

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CABINET**

TUESDAY, 8 JUNE 2021

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road,
West Bridgford and live streamed on
the Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors A Edyvean (Vice-Chairman), A Brennan, R Inglis and G Moore

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors R Jones, J Walker and L Way

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
S Sull	Monitoring Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors S J Robinson

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 May 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 11 May 2021, were declared a true record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

3 Citizens' Questions

There were no questions.

4 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor Way, on behalf of the Independent Group to Councillor Edyvean.

“We welcome the bid for funding for our much needed new health centre and hope this will be the priority and that the opportunity will not be lost whilst bidding for a larger project i.e. the hub. Once again much of this information is new to the Ward Members and East Leake Parish Council. Going forward, how will East Leake Parish Council and Leake Ward members be consulted and

involved in the bid process and future development of the project and how will the community be kept informed of progress?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that the need to redevelop the health centre had been identified as a top priority for the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and this had been discussed at the East Leake Growth Board (ELGB) and it was believed that it would continue as a priority for the CCG, regardless of the Levelling Up Funding. Going forwards, a Communication Plan would be developed, and shared with Ward Councillors and the ELGB, and it was noted that Ward Councillors and the East Leake Parish Council were represented on the ELGB. The Council would continue to update Ward Councillors and relevant parties on major projects, to ensure that they are well informed.

Councillor Way asked a supplementary question to Councillor Edyvean.

“Can you explain what will happen to the land that the present health centre and library occupy. Will this land revert to ownership of the Borough or Parish to be used to enhance the village centre and provide more employment opportunities?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that it was his understanding that the land belonged to NHS England, and the Council would therefore have to negotiate with the current landowner as to how that land could be used. It was noted that whilst the future use of the land was unknown, the Council would clearly wish to enhance the centre of East Leake.

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Edyvean.

“The Labour Group has serious concerns that moving the time of the Planning Committee meeting to weekday afternoons will limit the ability of those Councillors and residents, who are employed in paid work during those hours, in being able to fully participate.

I would like to ask how the Cabinet will take this potential impact on local democracy into their considerations?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that the timing of meetings was accepted as one consideration; however, Councillors should equally consider the demands on their time, when putting themselves forward for election. The start time of meetings at other local Councils had been investigated, and it was noted that start times varied widely. It was reiterated that this was a pilot proposal, and would be reviewed in six months, rather than 12 months, as originally suggested, to ensure that it was meeting all the goals set to improve the Planning Committee function.

Councillor J Walker asked a supplementary question to Councillor Edyvean.

“Further options should be explored and has Cabinet considered the employment of more planning staff to ease the burden of work on individual officers?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by advising that he would provide a written response to that question within the next seven days.

5 COVID -19 Memorials

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities and Climate Change, Councillor Brennan presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods outlining a range of proposals for public COVID-19 memorial schemes in the Borough.

Councillor Brennan stated that the significant impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the entire population both directly and through secondary effects could not be underestimated. Cabinet noted that measures introduced by the Government, including the vaccine roll-out were providing hope that life would begin to return to some form of normality going forward; however the impact of the virus could not be overstated and it was important to offer a way for people to commemorate the loss of loved ones, and to celebrate all those who had supported the pandemic response.

Councillor Brennan advised that approval was sought for the provision of a lasting memorial to those in the Borough who have lost their lives, and to those who had continued to work tirelessly to respond to the aftermath of the pandemic, through the creation of a memorial garden in Bridgford Park. It was noted that young people in particular had been impacted by the restrictions placed on their lives, and the invaluable work undertaken by key workers, volunteers and community groups could not be underestimated, and to thank all those people it was proposed to create a temporary art installation at the Rushcliffe Arena.

In conclusion, Councillor Brennan advised that the Council wished to support local communities throughout the Borough, to create their own local memorials and remembrance activities, through the creation of a Commemoration Grant Scheme and through the distribution of spring bulbs for memorial planting schemes in towns and parishes.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis referred to the establishment of the memorials, and the many reasons why they would be so poignant in the Borough, to allow everyone to reflect on the significant impact that the pandemic has had. Councillor Inglis referred to the devastating loss of life, which had been exacerbated by the bereaved being unable to fully respect or celebrate a lost life, due to the restrictions on gatherings. The proposed memorial garden in Bridgford Park, which would be fully accessible for everyone was welcomed, as was the creation of an art installation to thank keyworkers and voluntary groups for their hard work and dedication in providing support and bringing communities together. The creation of a scheme to support parish and town councils to create their own local memorials and planting schemes was also to be applauded.

