

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL**

THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2020

Held virtually at 7.00 pm and livestreamed on the
Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors S Mallender (Chairman), T Combellack (Vice-Chairman), R Adair, S Bailey, B Bansal, K Beardsall, N Begum, A Brennan, B Buschman, R Butler, N Clarke, J Cottee, G Dickman, A Edyvean, M Gaunt, P Gowland, L Healy, L Howitt, R Inglis, R Jones, A Major, R Mallender, D Mason, G Moore, J Murray, A Phillips, F Purdue-Horan, S J Robinson, K Shaw, J Stockwood, Mrs M Stockwood, C Thomas, R Upton, D Viridi, J Walker, R Walker, L Way, G Wheeler, J Wheeler and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Banks	Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods
C Caven-Atack	Service Manager - Finance and Corporate Services
T Coop	Democratic Services Officer
K Marriott	Chief Executive
S Sull	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager
L Webb	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES:

Councillors B Gray, Mrs C Jeffreys and D Simms

32 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

33 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 24 September 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

34 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor greeted Councillors and informed them of the many events that she had been able to participate in since the last Council meeting despite the Tiers and further lockdown brought about by Covid-19. Those had included the unveiling of new glass recycling bins at the Hook in Lady Bay and a tea party hosted by the Mayor of Broxtowe Borough Council. The Mayor advised Council that she had been pleased to attend in-person occasions surrounding Remembrance and Armistice this year, including a tree-planting event at

Bridgford Park and a number of wreath laying events. The Mayor updated Council on the Christmas lights switch-on in West Bridgford, and invited all Councillors to watch the Council's YouTube channel to see the final night of the Rushcliffe Community Awards tomorrow evening. She concluded by informing Council that she had selected a Christmas card designed by the children at her local school in Lady Bay and that they had also performed a Christmas song that had been sent to all Councillors, in lieu of the normal festive songs before the Council meeting.

35 Leader's Announcements

The Leader of the Council praised Rushcliffe's officers for their continued efforts to support the Borough in its response to the Covid-19 pandemic, especially those staff processing grants to businesses during the latest lockdown, together with the new Tier 3 arrangements. Like the Mayor, he also referred to the Rushcliffe Community Awards, which, due to Covid-19, were being held virtually this year and he encouraged fellow Councillors to watch the videos on YouTube. In respect of Covid-19, the Leader notified Council that the figures for Rushcliffe had fallen to below 100 infections per 100,000 residents. The Arena would also be hosting a new test facility for the next three months to make it easier for residents to access a test if they needed one. Councillors were asked to help spread the key health and safety messages to their communities. Councillor Robinson concluded by wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and thanked them for the excellent community leadership they had shown throughout 2020.

36 Chief Executive's Announcements

There were no Chief Executive's announcements.

37 Citizens' Questions

There were no questions.

38 Development Corporation

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Robinson presented the report of the Chief Executive providing an update to Council on the Development Corporation.

Councillor Robinson outlined the dual purpose of the Development Corporation report, which sought to bring Council up to date on the development of the Corporation, and outlined recommendations to move forward. Council's attention was drawn to a typographical error in the recommendations, where £300k should read £500k. The ambitions of the Development Corporation, which aimed to capitalise on the geographical relationship between East Midlands Airport, the proposed HS2 link at Toton and the soon to be decommissioned, power station at Ratcliffe-on-Soar were outlined. The creation of 19,000 new jobs was highlighted, together with the potential for the Borough to be a leader in carbon neutral developments. Council was asked to note the business case for change contained within the report. The development of the site would be a long process, which would require legislation. In July 2020, the Secretary of State had confirmed support for the

creation of an Interim Vehicle to manage the change. This report sought Council's agreement to the creation of that Interim Vehicle. Councillor Robinson informed Council that the Interim Vehicle would be operational from January 2021, and that the funding mentioned in the report would cover a period of three years and included hiring a programme team, a master-planning exercise and the delivery of the business case. Councillors were reminded that the existing power station site was a vital, strategic site and a very visible site within the Borough.

Councillor Edyvean seconded the recommendations in the report and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor J Walker noted the progress that has been made on this project since the last update to Council. She conveyed that the Labour Group recognised the need for financial support but expressed their reservations about many of the proposed developments and asked whether they were really being undertaken with the best interests of Rushcliffe residents in mind. Concerns were expressed over the recent coverage in the press that HS2 would no longer reach as far as Toton, the 'gimicky' nature of the zero-carbon research centre, and that the government might still change the nature of its support for this project. However, Council was advised that despite her reservations, she still considered that it was more important to have a seat at the table than the alternative. Council was reminded of the opportunity presented by this project to create a sustainable future for the site but asked Councillor Robinson to ensure this future was environmentally viable as well as bringing economic benefits to the Borough.

