

**When telephoning, please ask for:** Member Services  
**Direct dial** 0115 914 8481  
**Email** memberservices@rushcliffe.gov.uk

**Our reference:**  
**Your reference:**  
**Date:** 6 July 2015

To all Members of the Community Development Group

Dear Councillor

A meeting of the **Community Development Group** will be held on Tuesday 14 July 2015 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pavilion Road, West Bridgford to consider the following items of business.

Yours sincerely



Executive Manager Operations and Corporate Governance

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Notes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 17 March 2015 (pages 1 - 10)
4. New Energy Initiatives
  - a) Solar
  - b) Anaerobic Digesters

The report of the Executive Manager - Communities is attached (pages 11 - 39).

5. Economic Growth Update

The report of the Executive Manager - Transformation is attached (pages 40 - 42).

6. Draft Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2016 – 2020

The report of the Executive Manager - Communities is attached (pages 43 - 67).

7. Annual Report 2014/15

The report of the Operations and Corporate Governance is attached (pages 68 - 74).

8. Work Programme

The report of the Executive Manager Operations and Corporate Governance is attached (pages 75 - 76).

Membership

Chairman: Councillor T Combellack

Vice-Chairman: Councillor L B Cooper

Councillors: B Buschman, J Donoghue, M J Edwards, R A Inglis, K A Khan, A L R A Pell and R G Upton

<b>Meeting Room Guidance</b>
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**Fire Alarm Evacuation:** in the event of an alarm sounding please evacuate the building using the nearest fire exit, normally through the Council Chamber. You should assemble in the Nottingham Forest car park adjacent to the main gates.

**Toilets** are located opposite Committee Room 2.

**Mobile Phones:** For the benefit of others please ensure that your mobile phone is switched off whilst you are in the meeting.

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Rushcliffe  
Borough Council

**NOTES**  
**OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP**  
**TUESDAY 17 MARCH 2015**

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

**PRESENT:**

Councillors T Combellack (Chairman), D G Bell, S J Boote, B Buschman,  
L B Cooper, Mrs M M Males, G R Mallender, E A Plant and J E Thurman

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

J Yarham Chief Executive – Futures Advice, Skills and Employment

**OFFICERS PRESENT:**

D Banks	Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods
A Crew	YouNG Apprentice
A Goodman	Member Support Officer
A Graham	Chief Executive
D Hayden	Principal Community Development Officer
C Jesty	YouNG Apprentice
D Mitchell	Executive Manager – Communities
A Poole	YouNG Project Leader
E Sayers	Business Admin Intern

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:**

There were no apologies for absence

**17. Declarations of Interest**

There were none declared.

**18. Notes of the Previous Meeting**

The notes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 January 2015 were accepted as a true record.

The Executive Manager – Neighbourhoods reported that the responses to the Actions from the previous meeting had been emailed to the Group on 3 March 2015. Members requested that the email be recirculated to the Group.

**Action**      **Member Services to resend the email, in respect of the responses to the Actions from the previous meeting, to the Group**

Investigation of New energy Initiatives - The Executive Manager – Communities reported that he had submitted Members questions in relation to Fracking to Nottinghamshire County Council and the Environment Agency. A

reply had been received from Nottinghamshire County Council who were happy to attend a future meeting of the Group, however as yet, no response had been received from the Environment Agency.

The Executive Manager – Communities confirmed that a question relating to chemical disposal from pipes had been included in the submission to the Environment Agency. He felt that it would be appropriate for questions in relation to the quality of shale gas were issues for Nottinghamshire County Council.

## 19. **YouNG Update**

The Principal Community Development Officer and the YouNG Project Officer gave a presentation to Members on the progress of the YouNG initiative since the last update to the Group. Members were shown a video which had been made by young people to promote the project. YouNG was a communications network for young people across Rushcliffe that use social media to promote events and activities to get young people more engaged in their communities. The project employed one young person from each of the seven secondary schools across the Borough. They were recruited through a competence based process and had employment contracts. The young people worked for three hours a week for 15 months, developing their employability skills. The project not only connected schools, but also towns and parishes.

The project started in 2012 and the fourth group of young people was just being recruited. The initiative was led and directed by young people, who had developed the name, brand, copyright and strapline, the Website and app, twitter and Facebook accounts. The project developed young people's skills including confidence, speaking, interviewing, producing videos, and creative writing and had had won the Youth on Board Award twice and had been shortlisted for the MJ Awards 2014. The Group had also developed new projects including the Young Market and attended the Sports and Community awards, and the Christmas Lights Switch On. They regularly blog, tweet, facebook about events/activities and issues that concern young people and provided a focus group for the voice of young people in Rushcliffe. They had also completed specific projects including creating a Cyber Safety Guide and the Superheroes Project which provides guidance to young people on how and who to contact when they are ill.

Members were informed that a recent Confederation of British Industry (CBI) study highlighted that over a third of businesses were not satisfied with school and college leavers' technical and team working skills. The aim of the YouNG project was to address these work readiness issues to enable young people to enter the work place.

