

CABINET

TUESDAY, 11 MARCH 2025

Present: Councillor M Radulovic MBE, Chair

Councillors: G Marshall (Vice-Chair)
G Bunn
C Carr
T A Cullen
J W McGrath
H E Skinner
V C Smith

121 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

122 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Radulovic MBE declared an other-registerable interest in item 7.1 as the 'Young Individual Boxing Competitor' was known to him, minute number 126.1 refers. Councillor M Radulovic MBE declared a further other-registerable interest in item 14 due to the close proximity of his residence to the site, minute number 133 refers.

Councillor H E Skinner declared an other-registerable interest in item 7.1 due to her being a trustee of the Eastwood People's Initiative, minute number 126.1 refers.

123 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2025 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

124 MINUTES FROM OTHER MEETINGS

Members noted the minutes of the Bramcote Bereavement Services Committee meeting held on 23 January 2025.

125 SCRUTINY REVIEWS

Members noted matters proposed for and undergoing scrutiny. It was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to conduct a review into the governance procedures at the East Midlands Combined Counties Authority.

126 URGENCY POWERS

As a result of building works to the Beeston Methodist Church a request was received by the Council to introduce a parking concession. Subject to availability, permits would be provided to allow up to two parking spaces to be used free of any charge in connection with the building operation. Cabinet noted the use of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers following consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Leader of the Opposition, to introduce the temporary concession.

126.1 GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, CHARITABLE BODIES AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN SPORTS, THE ARTS AND DISABILITY MATTERS 2024/25

Cabinet considered requests for grant aid in accordance with the provisions of the Council's Grant Aid Policy.

RESOLVED that the grants be made as follows:

	£
5th Stapleford Scout Group	4,500
2nd Beeston Sea Scouts	2,150
Age Concern Eastwood	10,000
2nd Kimberley Scout Group	7,000
Stapleford Community Association	3,000
D H Lawrence Music Festival	2,500
Beeston Film Festival	3,000
Bramcote Cricket Club	1,000
Chilwell Community Association	3,150
Stapleford Community Group	10,700
Eastwood People's Initiative	2,500
Phoenix Community Foundation	10,000
Young Individual Boxing Competitor	1,000

Reason

The Council is empowered to make grants to voluntary organisations by virtue of Section 48 Local Government Act 1985 (as well as other Legislation). Having an approved process in accordance with legislation and the Council's Grant Aid Policy would ensure the Council's compliance with its legal duties.

(Having declared an other-registerable interests Councillors M Radulovic MBE and H E Skinner left the meeting before discussion or voting thereon. Councillor G Marshall chaired the meeting for the item.)

126.2 COMPLAINT SELF-ASSESSMENT APPROVAL

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code promotes the progressive use of complaints, providing a high-level framework to support effective handling and prevention alongside learning and development. The Code aims to enable landlords to resolve complaints raised by tenants quickly and to use the learning from complaints to drive service improvements. The Ombudsman requires landlords to carry out regular self-assessments and take appropriate action to ensure compliance with the Code.

There is a requirement to publish the Self-Assessment Form annually, as from April 2024. The form has been published since 2024 with the introduction of the Code and there was a requirement to self-assess against the Code to ensure that it was being complied with. The Form has been published on the Council's website. However, following Councils' nationwide initial publication of the Form in 2024, the Housing Ombudsman had informed authorities that it would not hold them to account until 2025 for their performance against the Form. The Council was currently fully compliant with all areas of the Self-Assessment Form.

RESOLVED that the Housing Ombudsman's Self-Assessment form be approved.

Reason

Publishing the Self-Assessment Form would ensure compliance with the requirements of the Housing Ombudsman in relation to the Code.

126.3 REVIEW OF CORPORATE PLAN PROGRESS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE - DECEMBER 2024 - QUARTER 3

The Corporate Plan 2024-2028 was approved by Council on 10 July 2024. Business Plans were primarily linked to the five corporate priority areas of Housing, Business Growth, Environment, Health and Community Safety. In addition, the support service areas of Resources, Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services and ICT and Business Transformation were also considered. Business Plans for 2024/25 were approved by Council on 6 March 2024.

Members noted the progress made in achieving the Corporate Plan priorities and financial performance for the quarter ended 31 December 2024. It was stated that forecasting would be improved in order to understand performance reporting.

126.4 QUARTERLY COMPLAINT REPORT

Members were provided with a summary of complaints made against the Council and noted a report which outlined the performance of the Council in dealing with complaints, at stage one by the service areas, at stage two by the Complaints and Compliments Officer and at stage three when complaints are referred to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman.

It was stated that positive outcomes were being seen as a result of the information arising from complaints which were having a significant impact on the Council's infrastructure.

126.5 NEW HOUSING COMPLAINTS OFFICER

Cabinet was informed that in recent years the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator for Social Housing had been encouraging tenants and leaseholders to provide feedback and hold their landlords to account by raising complaints. The report to the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee in November 2024 showed that

the Housing service received 71 Stage 1 complaints between 1 July and 30 September 2024 (Q2) of which 15 of these complaints were escalated to Stage 2.

