



**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
CORPORATE OVERVIEW GROUP
TUESDAY, 20 JULY 2021**

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

PRESENT:

Councillors T Combellack (Chairman), N Clarke, B Gray, D Viridi and J Wheeler

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Caven-Atack

Service Manager - Corporate
Services

L Webb

Democratic Services Officer

J Wilkinson

Safety and Risk Management
Advisor

APOLOGIES:

Councillors B Bansal and R Butler

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 March 2021

The minutes of the meeting on 23 March 2021 were approved as a true record of the meeting.

3 Health and Safety Annual Report

The Health and Safety Advisor presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods which provided a summary of the Council's operational health and safety performance during the period 1 April 2020 to the end of March 2021. The Health and Safety Annual Report summarised the Council's health and safety policies, procedures and activities which have taken place over the last year, training programmes delivered, statistical data and the proposed health and safety objectives for the year.

The Health and Safety Advisor delivered a presentation to the Group which covered:

- The Council's response to Covid-19
- Progress to achieving goals
- Training
- Accident forms completed

- Accident forms by type
- Number of days absent
- Lost time due to injuries
- Accidents to members of the public
- New objectives for 2021/22.

Following the presentation, members of the Group were informed that staff who worked in the Business Support Unit were provided with first aid training as they had a larger presence working at Rushcliffe Arena during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Group raised concerns that only 24% of staff had completed the fire safety e-learning course and that low numbers of staff had completed their display screen equipment assessment. It was explained that the e-learning system had recently been upgraded and that managers would now be able to see which members of staff had completed courses and they would also be sent electronic reminders if courses had not been completed within a certain time frame.

The Group were informed that members of staff were provided with the opportunity to attend Red Umbrella webinars which covered topics such as anxiety, working from home and working collaboratively as a team during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was acknowledged that the Council was in a strong position at the outbreak of Covid-19 as most staff were already used to remote working but that staff were provided with additional IT equipment and office chairs if required once they had undertaken a Desk Screen Equipment assessment at home.

It was noted that none of the Council's health and safety legislative policies were out of date but that minor changes needed to be made such as the change of officer's names and job titles following the Council's restructure. The Health and Safety Advisor agreed to send the Group a list of policies which needed to be updated.

The Group wanted more detail about the impact of Covid-19 on the working environments for staff at home and in the office. For example, when considering remote working, the recording of accidents which take place at home and the investment in additional equipment to allow staff to work from home effectively. The Group agreed that this should be incorporated into a review of the Council's response to Covid-19 that had been highlighted as necessary but accepted as too early at the present time.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) The report of the Director – Neighbourhoods be noted
- b) The proposed health and safety objectives for 2021/22 be endorsed

4 Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen

Following a discussion, it was agreed that Scrutiny Group Chairmen would receive draft reports and a proposed agenda front sheet four days before the agenda is published on the Council's website. Additionally, Chairman's briefings would take place with lead officers two days before the agenda is published on the Council's website. The Service Manager – Corporate

Services informed the Group that scrutiny chairmen should work collaboratively with lead officers throughout the process of compiling reports to ensure that the key lines of enquiry, outlined in the scrutiny matrix were covered. She also suggested that consideration was given to the key lines of enquiry contained within each matrix following its approval and allocation to a scrutiny group work programme to ensure each fully represented the needs of the scrutiny group.

It was also suggested that the Service Manager – Corporate Services be provided with a space on each Corporate Overview Group agenda to feedback to the Group such as that included during the recent scrutiny transition period.

In terms of feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen, the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group received a presentation from Nottingham City Council which outlined three proposals for a new footbridge from the City of Nottingham to Lady Bay in West Bridgford. The Group welcomed the proposals subject to the Council being able to comment on planning issues public access and the loss of trees and wildlife. The Group also received three presentations regarding cycling networks in the Borough and suggested that this item needed to be discussed again so that the Group could have sufficient time to ask questions and to also scrutinise who would maintain the cycling paths on the new footbridge.

