



# Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP and via Zoom on Thursday, 13th July, 2023 at 7.00 pm

## **PRESENT**

Councillor R Ross (Chair)  
Councillor N Begy  
Councillor T Carr  
Councillor M Chatfield  
Councillor H Edwards  
Councillor S Lambert  
Councillor K Payne  
Councillor R Powell  
Councillor D Wilby (representative)

## **APOLOGIES**

Councillor L Stephenson (Vice Chair)  
Councillor A Brown  
Mr Andreas Menzies Roman Catholic Diocese  
Mr Peter French Diocesan Deputy Director of Education, Dioceses of Peterborough

## **PORTFOLIO HOLDERS PRESENT**

Councillor G Waller Leader of the Council  
Councillor A Johnson Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources  
Councillor P Browne Portfolio Holder for Planning and Property  
Councillor D Ellison Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health

## **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Mark Andrews Chief Executive  
Angela Wakefield Strategic Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)  
Kirsty Nutton Strategic Director of Resources (S151 Officer)  
Kevin Quinn Head of Corporate Services  
Andrew Merry Head of Finance (DS151)  
Tom Delaney Democratic Services Manager  
Jane Narey (Clerk) Scrutiny Officer

## **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES RECEIVED**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Councillor L Stephenson, Councillor A Brown, Mr Andreas Menzies and Mr Peter French.

## **2 RECORD OF MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

## **3 ACTIONS ARISING**

### Action 1

*Councillor Ross to speak with Councillors Begy and Lambert regarding their assistance in developing the scrutiny improvement plan due to their membership on last year's scrutiny committee.*

Councillor Ross informed the committee that he had spoken with Councillors Begy and Lambert and that they were happy with the proposed scrutiny improvement plan.

## **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **5 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS**

No petitions, deputations or questions were received.

## **6 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS**

No questions with notice with notice were received from Members.

## **7 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS**

No notices of motion were received from Members.

## **8 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO THE CALL-IN OF A DECISION**

No call-ins were received.

## **9 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS/OUTCOMES**

- Members were informed that a new process had been established for the reporting of recommendations from the scrutiny committee and the resulting outcomes.
- The table included in the agenda pack detailed the recommendations made and the resulting outcome(s).
- This document would be updated and presented to the scrutiny committee as and when recommendations were made.

## **10 REVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN**

- The draft work plan and the pending items list were discussed and updated accordingly – copies attached.
- It was noted that the quarterly financial outturn reports would be added to the work plan once publication dates had been confirmed.
- The Scrutiny Committee proposed holding an additional meeting before the Cabinet meeting being held on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2023 so that they could review Part

1 of the Leisure Procurement Process. The Chief Executive informed the committee that dates/timings would need to be checked before a meeting was arranged to ensure that the information the committee required for its meeting would be available.

## 11 ELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVES

- The Chair confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee required a substitute representative to attend meetings of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Joint Health Scrutiny Committee held three times a year in Leicester.
- The substitute member would only be required to attend if either the Chair (Councillor Ross) or the Vice Chair (Councillor Stephenson) were unable to attend.
- The next meeting of the LLR Joint Health Scrutiny Committee would be held on Monday, 18th September, 2.00 – 5.00 p.m. at County Hall.
- Councillor R Powell nominated Councillor T Carr as the substitute representative and this was seconded by Councillor K Payne.

### RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **APPROVED** Councillor T Carr as the substitute member to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee for 2023-2024.

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Councillor A Johnson joined the meeting at 7.37 p.m.

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The Chair proposed to take Agenda Item 14 before Agenda Items 12 & 13 and this was agreed by the Scrutiny Committee.

## 14 GROUP AND PANEL UPDATES

### A. ECONOMIC STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The notes from the meeting of the Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group held on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 were reviewed. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The 'summary' in the notes detailed the Task and Finish Group's recommended amendments to the final Economic Development Strategy.
- A further meeting of the Task and Finish Group had been proposed after the 24<sup>th</sup> July to review further information.
- It was stated that the Task and Finish Group had done a comprehensive job and that this had been an excellent example of partnership working between the Portfolio Holders, Officers and Members for the Scrutiny Committee to add value to Council services.

### RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- a) **APPROVED** that the summary of the recommended amendments to the Economic Development Strategy, as detailed in the notes from the meeting of the Economic

Strategy Task and Finish Group held on the 26th June 2023, be sent to Cabinet for their consideration

- b) **APPROVED** that any further comments from a future meeting of the Task and Finish Group should be sent directly to Cabinet for their consideration.