Complaints are currently responded to by the Housing Operations Manager, the Income and Housing Manager, the Housing Services and Strategy Manager or the Repairs Customer Services Manager, depending on the nature of the complaint. Of the 71 complaints received in the quarter, 26 were responded to by the Housing Operations Manager and 24 were responded to by the Repairs Customer Services Manager.

The Housing Service has been working to improve the quality of the investigations into complaints and the detail provided in the responses with an aim to reduce the complaints that are escalated to Stage 2 and onto the Housing Ombudsman. The work also ensures that the root cause of the complaint is correctly identified and appropriate action can be taken to learn from the complaint.

RESOLVED that a new Housing Complaints Officer, at Grade 6 be approved, with the estimated cost of £39,700 per annum (including oncosts) to be funded from Housing Revenue Account working balances.

Reason

This will allow the Housing Service to improve the quality of the investigations into complaints and the detail provided in the responses with an aim to reduce the complaints that are escalated to Stage 2 and onto the Housing Ombudsman.

127 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

127.1 DEVELOPMENT OF PIPELINE PROJECTS IN EASTWOOD

Members considered a report which informed that during 2021/22, the Council had prepared a submission for the Levelling Up Fund for Eastwood which was unsuccessful. The centrepiece of this bid was the D.H. Lawrence Library, Health and Life Chances Centre, which incorporated a new wellbeing hub in the heart of the town centre.

It was suggested that further investigation should be considered for a remote working space for lone workers with disabilities. It was important that the Council had a community and social response for residents.

RESOLVED unanimously to approve the requirement for funds up to £15,000 to develop a revised proposition, supported by a business case, for a Health and Wellbeing Centre in Eastwood, capable of successful submission to appropriate funding institutions.

Reason

The multi-purpose building would serve to improve health outcomes and generate footfall in Eastwood town centre.

127.2 YEAR FOUR UKSPF PROGRAMME FOR BROXTOWE

Members were informed of the details of an award of a further round of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) by the East Midlands Combined County Authority. It would identify the broad approach being taken towards planning to deploy this funding during the 2025/26 Financial Year and the report sought approval for the onward governance and implementation process.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. That the broad parameters document supplied in Appendix 2 of this report be approved and confirm that the existing UKSPF Panel will convene to agree the final Year 4 Plan, reporting to the first appropriate Cabinet meeting in Q1 of the new municipal year.**
- 2. That the revenue budget and capital programme for 2025/26 are duly updated to include the UKSPF programme relating to the confirmed allocation of grant funding.**
- 3. To take steps to extend the contract with Rushcliffe Borough Council for the co-ordinator of the UKSPF programme to ensure this resource remains available in year 4 of the programme.**

Reason

This is in accordance with all of the Council's corporate priorities.

127.3 REVIEW OF THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND ADDITIONAL GRANTS POLICY

The Disabled Facilities Grants and Additional Grants Policy had been updated to reflect legislative and operational changes, to improve the clarity between the mandatory and discretionary grants and increase the discretionary limit. The Policy did not deal with adaptations in Council property which was subject to a separate policy.

RESOLVED that the updated Disabled Facilities and Additional Grants Policy be approved.

Reason

This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priority of Housing to provide a good quality home for everyone by responding to need and to facilitate adaptations for disabled people in the private sector.

127.4 UK HIGH STREET RENTAL AUCTIONS-EARLY ADOPTERS PROGRAMME

Cabinet was informed that High Street Retail Auctions were a new permissive power for Local Authorities to require landlords to rent out persistently vacant commercial properties to new tenants such as local businesses or community groups. Local Authorities would be able to take action to fill long-term vacant properties by auctioning lease rights of up to five-years.

The process had some new resources and had been designed to have several intercept points where landlords of such premises and councils could work together to find common ground rather than being a rigorous enforcement regime for non-compliance.

As it is still an unproven process, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government had invited a number of authorities to be pathfinders.

RESOLVED that Broxtowe Borough Council formally approve participation in the above Early Adopters Programme to support the work of the Stapleford Town Deal Board.

Reason

This would enable the Council to take part in the 'Early Adopter' programme.

127.5 GREATER NOTTINGHAM STRATEGIC PLAN REGULATION 19

Broxtowe Borough Council has been preparing the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan in partnership with Gedling Borough, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe Borough Councils. A consultation was undertaken on the draft Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan from 4 November to 16 December 2024. The intention was to submit the Strategic Plan for examination following this period of consultation.

On 12 December 2024, the Government published the updated National Planning Policy Framework. This has implications for the Strategic Plan as it made changes to the transitional arrangements which set out how local plans should implement the changes made to national planning policy, particularly in respect of meeting higher housing targets.

It was stated that housing targets were challenging, and those that did not have a Strategic Plan in place would be vulnerable to having Green Belt areas built on. There were further difficulties around developing the infrastructure required to build the amount of houses. Furthermore, it was important that the right types of houses were built.