Mr Yarham, the Chief Executive of Futures Advice, Skills and Employment gave a presentation to the Group on Futures and the Wider Preparation for Employment Context. He explained that Futures Advice, Skills and Employment was a not-for-profit independent company jointly owned by Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council. The organisation had originated from the Careers Service and Connexions, and had 300 employees with a turnover of £20 million in 2015/16. Work funded by the Council focused on transitions support for young people with a particular

emphasis on disengaged and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) Groups. The company ran the National Careers Service for adults across the east midlands and eastern England regions and provided a range of support to unemployed adults to prepare them for employment opportunities. They also operated an Apprenticeship Training Agency employing 120 apprentices that were placed with host employers, a work experience brokerage and held a national kite mark for careers education in schools and other related services. In addition to these responsibilities, they had been asked by Nottingham City Council to operate an education business partnership model in City schools known as 'Aspire'. This fell under the workings of the company's charity 'Working Futures' and there was a strong board of trustees from the business and education communities that supported the development of this work.

Mr Yarham outlined the current policy context in which Futures and YouNG operated. He informed Members that since 2011 schools had been responsible for providing careers guidance, rather than local authorities as was previously the case. Some schools provided this in-house, however some did not undertake any significant activity, whilst others bought in services from organisations such as Futures. This was also the case for work experience, which was no longer required as a statutory entitlement for school aged students from 2012. In addition Ofsted had started to provide a greater level of focus on preparation of students for work in its latest inspections. The National Careers Service had a small element of its funding that was focused on brokering connections between employers and schools. The Government had launched a new 'Careers and Enterprise' company in December 2014, to also support this agenda, which was chaired by Christine Hodgson from Capgemini, a national IT consultancy company.

Mr Yarham concluded his presentation by informing the Group of the opportunities that existed for YouNG and Futures to collaborate. He explained that work had already commenced to ensure that they were effectively making the most of their combined efforts and the Chief Executive of the Council had given a presentation to the Working Futures group of trustees. YouNG Apprentices had already shadowed Futures staff and in addition to this were looking to; share resources and staff, data relating to employers to provide support to young people, partner each other on bidding opportunities; provide labour market information and combine efforts when approaching schools.

The Chief Executive gave a presentation to the Group on the creation of YouNG as a Community Interest Company (CIC). He explained the purpose of the project and what it aimed to achieved was as follows;

- Providing a unique and coherent careers service designed to be delivered by young people for young people.
- To provide opportunity for young people to have quality work experiences that were focused, organised, relevant and inspirational.
- To provide support, experience and skills required by Young people and businesses by developing a dedicated website and social media applications

The website had been built by Mr Crew and Miss Jesty in eight weeks and was aimed at young people by providing solutions for young people to engage with businesses.

**Action            the Executive Manager – Communities to provide the Group with the link to the YouNG website and a copy of the House of Commons Apprenticeship's and Traineeships report**

The project was aligned to the Council's Corporate Priorities of Supporting Economic Growth and Maintaining Our Residents Quality of Life. It was designed to transform and innovate provision using the enthusiasm of young people by working in partnership with other organisations. The YouNG project was aiming to co-ordinate and dovetail with existing provision, rather than duplicate, and was not another provider. Two bids had been submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government to secure funding from the Transformation Fund however they had not been selected.

The Chief Executive informed the Group that CIC's were Limited Companies that were run as businesses and were the simplest and quickest form for setting up a social enterprise. CIC's were becoming increasingly popular and operated for the benefit of the community. He explained that Community Interest Company status was more flexible than charitable status and outlined the main characteristics. In respect of Governance, Company Directors had the same rights and duties as in conventional companies, but had an obligation to have regard to the wider community the company served. For the characteristic of Social Purpose, the company would have to withstand a community interest test and activities would be for the benefit of the community, not solely for specific individuals. There were no restrictions on trading, as long as activities satisfied the community benefit test, and that the activities were run by young people for young people. There would be a maximum share dividend of 20% of the paid up share value, with an aggregate dividend cap of currently 35% per annum of the distributable and the ability to carry forward unused capacity by five years. In relation to property rights an "asset lock" would require that any transfer of assets satisfied the requirements designed to ensure assets were used for the benefit of the community. The Company would be held accountable by its membership if a democratic structure was adopted and would be required to provide their accounts, community interest company report and annual return to the Register of Companies on an annual basis.

Although the company must not be owned or controlled by a political party or political campaigning organisation, Members could sit on the Board and be directors. A democratic structure was optional, and members voting rights and appointment of directors could vary from company to company. The purpose of YouNG was that the Company's activities would provide benefit to inform, prepare and develop young people, from the ages of 11 to 22, to maximise employment choices and pathways.

The Chief Executive outlined who the stakeholders would be and the benefits of the project. Staff from the Authority would benefit from the development of new skills and expertise, with the ability to influence change in the D2N2 area and opportunities to work across service boundaries. Schools would gain a

simplified interface between young people and business through a single message. Young People would have improved opportunities for work experience, mentoring, coaching and workshops and businesses a simplified and seamless interface with young people and schools. In addition there would be an opportunity to generate new streams of Income to ensure sustainability, through offering the services via a subscription charge, payable by businesses or parents.

There was a need to communicate with young people and give access to providers, to make it simpler for businesses. Currently YouNG was working in partnership with the Princes Trust, Young Enterprise, Nottingham Futures and D2N2 to deliver a young people's experience at VentureFest East Midlands on 14 April 2015. The event was a business showcase for innovators, investors and entrepreneurs. YouNG had been commissioned by D2N2 to deliver this. In respect of the benefits of the YouNG Group, Mr Sayers stated that, as a Business Intern he had gained work experience that would give him an advantage over others when he returned to university. Miss Jesty, as a YouNG Apprentice, felt that often work experience was forced upon young people, whereas, they needed personal experience and that this was not being provided by schools. Mr Crew had also benefitted from a YouNG Apprenticeship. YouNG offered guidance and advice to young people who do not know what career path they wanted to follow.