## B. ASSET REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The draft Terms of Reference for the proposed Asset Review Task and Finish Group were reviewed. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The date for the Task and Finish Group to receive the relevant papers should be included in the proposed timescales.
- The Chief Executive stated that an All Members' Briefing would be held to present a background overview of the Asset Review and that the proposed timescales for the Task and Finish Group would be amended.
- Following the All Members' Briefing, the Scrutiny Committee would then identify how it could add value to the asset review process and confirm the methodology and timelines.
- The recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee could then be made to Cabinet before a final decision would be made by full Council.
- Councillor K Payne nominated Councillor R Powell as the Chair of the Asset Review Task and Finish Group and this was seconded by Councillor S Lambert.
- Councillor D Wilby nominated Councillor K Payne as the Vice Chair of the Asset Review Task and Finish Group and this was seconded by Councillor T Carr.
- The Chair informed the committee that Councillor S Harvey had confirmed that she would like to be a member of the Task and Finish Group.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- a) **APPROVED** Councillor S Powell as the Chair of the Asset Review Task and Finish Group.
- b) **APPROVED** Councillor K Payne as the Vice Chair of the Asset Review Task and Finish Group.
- c) **APPROVED** Councillors S Harvey, N Begy and S Lambert as members of the Asset Review Task and Finish Group.

## **12 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2022-2023**

Report No. 106/2023 was received from Councillor Andrew Johnson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources. During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Councillor Johnson confirmed that he had received questions/comments from the Scrutiny Committee prior to the meeting and details of these, along with the relevant responses, would be published with the minutes.
- The report detailed the performance for the first year of the new Corporate Strategy but 'trends' would be shown in future reports.
- Members would also continue to receive the Quarterly Performance Reports which would identify trends on a quarterly position.
- The Chief Executive informed members that a lot of positives were identified within the report and agreed with Members that recognition and better communication

with the public was needed regarding the Council's successes with equal emphasis on the service receivers as well as the service deliverers.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the contents of the annual report and the performance of the Council over the last year as set out in Report No. 87/2023

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Kevin Quinn left the meeting at 8.24 p.m.

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## **13 FINANCIAL OUTTURN POSITION 2022-2023**

Report No. 107/2023 was received from Councillor Andrew Johnson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources and was presented by Kirsty Nutton, Strategic Director for Resources (s.151 Officer). During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Members of the Scrutiny Committee had submitted comments and queries to Councillor A Johnson prior to the meeting and details of these, along with the relevant responses, would be published with the minutes.
- Councillor K Payne queried how the Council would evidence that it was delivering against the Financial Sustainability Strategy.
- The Strategic Director of Resources informed members that the report detailed the impact on the medium term financial strategy (Section 3.11).
- It was noted that there was still uncertainty regarding central governance funding but that the Quarterly Financial Outturn Reports would contain narrative information as well as data.
- An enhanced budget setting process was in place to ensure the Council and its services remained sustainable.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee:

- a) **NOTED** the contents of the 2022/2023 revenue and capital outturn report as set out in Report No. 104/2023.

## **15 SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT PLAN: DRAFT**

- The Scrutiny Improvement Plan, drafted by the Scrutiny Officer, was received and reviewed by the Committee.
- There were no questions or comments from members of the Scrutiny Committee.
- The Chair confirmed that he, with the support of the Scrutiny Officer, would produce a final version of the Scrutiny Improvement Plan for approval at a meeting of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **16 ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday, 21st September 2023 at 7.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber.

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**The Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.48 pm.**

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**Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Work Plan 2023-24 v3**

<b>Standing Agenda Items</b>	Welcome and Apologies
	Record of Meeting
	Actions Arising
	Declarations of Interest
	Petitions, Deputations and Questions
	Questions with Notice from Members
	Notices of Motion from Members
	Consideration of Any Matter Referred to the Committee in Relation to the Call-In of a Decision
	Scrutiny Recommendations/Outcomes ( <i>when required</i> )
	Review of the Work Plan
	Group/Panel Updates
	Any Urgent Business
	Date of Next Meeting