Further consultation on the Strategic Plan must begin on 12 March 2025 in order to comply with the National Planning Policy Framework transitional arrangements. Failure to undertake the consultation on this date would result in having to start Plan production again and significantly increase the housing targets, resulting in considerable delay and expense to the three authorities (Broxtowe, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe). A call-in period would therefore prevent the consultation being undertaken within the required timeframe. The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with the Constitution, has given permission for the item to be excluded from call-in based on the reasons stated. A notice was published on 15 January 2025.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The previous Regulation 19 Publication Draft of the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (published for consultation on 4 November 2024) be withdrawn;**
- 2. The Publication Draft Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (March 2025), Sustainability Appraisal and supporting documents be approved in so far as it relates to Broxtowe Borough, to allow a period of public representations;**
- 3. Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development, in conjunction with the Leader and Deputy**

- Leader of the Council, to make any minor editing changes such as typographical, formatting or changes to imagery necessary to the Publication Draft Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan and any supporting evidence documents prior to consultation; and**
- 4. The updated Local Development Scheme (March 2025) be adopted.**

Reason

The Strategic Plan is in accordance with all of the Council's corporate priorities, particularly providing a good quality home for everyone.

127.6 ASBESTOS POLICY

The Asbestos Policy had been updated to reflect the regulatory requirements and reflect the internal processes. The revised Policy aligned with all key legislation and supporting regulations. Key stakeholders in Housing and Asset and Development had been consulted on the improvements to the original policy and were in support of the revisions.

RESOLVED that the Asbestos Policy be approved.

Reason

This is in accordance with all the Council's corporate priorities.

127.7 FIRE SAFETY POLICY

The Fire Safety Policy had been updated to reflect the latest regulatory requirements and ensure that the internal processes complied with them. The revised Policy aligned with all key legislation and supporting regulations.

RESOLVED that the Fire Safety Policy be approved.

Reason

Failure to comply with the relevant legislative requirements could result in serious legal consequences for the Council.

127.8 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2023/24

Members noted the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24 which provided information on the monetary (and non-monetary) contributions sought and received from developers for the provision of infrastructure to support development in Broxtowe, and the subsequent use of those contributions by Broxtowe Borough Council.

128 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

128.1 LITTER STRATEGY

Cabinet was informed that the initial Strategy ran until 2023, and over time it had become clear that the principles guiding the Strategy had matured. Consequently,

there was a need to review, refresh and re-write certain elements of the document. Additionally, since the declaration of the climate emergency in 2019, various waste work streams had been included in the Climate Change and Green Futures Programme, emphasising the importance of encouraging sustainable behaviour and responsible waste management. These developments underscored the necessity for a revised Strategy that aligned with current priorities and effectively addressed the ongoing challenges of litter reduction.

RESOLVED that the Litter Strategy be approved.

Reason

This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priority of Environment – 'Protect the environment for the future'.

128.2 TREE STRATEGY REVIEW

In November 2023, the Council adopted its first Tree Strategy which established a comprehensive framework for the Management of trees under its ownership. This Strategy outlined how the Council would maintain a healthy, safe stock of trees and enhance tree coverage across the Borough. Moving forward, it was necessary to review and adjust the Strategy, along with its supporting action plan.

RESOLVED that the Tree Strategy – Management Strategy for trees in Council ownership 2023-2027 be approved.

Reason

This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priority to protect the environment for the future.

128.3 WAIVER OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Members were informed that due to time constraints, a Financial Procedure Rules (Contracts) waiver was being sought under Chapter 4 Part 2: Financial Regulations (Contracts).

Construction works were required to Bramcote Crematorium prior to installation of two new Cremators. The construction work schedule is dictated by the cremator delivery which has been affected by delays.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny had agreed that the call-in procedure shall not apply to this decision. This was because any delay in implementation caused by the call-in procedure would seriously prejudice the Council's opportunity to comply with the Regulations as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that:

- 1. The waiver under the Council's Financial Procedure Rules (Contracts), as detailed in the report, be approved.**
- 2. The use of the Chief Executive's urgency powers be approved, in order for the work to commence prior to the cooling period ending.**

Reason

This is in accordance with the Corporate Plan objectives for Environment and Climate Change.

129 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the Work Programme, including key decisions, be approved.

Reason

This is in accordance with all of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

130 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

131 APPROVAL TO DISPOSE OF THREE GARAGES

RESOLVED that the sale of assets, as detailed in the report, be approved in principle.

Reason

This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priorities for Housing – 'a good quality home for everyone'.

132 INTERIM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT POST

RESOLVED that the recommendations as detailed in the report, be approved.

Reason

This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priorities for Housing – 'a good quality home for everyone'.

133 OPPORTUNITY TO BUY A SITE TO DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

RESOLVED that the purchase as detailed in the report be approved.

Reason

This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priorities for Housing – 'a good quality home for everyone'.

(Having declared an other-registerable interest, Councillor M Radulovic MBE left the meeting before discussion or voting thereon. Councillor G Marshall chaired the meeting for the item.)