Councillor Edyvean reiterated previous comments and stated that it was hoped that the public would welcome this, as it was important to commemorate those who had lost their lives and those who had contributed positively to help others.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the creation a public memorial garden in Bridgford Park, West Bridgford as a shared place to commemorate people who have lost their lives in Rushcliffe due to the COVID-19 pandemic be approved;
- b) the creation of a temporary art installation / display at Rushcliffe Arena to recognise the contribution that keyworkers, community groups and volunteers from across the Borough have made to the local pandemic response be approved; and
- c) support for town and parish memorials and remembrance activities, led directly by town and parish councils be approved, incorporating:
 - i) the creation of a COVID-19 commemorations grant scheme; and
 - ii) the distribution of spring bulbs for memorial planting schemes in parishes.

6 Levelling up Funding and Identification of Council Owned Land, East Leake

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Chief Executive providing an update on the Levelling Up Funding application in relation to Council owned land in East Leake.

Councillor Edyvean referred to the Government commitment to the initial £4 billion Levelling Up Fund (LUF), highlighted the key headlines in the report and confirmed that the bid was being supported by Rushcliffe's MP, Ruth Edwards. It was noted that East Leake Health Centre was the oldest in the County and had been identified by the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as requiring replacement. Cabinet was advised that a site owned by the Borough Council had been identified as the preferred new site by the CCG. Reference was made to the significant development that had taken place over the past few years, which had led to an expansion of the village and the infrastructure provision would need to increase to meet that greater demand. Although Rushcliffe was categorised as a low priority area, East Leake fitted many of the criteria to support a bid and the existence of the Levelling Up Funding allowed the Council to explore a wider project and make proposals for significant local infrastructure improvements, details of which were highlighted in the report. Cabinet noted that there was Section 106 funding allocated for both the new health centre and to upgrade the existing sports pavilion, and that would be included as match funding within the LUF bid.

In conclusion, Councillor Edyvean stated that because of the timescales set out by Government, any bid would be submitted in the later round of bidding, as it was a requirement that any money made available had to be used quickly to deliver the improvements, and the Council was not yet in that position.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Moore was pleased to note that the Council would have the time to submit a bid at a later stage, when it was

fully prepared. As the Chair of the East Leake Growth Board (ELGB), Councillor Moore stated that the need for a new health centre had been a top priority for that Group since its inception, and although progress had been slowed by the pandemic, this new funding opportunity would make a significant difference going forward.

In welcoming the bid, Councillor Brennan stated that it was important to look at the broader objectives of supporting the wider regeneration of East Leake and that the Council demonstrated that it was looking to the future.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the use of the Council-owned land shown in Appendix A of the report for the delivery of a new community hub including a health centre in East Leake, subject to relevant permissions (including planning) and surveys, be supported;
- b) the preparation of the LUF application to Government for funding towards a community hub and improved sports pavilion on Costock Road in East Leake be supported; and
- c) the inclusion of the value of the land shown in Appendix A of the report as match funding to support a LUF application, with the appropriate safeguards included in the agreements with partners, to ensure that the land is only used for these purposes be approved.

7 Petition: Community Governance Review

In the absence of the Leader, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Chief Executive outlining the next steps to be taken in relation to the request for a Community Governance Review contained within the recently received petition.

Councillor Edyvean confirmed that the Council had received a petition containing 635 valid signatories from registered electors in Bingham, calling for a Community Governance Review of Bingham Town Council. Cabinet noted that such a review could be undertaken by a principal authority and details of the legislation were highlighted in the report. Councillor Edyvean advised that the petition called for the dissolution of Bingham Town Council and for the Borough to take over the operation until new elections could be held, and to reset the culture and strengthen the procedures at the Town Council, to ensure that the concerns previously mentioned did not continue.

In conclusion, Councillor Edyvean advised that a thorough investigation of the issues raised would be required by any principal authority before undertaking a review. Cabinet noted that it was an unusual request to specifically call for the dissolution of a town council and the Borough Council had sought advice, which formed the basis of the recommendations outlined in the report.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Moore referred to both the unusual and serious circumstances and stated that the situation should not be taken lightly, and it was pleasing to see the course of action recommended and

that the issues would be dealt with swiftly.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) Rushcliffe Borough Council's commitment to working collaboratively with Bingham Town Council to achieve the best outcomes for residents in response to the petition be confirmed;
- b) a cross-party Cabinet-led Member Working Group be set up to consider the request contained within the petition for a Community Governance Review in Bingham;
- c) the Member Working Group report back to Cabinet by September 2021, with its views and suggested Terms of Reference on resolution a) above;
- d) the Chief Executive writes to Bingham Town Council and Nottinghamshire County Council sharing the contents of this report and setting out what is agreed by Cabinet; and
- e) the Member Working Group be supported by the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer, and external independent peer and legal support.