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Proposed Item</b>	<b>Reason/Format</b>	<b>Author</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>	Election of Vice-Chair	Statutory Decision	
	Confirmation of Co-opted Members	Statutory Decision	
	LLR Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: Confirmation of Representation	Delegated Decision	
	Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23	Statutory Report	Chair / Vice Chair / Scrutiny Officer
	Annual Work Plan	Statutory Report	
	Scrutiny Improvement Plan	Discussion	Chair / Scrutiny Officer

<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Proposed Item</b>	<b>Reason/Format</b>	<b>Author</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>	LLR Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: Confirmation of Substitute Member	Delegated Decision	
	Corporate Performance: Annual Progress Report 2022-2023	Statutory Report	Head of Corporate Services
	Financial Outturn Position 2022-2023	Statutory Report	Strategic Director of Resources
	Scrutiny Improvement Plan: Draft	Report	Chair / Scrutiny Officer
	<b>Group/Panel Updates</b> Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group: feedback from final meeting	Report	Chair of the Task and Finish Group
Asset Review Task and Finish Group	Terms of Reference	Strategic Director of Places & Head of Property Services	

Meeting Date	Proposed Item	Reason/Format	Author
21 <sup>st</sup> September 2023	Delivering Better Value Programme	Report	Strategic Director of Children and Families
	Area SEND Inspection Report	Report	Strategic Director of Children and Families
	Transport Network Review Business Case	Report	Strategic Director of Places & Transport Operations Manager
	<b>Group/Panel Updates</b> Economic Strategy Task and Finish Group: final report	Report	Chair of the Task and Finish Group

Meeting Date	Proposed Item	Reason/Format	Author
23 <sup>rd</sup> November 2023	Corporate Performance – Mid Year	Statutory Report	Head of Corporate Services (Kevin Quinn)
	<b>Group/Panel Updates</b> Asset Review Task and Finish Group: Final Report	Report	Chair of Task and Finish Group

Meeting Date	Proposed Item	Reason/Format	Author
25 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 [BUDGET]	<b>Scrutiny of the Budget</b> Draft Revenue and Capital Budget 2023/24	Statutory	Strategic Director of Resources
	<b>Scrutiny of the Budget</b> Fees and Charges 2023/24	Statutory	Strategic Director of Resources

Meeting Date	Proposed Item	Reason/Format	Author
8 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	CQC Inspection Framework	Update Report	Strategic Director of Adults and Health and Adult Social Care Principal Social Worker and Quality Lead
	Local Plan (Date tbc)	Report	Strategic Director of Places & Planning Policy and Housing Manager

Meeting Date	Proposed Item	Reason/Format	Author
21 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	Local Plan (Date tbc)	Report	Strategic Director of Places & Planning Policy and Housing Manager

Meeting Date	Proposed Item	Reason/Format	Author
23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024 DATE TBC	Election of Vice-Chair	Statutory Decision	
	Confirmation of Co-opted Members	Statutory Decision	
	LLR Joint Health Scrutiny Committee: Confirmation of	Delegated Decision	



	Representation	(TBC)	
	Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23	Statutory Report	Scrutiny Officer
	Annual Work Plan	Statutory Report	

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## **Pending Items for Scrutiny Work Plan 2023/2024 (Updated: 13 July 2023)**

The Scrutiny Work Plan outlines the areas of work which are expected to be scrutinised over the coming months/year by or on behalf of the Council's Scrutiny function and any Panels/Task and Finish Groups convened for review work.

Topics added to the work plan will have expected outcomes to add value to the services delivered by the Council and its partners and/or improve the quality of lives of Rutland residents. It is recognised that there is a need for flexibility in the work plan so as to allow relevant issues to be dealt with when they arise.

Scrutiny should always link back to the Council Corporate Strategy so that it is scrutinising whether the Council is meeting its strategic aims. Scrutiny should use effective processes to select topics that will contribute towards the best possible work plan for Scrutiny. This means looking at and using sources of information that may help them to choose the right topics.

Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members will need to be selective whilst also being able to demonstrate clear arguments in favour of including or excluding topics.

A common pitfall for Scrutiny can be the inclusion of topics on the work plan that are unmanageable, of limited interest to the community, purely for informational purposes, have few outcomes and fail to 'add value' to the work of the Council or the wellbeing of the community.

The selection and prioritisation of topics is critical to the effectiveness of Scrutiny so processes are in place to ensure clearer focus, particularly in poor or weak areas of performance or major issues of concern to the wider community. It is not possible to include every topic suggested as Scrutiny has limited time and resources and therefore workplans need to be manageable.

