, R Mallender, J Stockwood and C Thomas

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

L Ashmore	Executive Manager - Transformation
K Marriott	Chief Executive
S Sull	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager
S Whittaker	Financial Services Manager

**APOLOGIES:**

There were no apologies.

**1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 June 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 9 June 2020 were declared a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**3 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions**

There were no questions.

**4 Citizens' Questions**

There were no questions.

**5 Crematorium**

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Growth presented the report of the Chief Executive providing an update on the crematorium project.

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Growth confirmed that Cabinet had previously agreed the acquisition of the Stragglethorpe site, and the procurement process, in line with the planning permission. In light of the

Covid-19 pandemic, and following a thorough review of all options, it was considered prudent that Cabinet reaffirm its commitment to the project and agree the operating model it wished to pursue. In the next stage, it was proposed to appoint a project led management team to move forward to design and delivery, with a view to appointing a contractor by September 2020, for completion by spring 2022. Extensive background work had been undertaken by officers, together with consideration of new technology and the Council's carbon neutral target to ensure that the facility would align with the corporate priority of The Environment. The most favourable option for the Council would be to follow an in-house operating model, and feedback from residents had concurred with that view. The in-house option would also offer the best financial stability to the Council and despite the current budget pressures due to Covid-19, it was important that the Council continued to offer services to its residents.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Upton referred to the local need for such a facility and welcomed the progression of the project and the establishment of a management team. It was important that the design was sustainable, environmentally friendly and with a low carbon footprint and the in-house operating model would provide good value for money.

Councillor Robinson referred to the inadequacy of the current facility and how that had been a major factor in the project being established, and it was excellent to see the progress that had been made. It was pleasing to note that further investigation into environmental matters was included in the recommendations and this would give the Council the opportunity to lead the market and set a good example.

**It was RESOLVED that:**

- a) the Chief Executive be authorised to appoint the successful multi-disciplinary design team to develop detailed designs for the crematorium and perform contract administration and management duties for the construction contract;
- b) the in-house operating model was agreed to provide the best return for the Council and that this should be developed working alongside the wider bereavement sector;
- c) the Chief Executive continue investigations into new technologies to enable the delivery of a greener crematorium for the Borough within the project budget;
- d) the commitment to delivering the build of the crematorium within the capital programme and projected revenue impact be confirmed, with a further report to be submitted to Cabinet, should pre-tender build estimates be over budget; and
- e) the Corporate Overview Group be asked to allocate the appropriate scrutiny group to review and make comment on the detailed designs prior to build tenders being advertised for the construction.

## 6 Budget Q4

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Contract Services outlining Quarter 4 and the year-end financial outturn position for 2019/20, linked to the closure of the accounts process and previous financial update reports.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised that the draft Statement of Accounts had been prepared, approved, and considered by the Corporate Overview Group, which had made no observations to Cabinet. Council officers were thanked for their hard work in producing the document well within the statutory limits. The certification and completion of the audit would normally be issued by 31 July; however, due to Covid-19 that would now be delayed until the end of November 2020. The Council's strong financial position had helped it to deal with the pressures it had faced during the pandemic. On a positive note, the Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed a net transfer to reserves of £1.35m, the majority of which had come from revenue efficiencies noted in the report, which equated to a £619k gain. There had been an addition of £409k from the Nottinghamshire Pool Surplus and £381k from renewable energy business rates. The Council's reserves had increased by £1.6m, and at the end of last year, the Council had total reserves of £13.5m. From those reserves, the Council had committed £1m to the Climate Change Reserve. A number of small reserves totalling £524k that were not planned to be used would be incorporated into the organisation's Stabilisation Reserve, as part of the Council's Covid-19 recovery strategy. The report highlighted important carry forward requests to assist the Borough moving forward and dealing with its growth agenda. There was an underspend of £19m on capital projects, which had primarily occurred due to the postponement of the Council's Asset Investment Strategy, the Bingham Hub and the crematorium, which had been moved into this year. The report referred to the Nottinghamshire County Cricket club loan repayment being delayed; however, Cabinet was advised that following a recent meeting, it had been agreed that the £55k would be repaid in September 2020. Last year the Council's overall financial position was positive and officers were thanked for their hard work in enabling the Council to reinforce its reserves, particularly when the current situation was so challenging.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis reiterated the comments made regarding the Council's sound financial management, which would allow the Council to continue to meet the challenges ahead.

Councillor Robinson stated that as the report only covered figures up to the end of March 2020, it could only encompass a few weeks of Covid-19 and lockdown. Whilst it was encouraging that the Council's reserves were so strong, it should be noted that the report could not highlight the financial impact that had taken place since then and the next report covering Quarter 1 would provide a more accurate account of the impact of Covid-19.

### **It is RESOLVED that:**

- a) the 2019/20 revenue position and efficiencies identified in Table 1 in the report be noted and the carry forwards in Table 2 of the

report be approved;

- b) the associated changes to the earmarked reserves as set out at Appendix B of the report be approved, and it be recommended to Full Council that it approves the transfer of three reserves totalling £0.524m as stated at paragraph 4.8 to the Organisation Stabilisation Reserve from 2020/21;
- c) the re-profiled position on capital be noted and the capital carry forwards outlined in Appendix C of the report be approved; and
- d) the update on the Cricket Club loan in Section 5 be noted.

