



**NOTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
MONDAY 18 APRIL 2011**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West
Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs J A Smith (Chairman), M G Hemsley, N C Lawrence (substitute for Councillor J E Cottee), G R Mallender, J A Stockwood, Mrs M Stockwood (substitute for Councillor B Tansley) and B Venes

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms G Jenkins Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

OFFICERS PRESENT:

C McGraw Head of Community Shaping
V Nightingale Senior Member Support Officer
P Phillips Environmental Sustainability Officer
P Randle Deputy Chief Executive (PR)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Councillors S J Boote, J E Cottee, T W Holt and B Tansley

The Chairman, on behalf of the Group, wished Councillor Holt a speedy recovery.

19. Declarations of Interest

Councillor J A Stockwood declared that he was the Council's representative on the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group
Councillor B Venes declared that she was the Council's representative on the Rushcliffe Barn Owl Group.

20. Notes of the Previous Meeting

The notes of the meeting held on Monday 24 January 2011 were accepted as a true record.

With regard to the Council's application to be a vanguard authority Members were informed that the Council had been included within the second tranche of the Government's initiative, which had now been renamed Frontrunner. Funding of £20,000 had been allocated and work would be on going with Keyworth residents. Officers stated that they would also consider the work of other local authorities participating in the initiative.

In respect of the review undertaken by the Community and Local Government advisors on the Council's homelessness service Members were informed that the full report had just been received. This contained an Action Plan and officers would give the Group a further update at the next meeting.

At the previous meeting Members had requested further information on the Credit Union. The Head of Community Shaping explained that there had been limited success in Rushcliffe during 2010. She also explained that there were other similar initiatives and officers were considering which were felt to be good practice to take forward.

21. **Cabinet Member Questions**

There were none received.

22. **Nature Conservation**

The Head of Community Shaping presented a report outlining the Council's approach to nature conservation and its partnership with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. Members were informed that a strategy had been developed in partnership with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Nottinghamshire County Council, Campaign to Protect Rural England, Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group - Nottinghamshire, Natural England - East Midlands, and Rushcliffe Community Partnership. The strategy had been developed to protect and enhance Rushcliffe's existing wildlife interest whilst also seeking to establish new links to allow the spread of plants and animals across the Borough. To achieve the targets set out in the Strategy the Borough Council had a service level agreement with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and this had enabled

- targeted work to be carried out,
- increased people's understanding of the natural environment and
- increased participation in conservation activities, especially by volunteers ie 'friends' groups.

Members were informed that for nature conservation there were 360 hectares of land, which included 8 sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and 211 sites of importance for nature conservation (SINCs). Support for the management of these areas was included within the service level agreement and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust assisted 'friends' groups and other interested parties, including local farmland 'bed & breakfast for birds' sites.

With regard to education the Group was informed that, in the last year officers from Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust had worked with schools, nurseries and brownie & guide groups. Also six schools had received detailed advice on improving their school grounds, these had formed links to other initiatives eg Eco Schools and Forest Schools. The Trust also ran a Rushcliffe Watch Group at Rushcliffe Country Park, which was part of the Trust's junior section.

The Head of Community Shaping informed the Group of the Action Plan for the next five years, including key areas to:

- Promote an appropriate standard of management on nature reserves in order to maintain and enhance biodiversity- this includes a review of additional areas to be promoted as nature reserves in the future

- Identify additional Blue Butterfly sites in Rushcliffe
- Promote wildlife friendly management of SINIC sites outside of nature reserves
- Promote action for wildlife amongst Parish Council's and landowners
- Promote the creation of a natural history group in Rushcliffe
- Develop a green infrastructure directory
- Explore and Develop options for Landscape Scale Conservation in Rushcliffe

Councillor Venes was concerned about a development by a disused railway line designated as a SINIC, which had not had any remedial work from the builders. The Environmental Sustainability Officer stated that part of the site at Ruddington had been designated for wildlife and officers were aware of this issue.

Members felt that there had been a considerable amount of valuable work undertaken to preserve the countryside and natural habitat. Following a question the Environmental Sustainability Officer explained that Nottingham City Council provided a portal for people to view where sites were. Also he could provide information for Members on a ward basis. If it was felt that sites had not been included Members could inform the Environmental Sustainability Officer or the Biological Records Office at Nottingham City Council.

With regard to protecting hedgerows Ms Jenkins explained that if they were deemed to be species rich or of a historic nature local authorities would not permit their removal, however it was difficult to influence private landowners. She stated that the Trust produced a management leaflet which was available to all landowners.

Members AGREED that:

- a) the work that had been undertaken to support nature conservation was successful and offered value for money
- b) the approach should be supported in the future.

23. **Annual Review of Work Programme**

The Group discussed their annual report. It was felt that the presentation by representatives from Cropwell Bishop in respect of their village plan had been very informative. Members agreed that the village had been rejuvenated.

It was AGREED that the Group approved the report and it should be forwarded on to Council for consideration.

24. **Work Programme**

The Group included an update on the Choice Based Lettings scheme. The Deputy Chief Executive (PR) explained that the Government had introduced affordable rents, which was a model for affordable housing. It was felt that the

Group should consider the Council's strategy before it was presented to Cabinet. Other issues included:

- Items arising from the Council's 4-year plan
- The Localism Bill
- Service Level Agreements for Rushcliffe Council for Voluntary Service and Rural Community Action Network.

Members also felt that the Group should consider housing needs and the types of housing provided, although it might be more appropriate for this to be considered by the Local Development Framework Group.

Members were informed that the work programme items were considered by the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen's meeting to ensure that issues were scrutinised by the most appropriate group.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Action Sheet

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP - MONDAY 18 APRIL 2011

Minute Number	Actions	Officer Responsible
20. Notes of the Previous Meeting	Officers to give the Group a further update at the next meeting.in respect of the review undertaken by the Community and Local Government advisors on the Council's homelessness service	Head of Community Shaping