The Group felt that a diagram showing how the different organisations interacted with each other would be beneficial for Members to aid understanding the roles and relations.

**Action                    the Executive Manager – Communities to arrange for Mr Yarham to provide Members with a diagram showing how the different organisations interact**

The Chief Executive informed Members of the deliverable criteria and key milestones. The first YouNG Apprentices had been employed in November 2014 and the YouNG Website was launched on 14 February 2015. A bid for European funding had been submitted to gain income for and share knowledge of running YouNG Markets. In addition 47 young people had registered on the YouNG website to be employed as counting assistants at the Elections in May 2015. The YouNG Group had been asked to host a stand and present at the Local Government Association Conference in June/July and were organising a YouNG Market alongside the Rushcliffe Food Festival on 11 July. The Group was again undertaking a work placement/opportunities programme during the six weeks summer holidays commencing 23 July. Last year 69 young people were successfully matched and it was hoped that this would increase to 200 this year. In respect of the formation of the Community Interest Company it was intended to present a report to Cabinet in July. Key strategic alliances were being established with providers, including Nottingham Futures and 3 an apprenticeship provider in Derbyshire, and local authorities and schools including Rushcliffe, Southwolds, Toothill and Farnborough schools.

The Chief Executive outlined the potential Governance Framework for YouNG as a Community Interest Company. The Investors Board would be made up of representatives from the Council, private investors, Nottinghamshire Futures,

3AAA and “Six Serving Men” a West Bridgford Company that hosted and supported development of the website The Structure of the company would consist of a development/delivery team, a support and mentoring team, a Vision/Strategic/Innovation Board and underpinned by legal support. The development/delivery team would consist of the YouNG Apprentices, who would be responsible for web development and contract management. The Business Intern would be responsible for business development, marketing and promotion and the promotional/link to schools and communities would be provided by 14 year old Ambassadors. The support and mentoring team would comprise of the Principal Community Development Officer, the YouNG Project Leader and Nottinghamshire Futures. The Vision/Strategic/Innovation Board would have representatives from the Council, Business, school heads and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Members were informed that the achievements of the project would be measured by the following;

- Young people employed to inspire and motivate young people to explore the world of work
- Improved employability of YouNG people that are more rounded and grounded and ready for the world of work
- Measurable data showing the number of work opportunities and entries into apprentices and work. A legacy of supporting local young people into employment
- Enhanced organisational reputation across the D2N2 area
- YouNG established as a Community Interest Company

In concluding his presentation, the Chief Executive explained that Members could support the project by promoting the website launch through their networks, encouraging businesses and Young People to register with the site, following YouNG on social media and supporting the Intern and Apprentices with ideas and encouragement in developing the project.

Members felt that this was a worthwhile enterprise that provided a human bridge between schools and businesses. In a culture of electronic communication the soft skills and experience required to gain employment opportunities were often overlooked. In response to questions Members were informed that hopefully schools would “buy in” to the project. However schools were measured on how many students went on to attend university and currently there was no measure of successful work experience.

In respect of the summer employment Members enquired whether there was a limit on the amount of hours that could be worked by young people. The Chief Executive explained that 14 year olds could work two hours a week and 16 year olds could work longer, as long as there was no impact on their school work. Young people could work longer during school holidays however parents and guardians needed to be in support. The young people that would be employed as counting assistants at the forthcoming Elections in May would be



six form students, aged 18+, therefore the restriction on working hours did not apply. As there were two counts more counting assistants were required.

In response to questions Members were informed that the cost to the Council of YouNG Project was mainly officer time, which was met from existing budgets, and the apprentice posts. Officers were looking for investment from businesses and the European Funding Model and income would be generated from subscription services. The Chairman thanked Mr Crew, Miss Jesty, Mr Sayers and Mr Yarham for attending the meeting.

It was Agreed that the Community Development Group

- a) note the achievements of the YouNG Group and
- b) inform Cabinet of their support for the creation of YouNG as a Community Interest Company

## 20. **Solar Energy Briefing Note – Draft**

The Executive Manager – Communities circulated a draft briefing note to the Group on Photovoltaics. He explained that the Briefing Note had been produced as part of the Item on New Energy Initiatives that had been considered at the last meeting of the Group and contained the following information;

- Background to Photovoltaics
- Cost and funding in the domestic sector
- Small scale rooftop installations (less than 50 kWp)
- Medium size projects on commercial and industrial rooftops including public buildings (50 kWp to 1 MWp)
- Large scale ground mounted commercial Photovoltaics
- Planning Policy
- Further reading
- Interactive map of solar energy generation planning applications and screening opinions

The Briefing Note was in draft form and Members were invited to submit any comments to the Chairman for incorporation into the final document before it was circulated to all Councillors.

**Action                      Members to submit any comments on the content of the Briefing Note to the Chairman for the Executive Manager – Communities to include in the final version**

## 21. **Work Programme**

The Group considered the report of the Executive Manager – Operations and Corporate Governance that set out details of the proposed work programme for the remainder of the municipal year 2014/15.

Following Council's decision on 3 March 2015 that the Community Development Group be requested to consider a Trees and Woodlands Policy, this was added to the Group's work programme for the October.