The Communities Scrutiny Group received a progress report and presentation regarding the Council's Carbon Management Plan at its meeting in April. The Chairman of the Communities Scrutiny Group noted that the Group were due to scrutinise the Council's partnership with WISE and the safeguarding adults and children strategy at its next meeting later in the week.

The Chairman of the Governance Scrutiny Group noted that the group scrutinised eight substantive items which included the Council's internal and external audit plans, the Council's Fraud Annual Report and the Council's annual governance statement. The Group were also advised that following the Redmond Review, the Council was recommended the possibility of appointing at least one, suitably qualified, independent member to sit on the Governance Scrutiny Group to offer support and a fresh perspective. Members considered both the advantages and disadvantages of such an appointment, and the majority of the Group agreed that given that the Council already received excellent advice from both its internal and external auditors and officers, and that members of the Group were appropriately trained to undertake their duties, at the current time it would be inappropriate to consider such an appointment. The Group also agreed to amendments to the Council's constitution which were later approved by Council in July 2021.

5 Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes - July 2021

The Service Manager –Corporate Services presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services which asked the Group to create and receive feedback on the scrutiny group work programmes for 2021/22 based on the Cabinet Forward Plan, Corporate Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Investment Strategy and Transformation Plan. The Group were also asked to consider potential topics for scrutiny which were submitted by Councillors and officers.

The Group first considered the requests for scrutiny items submitted by either Councillors or officers using the scrutiny matrix. The Chairman informed the Group that she had submitted the item 'planning communications' which would address the consistency of the planning application process. It was explained that the public perception and reputation of the Council had been damaged due to parish council's and residents not being informed about submitted planning applications and therefore, the planning process and its communications method needed to be thoroughly scrutinised. It was agreed that the item should be added to this year's work programme despite the officer's recommendation of adding the item to the work programme of 2022/23 due to expected changes in government legislation and recruitment of additional resources to the planning team. Members of the Group made some suggestions which should be included in the scrutiny of this item such as circulating additional information to residents about material and non-material planning conditions and redesigning envelopes so that residents understand the importance of the contents of the letter regarding planning applications. This item was scheduled for April 2022 for consideration by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group and the Service Manager – Corporate Services was asked to ensure that the list of additional issues mentioned in the matrix was forward to the Head of Planning to inform the preparation of his report.

It was agreed that the Community Infrastructure Levy would be scrutinised in October in order for the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group to develop protocols in regard to how the money generated from the levy is spent. The Service Manager – Finance and Corporate Services was mindful that this was a timely issue and that a framework needed to be developed in order for decision to be made and for the money to be spent Rushcliffe's communities.

It was noted that Councillor Bansal had requested that the Council's community facilities and assets be scrutinised following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was also suggested that the success of the Rock Church's management of Lutterell Hall and the use of Gamston Community Hall as a vaccination centre should also be discussed. It was agreed that the item would not be scrutinised and instead, the Group would be provided with a briefing note addressing the key lines of enquiry outlined in the matrix and that this issue be subsumed into a broader piece of work outlining the Council's response to Covid-19 to be scheduled after the pandemic.

The Corporate Overview Group agreed to maintain the rolling work programme which was outlined in the report. The Service Manager –Corporate Services explained that it was a legislative requirement for the councillors to monitor performance and so items such as the health and safety annual report, the customer feedback annual report, and the diversity annual report would remain on the work programme.

The Chairman of the Governance Scrutiny Group agreed to contact the Financial Services Manager to see if items could be moved around in the work programme where they were not time dependent in order for the number of substantive items to be better balanced and to consider whether all of the items currently presented on the programme needed to be presented at scrutiny.

It was agreed that the conservation areas item for Growth and Development Scrutiny Group and the tree conservation item would be combined for the Growth and Development Group to discuss in January 2022. The Group were also informed that the housing delivery plan scheduled for the Communities Scrutiny Group to scrutinise in January 2022 was time dependent and therefore, could not be changed. It was suggested that due to the lack of items on the Communities Scrutiny Group work programme, that Councillors be reminded to submit their suggestions for scrutiny items by using the scrutiny matrix in their weekly newsletter. It was agreed that the planning communications item be added to the agenda for the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in April 2022.