### **Does it stand up to the PAPER test?**

- **P**ublic interest – is the matter of concern to residents?
- **A**bility to have an impact – can Scrutiny influence and change things?
- **P**erformance – is it an underperforming area or service?
- **E**xtent – does it affect a number of residents or a large geographic area?
- **R**eplication – is it a new matter? i.e. not discussed in the past 6 months or currently being dealt with

**PENDING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY WORK PLAN: UPDATED 13.07.23**

<b>Timescale (approx.)</b>	<b>Suggested Topics</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Corporate Aim</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Sept 2023</b>	<b>Health</b>	Adults and Health	Strategic Director of Adults and Health	<b>Public Interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee can exercise statutory health powers to call in those responsible for delivery and hold them to account for implementation of health in Rutland but specific area(s) of health would need to be identified.</li> <li>• Timings would need to be flexible to fit around specified deadlines.</li> <li>• <b>Draft Proposal Form to be finalised for discussion/approval by the Committee in September.</b></li> </ul>	Healthy and Well	
<b>Sept / Oct 2023</b>	<b>Leisure</b>	Places	Strategic Director of Places & Head of Culture and Registration (Robert Clayton)	<b>Public Interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Part 1 of the leisure procurement process closed on Friday, 14.07.23.</b></li> <li>• <b>The outcome of Part 1 of the process would be considered by Cabinet on 15.08.23.</b></li> <li>• <b>Depending on the outcome of Part 1 of the leisure procurement process, the Scrutiny Committee could undertake some forward-thinking policy development on principles of leisure.</b></li> <li>• <b>The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) would be able to provide Scrutiny Committee with clearer details including timings regarding possible scrutiny options following the Cabinet meeting on the 15.08.23.</b></li> </ul>	Healthy and Well	
<b>Oct. 2023</b>	<b>Access to NHS Dental Services: Update</b>	Adults and Health	NHS England - Dental	<b>Public Interest</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update to be requested from NHS England for Oct 2023.</li> <li>• National issue.</li> <li>• Item not to be discussed at Scrutiny Committee</li> </ul>	Healthy and Well	

**PENDING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY WORK PLAN: UPDATED 13.07.23**

<b>Timescale (approx.)</b>	<b>Suggested Topics</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Corporate Aim</b>	<b>Decision</b>
				<p>as scrutiny would have little influence or ability to change things.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Update report to be shared with Scrutiny Committee members for communication with residents.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>Dec. 2023</b>	<b>Customer</b>	Resources	Strategic Director of Resources and Head of IT and Customer Services (Andy Nix)	<p><b>Public Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A possible impact assessment study could be done by the Scrutiny Committee towards the end of 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) to advise the Scrutiny Committee nearer the time.</b></li> </ul>	A Modern and Effective Council	
↪ <b>Late 2023/24 or Early 2024/25</b>	<b>Waste</b>	Places	Strategic Director of Places & Head of Safe and Active Public Realm (Angela Culleton)	<p><b>Extent</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny Committee would have little to add at this stage following the extension of the waste contract.</li> <li>• Scrutiny Committee to be involved in the next procurement stage.</li> <li>• <b>Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) to advise the Scrutiny Committee nearer the time.</b></li> </ul>	Sustainable Lives	
<b>Feb. 2024</b>	<b>Early Years Sufficiency and School Place Planning</b>	Children and Families	Strategic Director of Children and Families and Head of Learning and Skills (Gill Curtis)	<p><b>Public Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools' Forum to receive report on 01/02/24.</li> <li>• Scrutiny would not add value. It would have little influence or ability to change things.</li> </ul>	A County for Everyone	<b>Removed from pending list 13.07.23</b>
<b>TBC</b>	<b>Annual Education Performance Report</b>	Children and Families	Strategic Director of Children and Families and Head of Learning and Skills (Gill Curtis)	<p><b>Public Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny would not add value and it would have little influence or ability to change things.</li> </ul>	A County for Everyone	<b>Removed from pending list 13.07.23</b>
<b>TBC</b>	<b>SACRE Annual Report</b>	Children and Families	Strategic Director of Children and Families and Head of Learning and	<p><b>Public Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SACRE Annual Report 2021-2022 published on Council website and all Councillors notified.</li> <li>• SACRE Annual Report 2022-2023 to be</li> </ul>	A County for Everyone	<b>Removed from pending list</b>