**Action            Member Services to add a Trees and Woodlands Policy to the Group's work programme for the October meeting**

The Group AGREED the Work Programme as set out below:

Date of Meeting	Item
21 July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Encouraging Economic Prosperity</li><li>• Anaerobic Digesters</li><li>• Annual Report 2014/15</li><li>• Work Programme</li></ul>
20 October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trees and Woodlands Policy</li><li>• Work Programme</li></ul>

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

## Action Sheet

### Community Development Group - Tuesday 17 March 2015

Minute Number	Actions	Officer Responsible
18 Notes of the Previous Meeting	Resend the email in respect of the responses to the Actions from the previous meeting to the Group	Member Services
19 YouNG Update	a) provide the Group with the link to the YouNG website and a copy of the House of Commons Apprenticeship's and Traineeships report  b) arrange for Mr Yarham to provide Members with a diagram showing how the different organisations interact	the Executive Manager – Communities  the Executive Manager – Communities
20 Solar Energy Briefing Note – Draft	Members to submit any comments on the content of the Briefing Note to the Chairman for inclusion in the final version	Executive Manager – Communities
21 Work Programme	Add Trees and Woodlands Policy to the work programme for the October meeting	Member Services

## Responses

Minute Number	Actions	Officer Responsible	Response
18 Notes of the Previous Meeting	Resend the email in respect of the responses to the Actions from the previous meeting to the Group	Member Services	Email resent 17 March 2015
19 YouNG Update	<p>c) provide the Group with the link to the YouNG website and a copy of the House of Commons Apprenticeship's and Traineeships report</p> <p>d) arrange for Mr Yarham to provide Members with a diagram showing how the different organisations interact</p>	<p>the Executive Manager – Communities</p> <p>the Executive Manager – Communities</p>	<p>Emailed to Group 19 March 2015</p> <p>In progress – officers have sent a reminder</p>
20 Solar Energy Briefing Note – Draft	Members to submit any comments on the content of the Briefing Note to the Chairman for inclusion in the final version	Executive Manager – Communities	<p>The Chairman received one question.</p> <p>The updated Briefing note is included as an Item on the 14 July 2015 Agenda.</p>
21 Work Programme	Add Trees and Woodlands Policy to the work programme for the October meeting	Member Services	<p>Added to Work Programme</p> <p>The updated Draft Nature Conservation Strategy note is included as an Item on the 14 July 2015 Agenda.</p>

## Report of the Executive Manager - Communities

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. At the meeting of the Community Development Group on the 18 March 2014 it was agreed that new energy initiatives should be included in the Groups' work programme.
- 1.2. Members have since undertaken a site visit to British Geological Survey and received reports and presentations covering shale gas extraction (fracking) and solar energy. This report and associated presentation will cover anaerobic digestion and completes the programme of new energy initiatives proposed for consideration by the Community Development Group.
- 1.3. Members will receive a presentation on anaerobic digestion from PHD student William Hawley.
- 1.4. Briefing notes summarising all three energy initiatives are attached as Appendices A-C.

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that

- a) Members comment on the presentation and draft briefing note on anaerobic digestion.
- b) Members identify and agree if any further investigatory works are necessary in relation to new energy initiatives.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. On 6 August 2014 eighteen Members attended a fact finding visit to the British Geological Survey in Keyworth to learn more about shale gas extraction. At the subsequent Community Development Groups on 21 October 2014 and 20 January Members provided feedback and raised further questions relating to the Environment Agency and Nottinghamshire County Council. The detailed responses to the questions are attached as Appendix D.
- 3.2. On 20 January 2015 Mr Angus from the Nottingham Energy Partnership gave a presentation to the Group on photovoltaics. A draft briefing note on solar

energy was presented to the Group on 17 March 2015. This briefing note has since been finalised.

#### **4. Supporting information – an introduction to anaerobic digestion**

- 4.1. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) defines anaerobic digestion as ‘a natural process in which microorganisms break down organic matter in the absence of oxygen, into biogas (a mixture of carbon dioxide and methane) and digestate (a nitrogen-rich fertiliser).
- 4.2. The biogas can be used directly in engines for combined heat and power (CHP), burned to produce heat, or can be cleaned and used in the same way as natural gas or as a vehicle fuel. The digestate can be used as a renewable fertiliser or soil conditioner.
- 4.3. The organic material used in anaerobic digestion can include farmyard manure, straw or silage and other grown crops, food waste or sewage.
- 4.4. Within Rushcliffe three planning applications have been received to date for on farm anaerobic digestion. Two have been approved at Cropwell Bishop and Barnstone and one has been rejected at Orston.
- 4.5. A draft briefing note (Appendix C) provides further details on the process of anaerobic digestion, the national scale of this method of energy production and Rushcliffe Borough Councils response from a development control planning context.

#### **5. Risk and Uncertainties**

- 5.1. The market for new energy initiatives is constantly evolving in terms of technologies and government grant funding. The main role of Rushcliffe Borough Council is as a planning authority (wind, solar and anaerobic digestion) and as a respondent to consultations from Nottinghamshire County Council determined mineral related applications.

#### **6. Implications**

##### **6.1. Finance**

- 6.1.1. There are no financial implications.

##### **6.2. Legal**

- 6.2.1. There are no legal implications

##### **6.3. Corporate Priorities**

- 6.3.1. Maintaining and enhancing our resident’s quality of life.