It was RESOLVED that

- a) The report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services be noted
- b) The work programme outlined be approved
- c) The Group be provided with a briefing note about the Council's community facilities in response to the matrix submitted but not approved.

Corporate Overview Group

November 2021

- Standing Items
- Implementation of Change
- o Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen
- o Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes
- o Financial and Performance Management
- Rolling Items
- o Customer Feedback Annual Report

February 2021

- Standing Items
- Implementation of Change
- o Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen
- o Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes
- o Financial and Performance Management
- Rolling Items
- o Diversity Annual Report

May 2022

- Standing Items
- o Implementation of Change
- o Feedback from Scrutiny Group Chairmen
- o Consideration of Scrutiny Group Work Programmes
- o Financial and Performance Management
- Rolling Items
- o Feedback on Residents' Survey 2021

Governance Scrutiny Group

September 2021

- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Asset and Investment Management Outturn 2020/21
- Investment Assets Update
- Risk Management
- Streetwise Annual Report
- Statement of Accounts

November 2021

- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Statement of Accounts
- Treasury and Asset Investments – 6 monthly update

February 2022

- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Internal Audit Strategy
- External Audit Annual Plan
- Annual Audit Letter
- Risk Management
- Treasury and Asset Investments Strategy - Update

May 2022

- Internal Audit Progress Report
- Internal Audit Annual Report
- Annual Governance Statement
- Constitution Update

Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

July 2021

- Cycling Networks in the Borough
- Trent Footbridge

October 2021

- Covid-19 Business Recovery Update
- CIL Update

January 2022

- Conservation Areas and Tree Conservation

April 2022

- Planning Communications

Communities Scrutiny Group

July 2021

- Safeguarding Adults and Children Strategy
- WISE Review

October 2021

- Police performance and resources for Rushcliffe
- Positive Futures and YouNG Update

January 2022

- Housing Delivery Plan

April 2022

- Waste Strategy
- Carbon Management Plan

6 Finance and Performance Management - July 2021

The Service Manager –Corporate Services presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services which outlined the year-end (outturn) position in terms of financial and performance monitoring for 2020/21. It was noted that this was linked to the closure of accounts process and previous financial update reports and includes the in-year variances along with variances resulting from Covid-19.

The Group were informed that the net revenue position shows a transfer to reserves of £8.892m (originally planned to be a transfer to reserves of £1.859m (adjusted down to £1.59m to reflect carry forward commitments) a significant net increase of £7.302m. The majority of this transfer is due to a number of high value transactions in the year relating to Covid; £7.4m of Covid grants received; £4.7m of payments of Covid Business grants paid out and £5m of S31 Business Rates (National nondomestic rates – NNDR) grants (related to additional Covid reliefs). The Service Manager –Corporate Services was pleased to note that overall, the impact of Covid-19 has been mitigated by in-year savings and service efficiencies.

The Group was informed that the year-end Capital Programme provision totalled £16.130m and that actual expenditure in relation to this provision totalled £9.306m (71% of the budget) giving rise to a variance of £6.824m, and a recommendation was made to carry forward £6.682m of this. The Group were informed that significant commitments had been made with regard to Bingham Hub, Crematorium and Gresham Pitches and 3G lighting but that wider issues surrounding the Covid pandemic had impacted upon the delivery of some of the schemes and as a result there has been some slippage. The projects have now commenced with the majority of the work expected to be completed in 2021/22. It was stated that the Capital Programme will be further updated with the revised budget position at September Full Council.

The Service Manager –Corporate Services asked the Group to comment on the monitored tasks which were outlined in the Corporate Strategy and the performance measures within the Corporate Scorecard. It was noted that despite the real impact that the pandemic has had on services, most notably the operation of leisure and community facilities, there had been positive outcomes for other indicators like a reduction in reported crime and lower NoX emissions. Additionally, many indicators that had not met their target had only been missed by a small margin which showed the efforts that had been made

by officers to ensure services continued to be provided with minimum disruption to our residents.