**PENDING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY WORK PLAN: UPDATED 13.07.23**

<b>Timescale (approx.)</b>	<b>Suggested Topics</b>	<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Corporate Aim</b>	<b>Decision</b>
			Skills (Gill Curtis)	<p>approved by SACRE on 05.12.23 and published on the Council's website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No statutory requirement for report to go to Scrutiny/Council.</li> <li>• Scrutiny would not add value and it would have little influence or ability to change things (retrospective report).</li> </ul>		<b>13.07.23</b>
<b>TBC</b>	<b>Safety on our Highways</b>	Places	Strategic Director of Places	<p><b>Public Interest</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Speedwatch was working effectively.</li> <li>• Issue was being dealt with by the Community Safety Partnership.</li> <li>• <b>Scrutiny Committee to review the 'Satisfaction Survey' when published by the Leicestershire Police to identify areas (if any) for scrutiny.</b></li> </ul>	A County for Everyone	

## Corporate Performance Annual Progress Report

### Comments/Questions from the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report No. 106/2023 – Appendix A – Annual Progress Report 2022-2023

- 1. Some of the questions relate to the basic presentation of information – is it readily understandable by the intended readership? Suggest that consideration be given to drawing out Key Data (e.g. Infrastructure spending) within a revised Introduction.**

The format of the report, and what information is deemed the most important to highlight, can be changed for future versions. This includes consideration of different versions and information presentation for various audiences.

- 2. Page 12 (and onwards) – The graphic used is confusing in relation to the specific Commitments and Achievement of Outcomes. It is not clear how the graphics relate to the individual Commitments and no ranking, as to the relative importance of individual outcomes, is given by way of narrative.**

The graphic is designed to be a simple overview of the performance indicators for each corporate priority as described in the supporting paragraph – the report also refers to the pages where further details can be found. These tables break the performance down against the individual commitments.

- 3. Page 17 – Healthy and Well Infrastructure – is this not deserving of inclusion in an introductory summary highlighting investment in Infrastructure – a KEY public concern? Could we have Infrastructure and a simple breakdown of where the money has been spent in an Intro?**

The report aims to focus on celebrating some key successes in the services we deliver. For this priority the CQC inspection outcome of Micare services was deemed the most important given its impact on vulnerable residents in our community.

- 4. Page 18 – Housing – affordable housing vs social housing? The key issue is social housing; what does it mean?**

Affordable housing is what can be delivered through the planning system through new housing developments. It is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework which can be found on page 64: [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/426123/National_Planning_Policy_Framework.pdf)

- 5. Page 20 – 5 Community Speed Watch Schemes per annum – why not show as cumulative percentage of all Rutland villages now offered the scheme over past 3 years?**

Each service area provides the indicators based on what is measurable, reportable and shows the outcome of services. In this case there is a commitment to support the scheme but there are no targets related to county coverage.

The report is for the period 2022-23 and therefore it only shows data for that year, which was the first year of the new corporate strategy.

**6. Page 22 – No recognition of elderly and their inability to access online services, be that from mobile phone or tablet or PC.**

The new website is a key tool for supporting high volumes of services online. Data shows a significant volume of residents use our online services, reflected in the number of website hits, MyAccount registrations and payments received online.

Research shows that transactions online are also more convenient and significantly cheaper than in person transactions. Therefore, making this easier through our website will reduce the demand on more expensive Council responses. The new website strengthens our digital offer by addressing the accessibility issues with our previous website and the platform is designed to make it simple to use on a mobile or tablet etc.

The website is only one access point into our services, it does not replace face to face and other access points which are available to residents regardless of age. A resident who cannot access online can call and book a face to face meeting where this is required or visit the Council offices, speak to an advisor and book a meeting.

**7. Page 23 – Consultation on bus services - 747 service?**

The 747 service is a Leicestershire County Council run service and not ours.

Engagement activity undertaken with bus users has proven very positive, feedback from users has shown a high level of satisfaction in the services we provide.

A review of the public bus network and post 16 transport is progressing with the core aim of developing a demand led public transport model which is sustainable, costs less, drives up passenger use and improves accessibility to services including health and education.

**8. Page 24 – Staffing - the council appears to operate with a high level of vacancies for some period of time. What needs to be done to address this problem?**

Some of the vacancies follow national trends and professions with acute shortages - this includes children and adult social care social workers. In addition, as with many sectors, local government has seen an increase in turnover over the past two years with a 'catch up' of staff movement and the increased flexibility in working practices/locations. Whilst service areas aim to manage this the best they can, such vacancies have impacted on service performance which can be seen in the performance indicators and subsequent commentary.