6.3.2. Supporting economic growth to ensure a sustainable, prosperous and thriving local economy.

#### 6.4. Other Implications

6.4.1. There are no diversity implications.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Craig Taylor Community Development Manager / Service Manager Transformation 0115 914 8345 email <a href="mailto:ctaylor@rushcliffe.gov.uk">ctaylor@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	Nil
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	Appendix A – Shale gas (fracking) briefing note Appendix B – Solar briefing note Appendix C – draft anaerobic digestion briefing note Appendix D – Responses to member questions on shale gas from Nottinghamshire County Council and the Environment Agency.

## Shale Gas Exploration Briefing Paper for Rushcliffe Borough

The UK gas and electricity sectors face the key challenges of steadily increasing gas import dependency and the closure of most existing nuclear power stations by 2015.

Oil and gas are primary sources of energy in the United Kingdom and to the population of Rushcliffe. However, they are both finite natural resources which are being depleted through our energy and manufacturing requirements.

Against this background, Wood Mackenzie undertook a major study of the UK gas and electricity markets, entitled "From surplus to shortage?"<sup>1</sup> and found that "By 2015 the UK will be almost 75 per cent dependent on gas imports, rising to 90 per cent by 2020", This requirement will be met from a range of sources and transport routes, including Norwegian, Dutch and Russian piped gas and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from (probably) Algeria, Egypt and Qatar".

### Shale Gas estimates for Northern England

While shale gas in the United Kingdom (UK) is in the very early stages of development, scientists from the British Geological Survey (BGS) have estimated that the total volume of gas in the Bowland Hodder shale at some 1,300 trillion cubic feet<sup>2</sup>

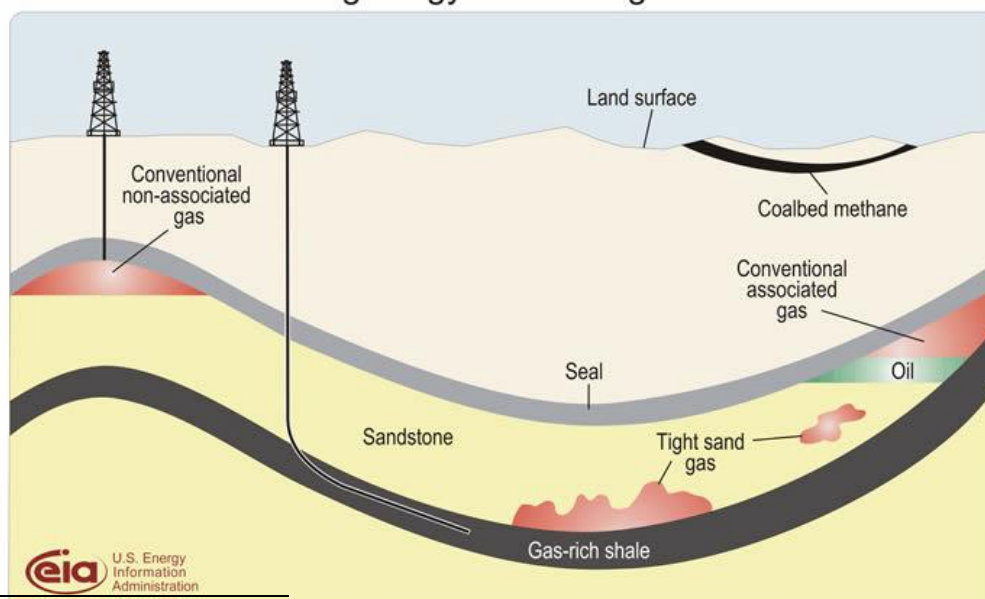
In the UK calculating how many years of shale gas depends on two things: how much can be extracted, and how much we expect to use.

It is too early to say much would eventually be recovered.

### What is Shale Gas?

Shale gas is methane found in rocks deep below the earth's surface which had previously been considered too impermeable ('tight') to allow for economic recovery.

Schematic geology of natural gas resources



<sup>1</sup> <http://knowledge.energyinst.org/Energy-Matrix/product?product=28683>

<sup>2</sup> <http://bit.ly/1xWjkPT>



## National Planning Policy on onshore oil and gas extraction

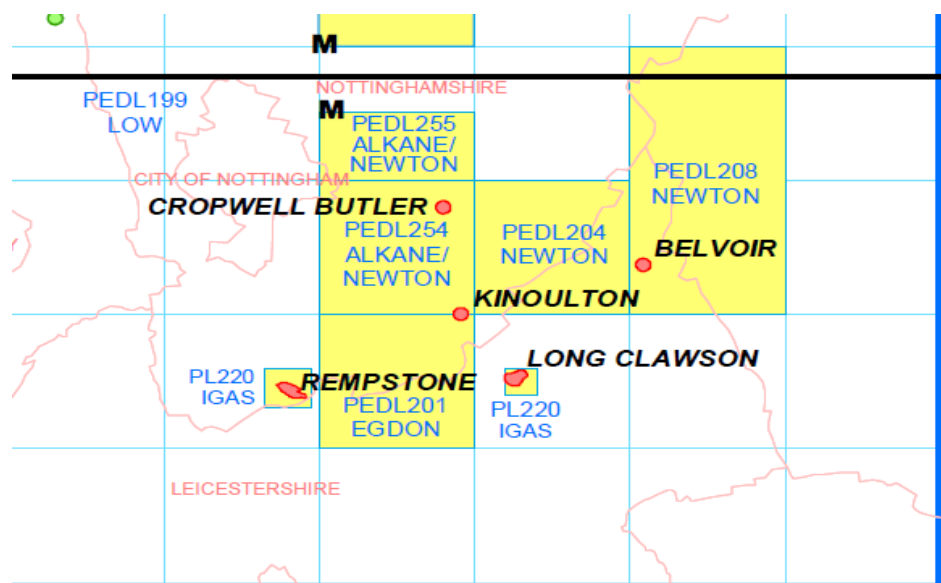
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out minerals planning policy for onshore oil and gas. The Government is clear that responsibility for determining planning applications for onshore oil and gas activities, including for the exploration of shale gas and coal bed methane, will be with Minerals Planning Authorities (MPA) which for the Rushcliffe district is Nottinghamshire County Council.