The Service Manager –Corporate Services was pleased to note that there were no exceptions to report for strategic tasks and only six performance indicators falling below target in the corporate basket. It was noted that there were five performance exceptions on the operational scorecard:

- LINS06 Cumulative number of fly tipping cases (against cumulative monthly comparison for last year)
- LINS25 Number of households living in temporary accommodation
- LICO41 Percentage of householder planning applications processed within target times
- LIFCS56 Percentage of visitors satisfied by their website visit
- LINS19a Number of household waste collection (residual, dry and garden) missed twice or more in a 3-month period

It was explained that there had been 1,400 fly tipping incidents in which WISE had issued 72 fix penalty notices with prosecutions pending. The number of residents needing accommodation and the number of residential planning applications had both increased. Additionally, the increase of number of bin collections missed was due to an increase of agency staff not being familiar of the locations of assisted collections. To resolve this issue, refuse staff now have to report when they have completed an assisted collection.

The Service Manager –Corporate Services also asked the Group to note the four additional tasks to be added to the Corporate Strategy which were:

- Implementation of proposals from the Resources and Waste Strategy for England;
- Coordinate Rushcliffe's involvement in the Development Corporation and Freeport to support the redevelopment of the Ratcliffe on Soar site;
- Support the recovery of local businesses and communities from the impacts of COVID;
- Implementation of proposals from new planning legislation.

The Group thanked the finance team for their hard work in distributing grants to businesses. It was also suggested that a scrutiny matrix be completed so that the effectiveness of the growth boards could be scrutinised. The Group also asked if apprentices and graduates could assist with administration tasks in order to relieve pressure on the planning team. The Service Manager – Corporate Services advised the group that the Council had a number of apprentices across its services and resources within the planning team were being assessed in light of current workloads.

The Chairman read out an email response from the Service Manager – Neighbourhoods which provided additional information about the collection of residential waste. In summary, the email detailed:

- Rushcliffe, like all others saw a sharp increase in tonnages collected at home during the pandemic although over the last few weeks it has started to fall but it will never fall to pre pandemic levels as work from

- home now is seen as one option for many.
- There was a huge increase in cardboard left next to the blue bins as residents seemed to be buying a lot of new things. The Council's bulky waste collection also got much busier with the Council providing 2 days worth of collections each week to avoid a long waiting list.
 - Rushcliffe's recycling rate our recycling rate had dropped and whilst residents at home were filling both grey and blue bins with more waste, the contents of the blue bin are always lighter hence the tonnages had a knock on effect on our overall recycling rate which was slightly below 50% for the first time in many years.
 - There was an increase in glass collections from bottle banks however, there is no plans to introduce a residential glass collection until new government legislation is implemented.

Councillor Viridi asked questions regarding the purpose of the new collection fund reserve, the increase in transfer to reserves and the increase in the organisation stabilisation reserve. It was also queried whether the general fund balance of £2.6m had been maintained. Councillor Viridi also requested further information about the capital fund programme and if its funds were committed to upcoming projects. As the Service Manager – Finance was not present at the meeting the Service Manager – Corporate Services informed the Group that they would be provided with a response to these questions following the meeting.

It was RESOLVED that the following be noted;

- a) the 2021/22 revenue position and efficiencies identified in Table 1, the Covid related variances in Table 2 and the carry forwards in Table 6;
- b) the associated changes to the earmarked reserves as set out at Appendix B including the newly created Collection Fund Reserve as stated in paragraph 4.2;
- c) the re-profiled position on capital and approves the capital carry forwards outlined in Appendix C;
- d) the update on the Special Expenses outturn and loan position at paragraph 4.13;
- e) the comments for performance exceptions and considers whether additional scrutiny is required;
- f) the progress to date of Strategic Tasks and endorses the removal of completed tasks and inclusion of four new emerging tasks in the Strategic Task Review.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

CHAIRMAN