Ongoing vacancies place pressure on staff and service delivery, in turn this can create conditions which mean we continue to experience vacancies due to workload pressures and job satisfaction.

Where vacancies occur, services take the opportunity to look at all alternative options and delivery models e.g. apprenticeships. We have a range of marketing and attraction strategies to help us source good candidates and fill our vacancies as quickly as



possible. However, as highlighted above, some services/roles are suffering from regional and national shortages and challenges and for services such as social care, qualified workers are legally required which reduces options. We continually question and challenge our approaches to help our success in difficult market conditions.

**9. Page 25 – Is sufficient prominence given to the increasing calls on services vs our fulfilment levels?**

This year we have included a dedicated page to customers and created a pool of performance indicators for customer service and service timeliness to highlight its importance to us.

We have spent some time reviewing our customer model which includes access routes into the Council. We are looking at opportunities to simplify access routes and in turn gain a better understanding of what residents contact us about and the quality of service they subsequently receive. This will help to further determine how effective we are. That said the performance indicators capturing customer satisfaction broadly suggest a good service is provided.

**10. Page 28 – Net Homes Built – does this mean all homes built?**

New homes built is the net of all new houses completed minus any demolitions.

**11. Page 28 - Inclusive Growth – new business ‘births’?**

Births is an Office of National Statistics (ONS) term which is widely used and we utilise to compare ourselves to other areas.

**12. Page 29 – Inclusive Growth – median wage vs level of qualification of Rutland residents. Does this make sense?**

This indicator compares the average full time wage of a resident in Rutland versus the average full time wage of a job in Rutland. The indicator shows the extent to which employment opportunities locally are competitive.

**13. Page 29 - Housing Affordability Index – what does this mean and is it true?**

Housing affordability index is information provided by the Office of National Statistics which is informed by the census and provides a consistent benchmark from which to compare affordability of housing in the County. Details on this can be found on the ONS site [here](#).

**14. Page 31 – Minimise Waste – what is the value of the current measure, given the weather dependency of green recycling volumes?**

Recycling rates are statutory indicators which we are required to report to DEFRA. Green waste can fluctuate but this is also the same for other recycling – for example if there is a

big sporting event glass recycling goes up, in other periods such as school holidays recycling often falls as people go away on holiday.

**15. Pages 39-40 – Reds – can we not reference, or give greater prominence, to the impact (if any) of staffing levels, in particular management turnover, on our performance?**

The commentary is provided by Heads of Service who are encouraged to provide detailed and pertinent information to explain performance. This has been captured and reinforced in our new Performance Management Framework and we will continue to work with managers to ensure commentary is clear, concise and explains to the reader the performance position.

**16. Page 42 – Balanced Budget in year 2022/23 – how much is due to SEND?**

The cost of SEND provision is, in the main, met from the Designated School Grant and not general Council funds. However, home to school transport for children with SEND is met from the Council budget; this area is under pressure and was overspent last year.

**17. Why do we not provide a Variance reconciliation between Budget and Actual (or Forecast)? Use of % Variance vs Absolute Amount – it is not clear HOW MATERIAL financially these variances are. How do you define ‘material’?**

As above the performance indicators have been set by Heads of Service and are based on what was deemed the most appropriate to report in the corporate indicators. This does not replace regular and more detailed financial reporting to Cabinet and Council.

**18. Page 43 – Customer Experience & Digital vs Rutland demographic – has this no relevance?**

This is a commitment within our Corporate Strategy ‘Customer Experience and Digital’. This includes actions and performance measurements around services online. Developing our digital content is one aspect of our approach to service delivery but not the only approach. Face to face support can be provided and service areas working with vulnerable groups, for example, those with disabilities, will cater their access accordingly.

Barriers to accessing services online include access to broadband connectivity and therefore supporting the expansion of fibre broadband across the County is a key action.

The accessibility of the information provided is also a key barrier - this can be for many groups, including those with disabilities and of all ages. We aim to overcome some of this with good and accessible online content and tools and we have introduced a website style guide for this purpose.