It sets out the principal issues that MPAs should address with any proposal include the following:

- noise associated with the operation;
- dust;
- air quality;
- lighting;
- visual intrusion into the local setting and the wider landscape cause by the placement of any building or structure within the application site area;
- landscape character;
- archaeological and heritage features;
- traffic;
- risk of contamination to land;
- soil resources the impacts on best and most versatile agricultural land flood risk;
- land stability / subsidence;
- internationally, nationally or locally designated wildlife sites, protected habitats and species, and ecological networks;
- nationally protected geological and geomorphological sites and features; site restoration and aftercare.<sup>3</sup>

### Rushcliffe Licensed area

The exploration of oil and gas is regulated by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC). The licensed areas in Rushcliffe are highlighted below in yellow.



<sup>3</sup> <http://bit.ly/1An3AYG>

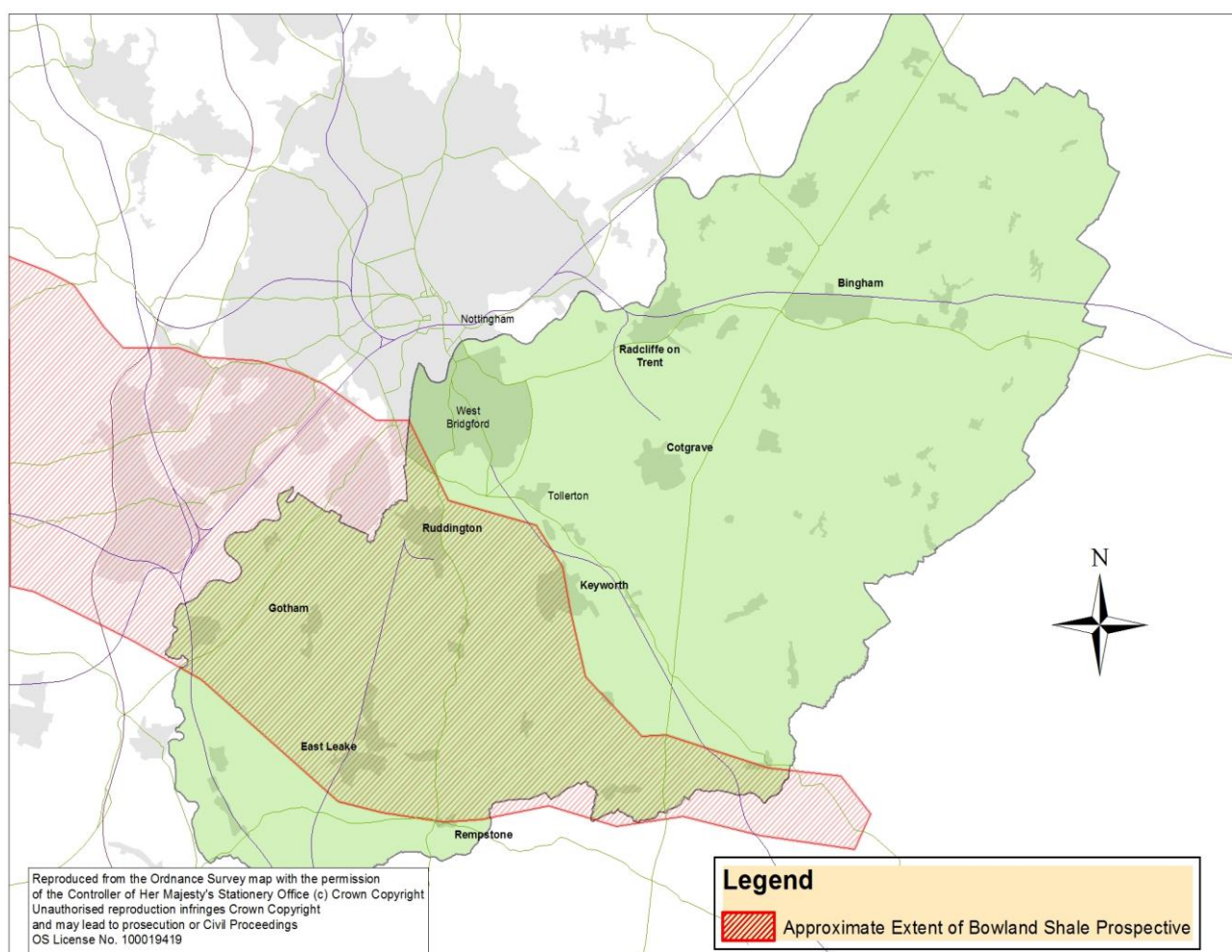
Onshore and offshore licensing rounds generally take place every other year.