## 7 Covid-19 Update Report

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented the report of the Executive Manager – Finance and Contract Services providing an update on the budget position reported to Cabinet on 9 June 2020 of the projected impact of Covid-19.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance confirmed that this was the third report on the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's budget, and it was expected that figures would continue to change. The leisure sector had been severely impacted; however, it was now hoped that there would be a partial reopening of leisure centres from 25 July 2020. It was hoped that public confidence would continue to be restored to ensure the use of Council facilities going forward. The Cabinet would continue to be updated at each meeting, with a revised budget reported to the Council meeting in September 2020. Everyone was aware of the graveness of the situation, particularly for local businesses and communities and it was important that everyone worked together to ensure Rushcliffe remained a great place to live and work.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance welcomed the Central Government funding of £1.23m; however, it was clear even in the short term that it would be insufficient to meet the budget shortfall. The report highlighted the further funding measures that had been announced to help bridge the gap; although it was unclear how the funding deficit in relation to the Council's leisure centres would be funded. Based upon current Government funding, this financial year, the budget gap was expected to be at least £1.25m, with a worst-case scenario of £2.5m, if Covid-19 returned over the winter. In respect of Revenue Budget pressures, the impact on fees and charges and commercial income had been significant during lockdown and it was estimated at £2m for a worst-case scenario. The Council continued to incur additional costs estimated at £1.5m for a worst-case scenario, primarily from supporting Parkwood Leisure, with the Parkwood contract being regularly monitored, the use of agency staff to support waste collection, additional accommodation to support the homeless and additional costs on managing parks and open spaces. Changes to financial projections would continue to be reported to the Cabinet and Corporate Overview Group and the Council remained committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of the community, maximising the use of its assets and ensuring the best economic outcome for the Council. The improved performance of Edwalton Golf course was noted and welcomed. Capital

Programme issues, including capital receipts and the viability of existing projects had largely remained unchanged since the last report, and the Cabinet would be updated at its next meeting. In respect of Council Tax and Business Rates collection, as of 1 July 2020, collection rates for Council Tax had reduced by 1.1%, which equated to approximately £1m; with £80k of that total for the Council. Business Rates had been largely unaffected because of the significant relief granted to the sector. The Council had reacted quickly to ensure that over £17.6m in Business Grants had been paid out to 90.6% of eligible businesses. Hardship Fund allocations totalling £225k in relation to Council Tax support had also been made. On 1 June 2020, the Council had launched its discretionary scheme, with 144 applications now received and 20 payments currently made of £175k out of the fund of £972k. Applications for the grant had been much lower than anticipated, and the lack of evidence and supporting information from the applicants had resulted in delays and given its discretionary nature, the scheme had created challenges in development and implementation. From 15 July 2020, the scheme would be relaunched, with some relaxation to the criteria, to ensure that everyone could receive the funding they were entitled to. The relaunch would be publicised on the Council's website and all existing applications would be reviewed using the new criteria. The Council was aware of the financial hardship that some town and parish councils were suffering and was offering low interest rate loans to them. The Council was very prudent and had managed its resources well and held a healthy level of reserves, which enabled it to deal in the short term with the economic crisis; however, the Council's financial resilience going forward would be severely tested and would require a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to deliver its corporate objectives, with a report planned for Council in September 2020 and a full budget later in 2020.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Edyvean referred to the varied challenges ahead and thanked officers for their hard work. The swift action of Central Government in providing financial support to Councils was welcomed, and in turn, that had allowed the Council to quickly provide much needed financial support to local businesses, many of whom had expressed their thanks. Despite the challenging situation, the Council remained relatively strong and committed to moving its projects forward wherever possible.

Councillor Robinson confirmed that this report reflected the current financial situation and thanked all members of the Finance team for their hard work in this challenging period. Officers were also thanked for distributing the Business Grants so quickly and efficiently and the gratitude of local businesses was noted and welcomed. The Council would continue to support local businesses and residents by providing the best front line services it could and hoped that additional Government funding would be made available to help the Council meet those challenges. The partial opening of leisure centres on 25 July 2020 would be welcomed; however, there would be challenges ahead and the Council would be there to support Parkwood going forward.

**It is RESOLVED that**

- a) the revised financial impact of Covid-19 on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the inclusion of these estimates and use of reserves and balances in the revised budget due be taken to Full Council be noted; and

- b) the contractual position and the ongoing extension to the Contract Variation agreement with Parkwood Leisure be noted.

## **8 Rushcliffe Equality Scheme**

The Portfolio Holder for Community and the Environment presented the report of the Chief Executive outlining the proposed comprehensive review of the 2016-20 Equality Scheme.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and the Environment confirmed that as the review period was this year, it was considered prudent to review and update the document to reflect current circumstances, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic, and actions required. The scheme covered many diversity strands, most of which were already protected from discrimination by law, and the Council was required to have a scheme. The scheme included Council employees as well as local residents who wished to access the Council's services. It was important that all Councillors were aware of the various strands of this document to allow them to feed into it through the scrutiny process.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis endorsed this timely review, which would ensure that this important document was appropriately updated and enhanced.

### **It is RESOLVED that:**

- a) the comprehensive review of the 2016-2020 Equality Scheme be supported;
- b) the Corporate Overview Group be asked to programme member involvement and input into the scrutiny calendar; and
- c) a future report on a new and revised Equality Scheme be submitted to Cabinet.

## **9 Moorbridge Road Industrial Units**

The Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Growth presented the report of the Executive Manager – Transformation providing an update on the Moorbridge Road Industrial Units.

### **It is RESOLVED that:**

- a) the Council does not proceed with the purchase of new industrial units at Moorbridge Road, Bingham given the increasing cost and adverse impact on the rate of return; and
- b) the Council keeps any future opportunities to buy new industrial units at Moorbridge Road, Bingham under review, to be considered by the Asset Investment Group if the acquisition meets the appropriate investment criteria and thereafter approval be sought

by Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm.

CHAIRMAN