Councillor Major confirmed that the Liberal Democrat party was happy to support the proposals for the Interim Vehicle to oversee the significant redevelopment of this Borough landmark. She recognised that investment was needed to move the project forward but expressed concern that this was being taken from the Council's Climate Change Fund and asked that alternative sources of funding be explored first.

Councillor R Mallender stated that the Council was right to be ambitious and also right to be seeking housing and employment for the benefit of the Borough. He echoed Councillor Major's concerns regarding the use of the Climate Change Fund and expressed concerns about the wider Freeport proposals. Councillor Mallender informed Council that he felt it was right to go forward with the proposals at this stage and that there would be opportunities to scrutinise progress in the future. Councillor Mallender expressed concern for East Midlands airport becoming a 24-hour freight hub.

Councillor Clarke advised Council that he believed the proposals contained within this report were vital for raising the profile of the East Midlands and would bring much needed investment to the Borough. The Development Corporation was a much broader proposal that just the future of the power station site in Ratcliffe-on-Soar, which would bring jobs and prosperity to the area. He concluded by asking the Council to put their trust in the Leader of the Council to fight for what was right for Rushcliffe.

Councillor R Walker confirmed his full support for the generation of high quality and high-tech jobs and recognised that Rushcliffe alone could not bring about

this change. However, he expressed concern about the involvement so far of the local communities that he represented, which would be most affected by this development and asked the Leader to think broadly about community engagement.

Councillor Gowland took the opportunity to reinforce the comments made by Councillor R Mallender in relation to the 24-hour freight hub.

Councillor Edyvean reminded Council that this was the start of a long process; the land was privately owned and therefore care had to be taken to engage the landowners in the process moving forward. The landowner working independently would not benefit the Borough and might lead to a derelict site in the Borough for years to come. Councillor Edyvean informed all Councillors that the local universities were involved in the zero carbon future site and that the whole project brought together the right people from all quarters. Councillor Edyvean also confirmed that East Midlands airport was presently a 24-hour freight hub.

Councillor Gaunt clarified the position of the Labour Group with regard to the proposals.

Councillor Robinson thanked Councillor Gaunt for his clarification and reminded Councillors that this was an incredible opportunity for the Borough, with the potential to deliver thousands of high-quality jobs, environmental change and a pioneering centre of excellence. He outlined the different ways in which this project would be monitored by the Borough Council including the Cabinet led member working group, the option to scrutinise in the future and the fact that all major decisions would come through Council and Cabinet. Tribute was paid to Uniper, who owned the site, for their commitment to the project so far and Councillor Robinson informed Councillors that he had been told to expect an announcement about HS2 in the next few weeks. Councillor R Walker was thanked for his comments about the importance of community involvement and undertook to consider those further. He concluded by reminding Council that the involvement of the Borough Council in this project was a huge opportunity and asked for the backing of the whole Council in carrying the recommendations forward.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) the progress made to date of the East Midlands Development Corporation Programme, towards the establishment of an Interim Vehicle was noted;
- b) the principle of a financial contribution to support the Interim Vehicle over the next three years in the sum of £500,000, subject to match funding from other affected local authorities and Government. The funding arrangements to be included within the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 onwards and funding will be allocated over the course of the three years be approved;
- c) the Members' Agreement and participation in the incorporation of the Interim Vehicle Company Limited by Guarantee be approved, and authority to the Leader and Chief Executive for agreeing the final form of

the Members' Agreement and Articles of Association be approved in principle; and

- d) the Leader of the Council be nominated as Director of the Interim Vehicle.

39 **Revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2020-2025**

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods presented the report of the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods providing an update on the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

Councillor Inglis referred to the report and asked Council to approve changes to the existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, which had been revised as a result of changes in Government legislation. Rushcliffe was responsible for licensing hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. The Department of Transport required local authorities to introduce stronger safeguarding measures for protecting children and vulnerable adults, as well as more stringent checks for licensees and vehicles. The changes should be adopted by January 2021. The draft revised Policy had been scrutinised by the Licensing Committee and undergone consultation within the sector. Council's attention was drawn to the second recommendation in the report, which gave the Executive Manager for Neighbourhoods the authority to make minor changes to ensure that the Policy remained responsive to change and any changes could be made expediently in the future.

In seconding the recommendations in the report, Councillor Brennan welcomed the changes to the Policy to strengthen safeguarding measures in this vital area and commented that those changes should not be overly onerous for drivers. Licensed drivers in the Borough were in a position of trust and this revised Policy strengthened the checks and documentation necessary to ensure the safety of those using those vehicles. This was a very comprehensive Policy that was regularly reviewed and would be modified, if necessary, in the future under delegated authority.

Councillor Begum spoke on behalf of the Labour group and welcomed the improvements that have been proposed. Council's attention was drawn to the reference of electric vehicles in Appendix 6, and it was noted that the Labour Group looked forward to further consideration of this area of the Policy in the future.