On the 28th July 2014, the Energy Minister, Matthew Hancock, invited applications for Licenses in the 14th Landward Licensing Round. Applications for Licenses closed on 2.00pm on the 28th October 2014.

This briefing note will be updated if any further licenses are granted in the above areas of the map shaded white.

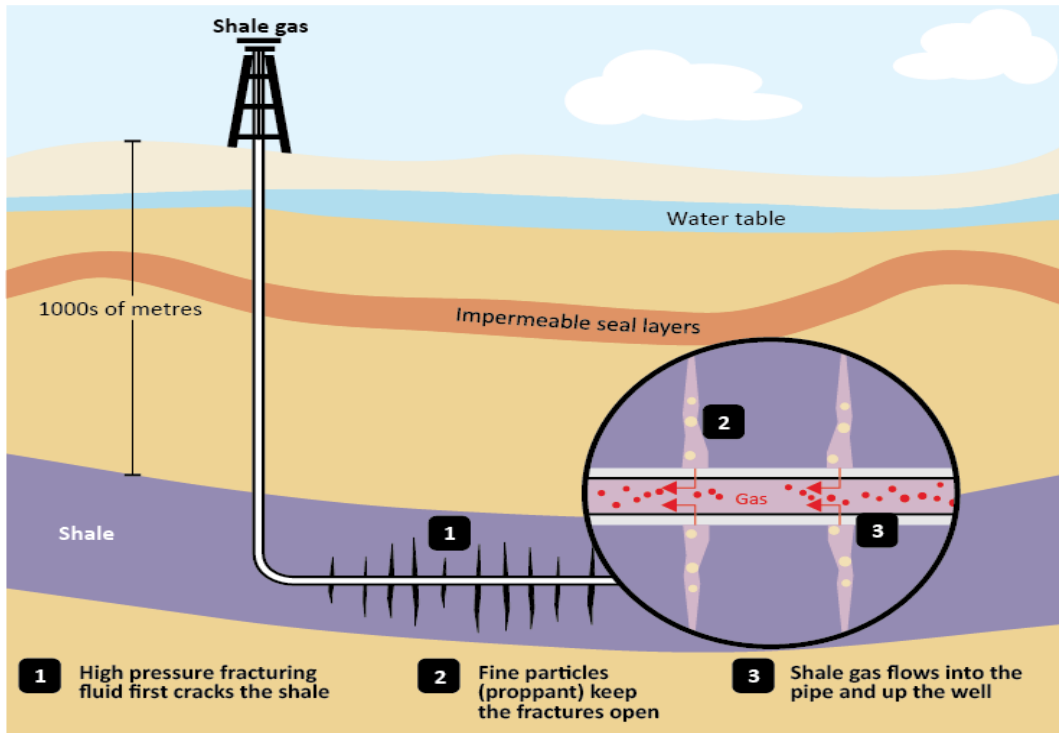
## Rushcliffe Geology

The below image shows the approximate extent of the Bowland Hodder unit which extends into Rushcliffe and contains the Widmerpool trough which is estimated to be up to 11,000 feet thick.



## The extraction process for Shale Gas

Shale gas is an “unconventional” fossil fuel, which means that additional procedures are required to extract it beyond regular drilling. Many such unconventional sources of oil and gas were formerly too difficult (or uneconomic) to extract until recent advances in drilling technology.



A combination of directional drilling and a process called hydraulic fracturing have made accessible large amounts of natural gas locked up in the tight pores of shale formations at depths of up to 2 km or more.

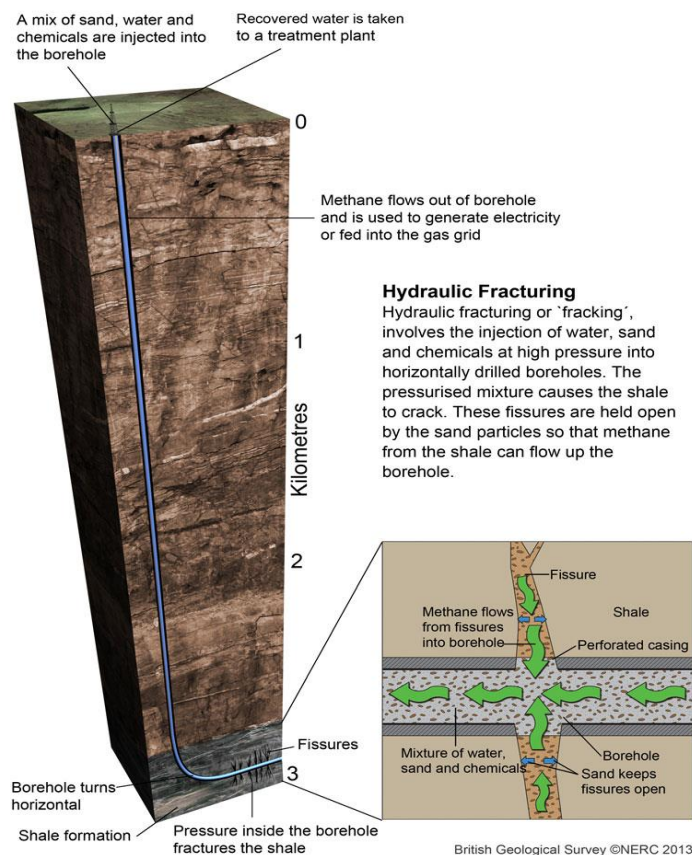
Recent successes in the United States have driven prospecting across Europe. In 2010, Cuadrilla Resources Holdings Limited (“Cuadrilla”) began drilling near Blackpool in Lancashire<sup>4</sup>.