Report No. 106/2023 – Appendix B – Revised Performance Indicators 2023-2024

**19. Pages 53 to 100 – what is this trying to tell the typical reader and who is going to read 47 pages of it?**

This is an appendix (appendix B) to the covering report for Council and not part of the Annual Progress Report.

This is 12 pages long, not 47, and outlines the key performance indicators being measured – as noted on page 31 of the pack, paragraphs 3.10-3.11.

**Responses produced by:**

**Councillor A Johnson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resources**  
**Angela Wakefield, Strategic Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)**  
**Kevin Quinn, Head of Corporate Services**

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## Financial Outturn Position 2022 – 2023

### Observations & Comments from the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee

No.	Question	Response
1.	<p><b>Overall:</b></p> <p>a. The report is well presented and understandable.</p> <p>b. Can more be done to highlight to Rutland residents the primary reasons for major overspends? When might this be done?</p> <p>c. Despite being assured in the Audit and Risk Committee that Financial Outturn reports would make comment on the position of the out-turn and impact on the Financial Sustainability Strategy, this document does not reflect either the position or the impact on the financial risk RCC is carrying. This should be commented upon in the document, the financial risk is the biggest risk the Council is carrying. Please comment.</p>	<p>a) Thank you for the feedback. The finance team are currently reviewing all financial reports to ensure transparency and clarity for the users to understand the financial position of the Council. These reviews will continue throughout the year, for each report taken to the various Council meetings. Feedback is welcomed to ensure that the information presented is clear, concise and understandable and continuous improvement can be made.</p> <p>b) Paragraph 3.4 provides an overview to the revenue financial performance for the year, with the table in 3.8 highlighting those service variances to budget of over £50k. Appendix B provides similar commentary for all variances over £50k along with an assessment of the possible impact for future budgets as contained in the MTFS, along with an explanation as to the movement since the forecast position in November 2022. Further clarity is sought for this point as to where additional information is required and this can be provided.</p> <p>c) In order to add clarity to the financial information presented the report is focused on the final financial performance for the 2022/23 year. However, it does provide the opportunity to assess whether the assumptions contained as part of the budget setting remain valid. This assessment is provided in section 3.11 to 3.14 and concludes that there are no changes recommended to the Councils MTFS (approved in Feb). Appendix B provides a more in depth analysis with regards to the assessment of the risk the variance from 2022/23 for the MTFS. With regards to the additional savings identified in the MTFS as part of the required transformational activity to service delivery. Work continues on these proposals, as per the original timescales outlined in the MTFS, with Cabinet to agree on the recommended changes to deliver savings in due course. As</p>

No.	Question	Response
		per the above conclusion the assumptions, as contained in the Financial Sustainability Strategy, remain valid.
22	<p><b>2. Revenue Outturn</b></p> <p>a. Summary – the principal reasons for positive variances arising appear to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in users</li> <li>• Alternative grant sources</li> <li>• Deferral of recruitment</li> <li>• Timing of receipts</li> <li>• Climate/ waste management</li> </ul> <p>b. Should more be done to explain whether such items (positive variances) are “one offs” or repeatable (e.g. grants)</p> <p>c. Page 105 – Item 3.4 – Is it not likely that Adult Social Care costs will increase, due to the demographic? Is it also not likely that the present economic conditions in the UK will result in a more general increase in demand for these services?</p> <p>d. Page 106 – Monies received in advance – are these not just pre-payments?</p>	<p>a) As per 1b) response above. Many of the underspends were known before the 2023/24 budget was set and therefore incorporated into budget setting process. This enabled more detailed assumptions on service delivery and its resultant expenditure to be made and relevant adjustments included within the MTFS.</p> <p>b) The Council is currently undertaking an enhanced approach to how it sets future years budget. As part of this performance, both financial and service delivery, is being used to influence the design of services in the future. This design is being undertaken within the estimated funding envelope as set out in the MTFS.</p> <p>c) For some activity the Council approved the provision in the budget of demand contingency that can be utilised if service managers are unable to mitigate pressures from an increase in demand over and above the estimates included in the MTFS. This is an item that will be monitored as we progress through the year, and MTFS assumptions updated where appropriate.</p> <p>d) The terms and conditions of the grants determine the accounting treatment. The Council's accounts adhere to the CIPFA / LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting. Some grants are general grants (in terms of the Terms &amp; Conditions) and the Council receives other grants for specific purposes. Government departments often release funding late in the financial year in accordance with specific spending plans given to them by the Treasury.</p>
3.	<p>2022/23 Capital Outturn</p> <p>a. Page 111 and 129 – Digital Rutland – why did such a huge underspend occur?</p>	