Councillor Jones thanked officers for a sensible, if complex Policy and stated that, as the changes made were required by legislation, he saw no reason why they should not be supported. He went on to recommend that the Executive Manager for Neighbourhoods made use of his new powers to make minor changes to the Policy in the new year, to update the specification of vehicles to Euro 5 classification instead of Euro 4, as stated in the current document. Councillor Jones also asked for clarification on the inspections licensing officers made on drivers' DBS checks.

Councillor R Mallender echoed the comments of the Labour Group in relation to the move towards electric licensed vehicles in the future.

Councillor Thomas thanked the officers for their detailed work to update the Policy.

In response to the comments made, Councillor Inglis informed Council that officers had considered the early move to requiring Euro 5 compliant vehicles before bringing this Policy forward for approval but had considered, in light of the hardship caused to the sector by Covid-19 this year, it would be unnecessarily pre-emptive. The Council noted that there was a long-term plan to update the vehicle emissions criteria of the Policy as part of the Council's Carbon Management Action Plan. Councillor Inglis also made reference to the process of acquiring and monitoring DBS checks for drivers and the need of those transporting children and vulnerable adults to have an enhanced DBS check.

It was **RESOLVED** that

- a) the Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2020-2025 be approved; and
- b) the Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods be granted delegated authority to make minor variations to the Policy.

40 **Notices of Motion**

- a) The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Gaunt and seconded by Councillor J Walker.

“This Council calls for an immediate increase in funding from central government to cover the true cost of the covid-19 pandemic. An increase in funding will ensure that councils are able to pay for essential services in their communities.”

Councillor Gaunt informed Council, in moving the motion, that local authorities had lost 60 pence per pound of funding from central government and that 168 Councils had no revenue support grants. Councillor Gaunt noted that Rushcliffe Borough Council was in a privileged position as it was able to use the new homes bonus by releasing green belt for development in order to balance budgets. However, he explained that other Councils have had to cut essential services such as rural bus services, and close libraries due to lack of funding from central government. Councillor Gaunt also asked the Council to stop comparing itself to Nottingham City Council as it had other additional pressures to deal with such as adult and children's social care and education. Councillor Gaunt stated that over centralisation of funding and power was not effective in delivering services to residents such as the NHS track and trace service, and that he believed cities such as Liverpool had been successful in track and trace testing for Covid-19.

Councillor Walker seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Robinson proposed an amendment to the motion:

“This Council calls for a review of funding from central government to support the true cost of the covid-19 pandemic.

Appropriate and fairer funding will ensure that well run and efficient councils, such as Rushcliffe are able to pay for essential services in their communities.”

Councillor Robinson supported the principle of the proposed motion; however, he believed that the motion should specifically mention Rushcliffe Borough Council and that efficient and well-run Council’s should be entitled to funding to enable essential services to continue in their communities. Councillor Robinson was pleased to note that an extra £10 billion would be allocated to local authorities in line with recommendations from the Local Government Association and that Rushcliffe Borough Council had already been allocated £27 million in grants in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor Edyvean seconded the amendment and reserved the right to speak.

Councillor Gaunt informed Council that the Labour Group would be supporting the amendment to the motion.

Councillor Jones also supported the motion and praised the Council’s finance team for their hard work in allocating grants to businesses. Councillor Jones also noted that not all Conservative Councils were necessarily well run and not in debt.

Councillor R Mallender made no comment regarding the amendment to the motion and suggested that it should go to the vote.

Councillor Thomas noted that previous motions had been discussed at Council meetings regarding commercialisation and requests for more funding, which were politically motivated and stated that all of the Councillors should be working together for the benefit of residents.

On being put to the vote, the amendment to the motion was carried and Councillor Robinson’s motion became the substantive motion.

Councillor Robinson noted that the Councillors should be congratulatory of the Council and its officers.

Councillor Gowland noted that all councils have their own pressures and that Rushcliffe Borough Council was privileged to be in a sound financial position.

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

41 Questions from Councillors

a) Question from Councillor Gowland to Councillor Robinson

“If the route of HS2 is altered by government what are the implications for Rushcliffe’s contribution to the development corporation?”

Councillor Gowland informed Council that she had withdrawn her question.

b) **Question from Councillor Thomas to Councillor Upton**

“Various agencies are consulted on individual planning applications with regard to infrastructure such as roads, drainage, and sewerage. How does the Council’s planning committee / planning department ensure that consideration is given to the cumulative effects of multiple new developments in proximity to each other and on existing settlements?”

Councillor Upton informed Council that whilst it was recognised that individual planning approvals might have a cumulative effect on new and existing infrastructure, the impact of all applications, singularly and cumulatively, was considered by the local authority and other agencies. This included the developments undertaken as part of the Local Plan as well as those submitted outside of the Local Plan Framework such as in East Leake.

No supplementary question was asked.

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm.

CHAIRMAN