8 Ruddington Neighbourhood Plan

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth providing an update on the Ruddington Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Edyvean noted the arduous work required to complete a Neighbourhood Plan and thanked all those involved for their dedication and commitment. Cabinet was advised that the Plan had been scrutinised by an independent Examiner, comments had been made, and where necessary the Examiner had proposed amendments, to ensure that the Plan had clarity, was robust and fitted in with the Policies set out in the Council's Local Plan. If Cabinet accepted the Examiner's recommendations, it was noted that the Plan would then proceed to a referendum.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis reiterated the importance of having a Neighbourhood Plan to help to influence future development and commended all those involved for their hard work in producing an excellent, detailed document. It was noted that the Examiner had not changed the overall structure or ambition of the Plan and the recommended modifications were considered to be acceptable.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) all of the Examiner's recommended modifications to the Ruddington Neighbourhood Plan be accepted;
- b) the Ruddington Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement and its publication be approved;

- c) the holding of a referendum for the Ruddington Neighbourhood Plan, with the area for the referendum being the Parish of Ruddington be approved; and
- d) the Director – Development and Economic Growth be granted delegated authority to make any necessary final minor textual, graphical and presentational changes required to the referendum version of the Ruddington Neighbourhood Plan.

9 **Revised Mobile Homes Fees Policy 2021-2024**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Safety, Councillor Inglis presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods outlining the revised Mobile Homes Fees Policy 2021-2024.

Councillor Inglis referred to the Council's Mobile Homes Policy, which had been approved in 2017, and renewed in 2020, and advised that significant statutory changes had been introduced to help strengthen the current regulatory framework to ensure the suitability of persons managing 'relevant protected sites' and those regulations would come into force in July 2021. Cabinet noted that 'relevant protected sites' were mobile home sites that had residential occupation all year round and there were seven sites in Rushcliffe. Councillor Inglis confirmed that the changes were being introduced to improve standards of site management for residents by ensuring that the person responsible for managing the site was a fit and proper person of good character. Details of the updated Policy, which set out the framework for the operation of the test and the processes that local authorities would use were highlighted in the report, and it was noted that this was a statutory Policy. Cabinet was advised that the Council could recover licensing costs by charges to the customer and no additional staffing would be required.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan reiterated that it was a statutory requirement to adopt the new regulations, and the importance of ensuring that a site must be managed by a fit and proper person, together with the introduction of further safeguards for residents was considered long overdue.

Councillor Edyvean reiterated previous comments and stated that he was delighted that the new regulations were being adopted.

It was RESOLVED that the adoption of a fit and proper person test and Mobile Homes Fees Policy for 2021-2024 be approved.

10 **Planning Committee Proposals Pilot**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Economic Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth outlining pilot proposals to improve the process and operation of Planning Committee meetings, with a view to delivering an improved performance.

Councillor Edyvean referred to the Planning Peer Challenge Review, which had taken place in 2017, and the successful changes that had been made to improve the process and operation of Planning Committee meetings, details of which were highlighted in the report. Cabinet was advised that given the lessons learnt over the last four years, it was now considered timely for another targeted review, to further improve the Committee by enhancing its ability to properly consider all the scheduled agenda items. The important role undertaken by Planning Committee and the significant reputational impact it had was acknowledged, and it was noted that the proposed pilot would monitor the changes over a six months period, with the findings reported back to Cabinet. Councillor Edyvean confirmed that the proposals had been shared with Committee members and Group Leaders, and their comments and feedback had been considered. Cabinet was advised that the most contentious change related to the timing of the Committee meeting, and due to the feedback received, on balance it had been agreed to introduce the new earlier start time; however, the pilot period would be reduced from 12 to six months. It was noted that concerns had also been raised that Councillors were now being asked to comment on applications within the 21 days allotted period, as opposed to making late representations; however, it was confirmed that late representations could still be made if new information became available.

In conclusion, Councillor Edyvean emphasised that the proposal to hold daytime meetings had been compared with other local councils and it was noted that adopting an earlier start time would not be unusual. The diverse membership of those committees, including mixed age ranges was also noted, and it was hoped that the proposed changes would allow more Planning Officers the opportunity to present reports to the Committee, thereby improving working relationships between themselves and Councillors.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Moore referred to the emotive nature of planning for many and referred to the importance of ensuring that adequate time was given when considering complex applications, and it was hoped that the proposed changes would facilitate that. Previous improvements to the process and operation of the Planning Committee were noted, and it was acknowledged that the process must be kept under review and it was pleasing to see that the pilot had been reduced to six months.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the proposals set out be piloted for six months from August 2021;
- b) the pilot proposals be included in the Council's Constitution (where necessary) and presented at Full Council on 1 July 2021; and
- c) a further report be brought to Cabinet after six months to consider the findings of the pilot period, with recommendations for Planning Committee changes going forward.

The meeting closed at 7.38 pm.

CHAIRMAN