No.	Question	Response																									
23	<p>b. Page 111 – Levelling Up Fund – is there not a case for separating out that part of the monies that relate to Melton, or failing that referencing the amount in a note?</p> <p>c. Page 112/3 – Dedicated Schools Grant – should RCC’s position with regard to funding not be more prominently highlighted in our messaging? (See also comment on Page 126 below).</p> <p>d. Page 115 – Process Improvement Fund – when will plans be brought forward for the utilisation of such monies?</p> <p>e. Page 116 – Item 10.4 – question as d. above?</p> <p>f. Page 126 – Commissioned Transport – by how much has this cost risen year-on-year since academisation? Have discussions taken place with VAR to establish lower cost alternatives?</p>	<p>a) Three sites were descope from the project savings £357k. Other site costs were re-engineered as they were above the cap set by DCMS.</p> <p>b) Costs will be in shown separate in the future once final costs are agreed. Additional disclosure on the LUF programme will be included in future reports.</p> <p>c) Costs will be in shown separate in the future once final costs are agreed. Additional disclosure on the LUF programme will be included in future reports.</p> <p>d) A detailed section is now included in the report highlighting the potential risk to the Council. There is a statutory override for Councils whilst plans to make good the deficit positions are developed. The Council has mitigated the risk of this deficit position by providing funds in reserves. However, in order for General Fund to be used for such purposes, approval is required from DLUHC as DSG is a Department for Education funding stream.</p> <p>e) The use of this reserve will be set out in the Reserves Strategy to be presented to Cabinet in August and Council in September. Use of this reserve will follow the normal governance procedures, in line with the Constitution and the financial procedure rules.</p> <p>f) Use of these grant funds will follow the normal governance procedures, in line with the Constitution and the financial procedure rules.</p> <p>The Council have a statutory responsibility for all school age children regardless of the type of school the child accesses. Table below shows budget and outturn over the last 4 years.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1220 1173 2072 1364"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2019/20</th> <th>2020/21</th> <th>2021/22</th> <th>2022/23</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>£000</th> <th>£000</th> <th>£000</th> <th>£000</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Budget</td> <td>1,601</td> <td>1,801</td> <td>1,921</td> <td>2,210</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Outturn</td> <td>1,959</td> <td>1,844</td> <td>2,333</td> <td>2,950</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Variance</td> <td>358</td> <td>43</td> <td>412</td> <td>740</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		£000	£000	£000	£000	Budget	1,601	1,801	1,921	2,210	Outturn	1,959	1,844	2,333	2,950	Variance	358	43	412	740
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4.	<p>Appendix D</p> <p>a. Page 131 – Local Plan – adequacy of reserve vs latest forecast</p>																										

No.	Question	Response
24	<p>b. Page 131 – Risk Reserve – adequacy and how tested?</p>	<p>a) An update on the latest forecast for the Local Plan will be included with the Quarter 1 budget monitoring report, along with the assessment of the adequacy of the reserve funds.</p> <p>b) The assessment of the adequacy of reserves is subjective. There is no 'right' answer as to the precise level of reserves to be held. There is also no formula approach to calculating the correct level; it is therefore a matter of judgement. The duties of the Council's Section 151 Officer include the requirement 'to ensure that the Council maintains an adequate level of reserves, when considered alongside the risks the Council faces and the general economic outlook'. Each Council must make their own decisions about the level of reserves they hold, taking into account all of the risks and issues identified when the MTFs was set and ongoing through the year as new risks emerge. An assessment of the financial risks will be completed as part of the Reserve Strategy. It will take into account CIPFA's recommended factors that should be taken into account when considering the level of reserves and balances:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assumptions regarding inflation and interest rates</li> <li>2. Estimates of the level and timing of capital receipts</li> <li>3. The capacity to manage in-year demand led pressures</li> <li>4. Ability to activate contingency plans if planned savings cannot be delivered</li> <li>5. Risks inherent in any new partnerships</li> <li>6. Financial standing of the authority (level of borrowing, debt outstanding etc.)</li> <li>7. The authority's record of budget management and ability to manage in year budget pressures</li> <li>8. Virement and year-end procedures in relation to under and overspends</li> <li>9. The general financial climate</li> <li>10. The adequacy of insurance arrangements</li> </ol>