## Hydraulic fracturing

Hydraulic fracturing or ‘fracking’ is the process used to release shale gas and coal bed methane. The technique is used to release oil, natural gas including unconventional gas and oil

This type of fracturing creates fractures from a wellbore drilled into reservoir rock formations, fracturing the rock structure before chemicals and sand mixed in water is injected into the rock.

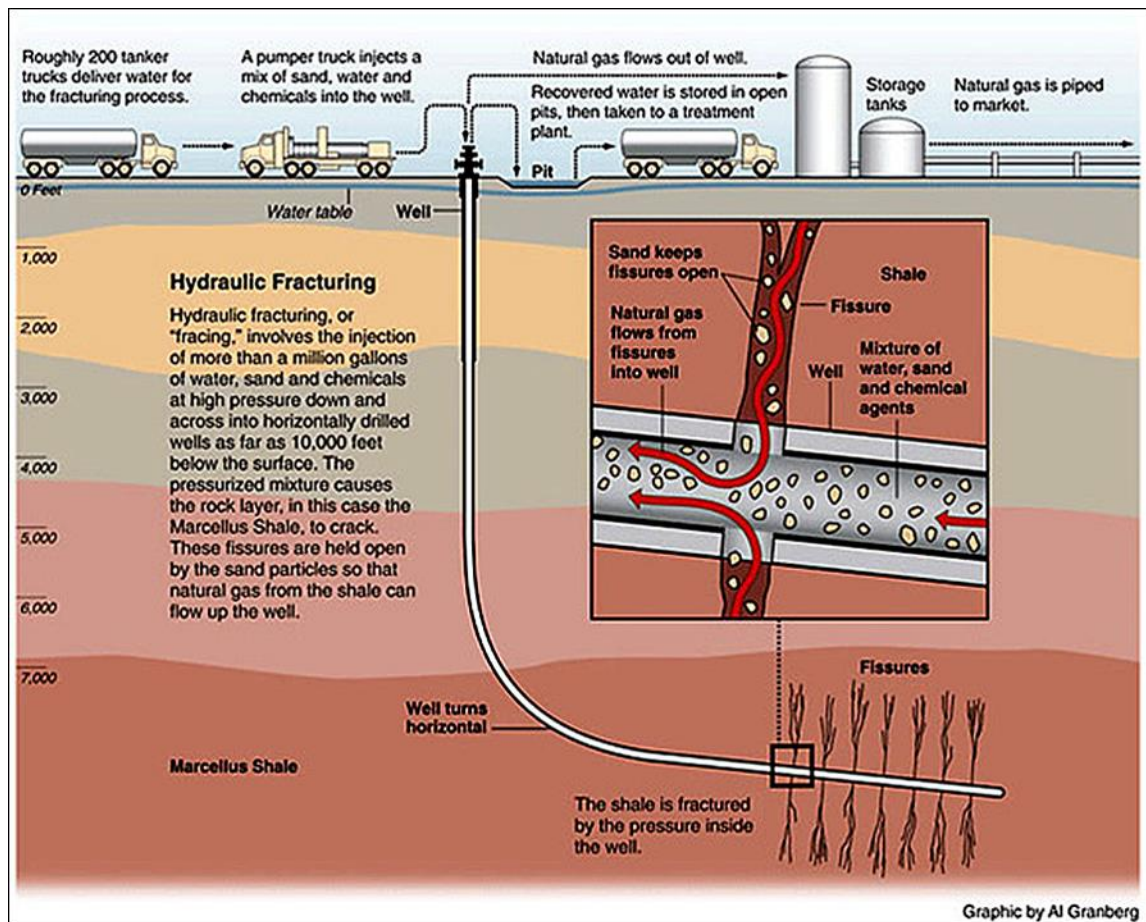
The chemicals and sand act to maintain porosity once the rock structure has been fragmented so to allow the gas deposits to be extracted.



<sup>4</sup> [www.parliament.uk/ecc](http://www.parliament.uk/ecc)

## Fracking and water

The fracking process can use significant amounts of water as water is injected into the rock to help with the gas extraction process. Water use is greatest at the production stage. When proposing a site for unconventional gas extraction, developers must ensure that there is sufficient water and infrastructure for their operations, and, where necessary, they would need to apply for an abstraction license from the Environment Agency. It takes roughly 200 tanker trucks of water to carry out one hydraulic fracture.



Groundwater is protected in the fracking process by: ensuring the casing around the well hole is of an adequate standard; ensuring adequate distance (and therefore rock) between the fracking activity and the groundwater; ensuring the chemicals used and the amounts used render it harmless, should they enter the water supply; controlling the storage and disposal of waste from the sites.

The Environment Agency (EA) protects water resources (including groundwater aquifers), ensures appropriate treatment and manages any naturally occurring radioactive materials. The EA may also require an Environmental Permit at the exploration phase. It is also likely to require an abstraction licence if more than 20,000 litres of water per day is to be

abstracted as part of the development. The EA has issued guidance relating to shale gas extraction and fracking.<sup>5</sup>

## **Further Reading**

### **Shale Gas Made simple**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/374718/Shale\\_in\\_Plain\\_English\\_booklet\\_Web\\_Final.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374718/Shale_in_Plain_English_booklet_Web_Final.pdf)

### **Facts about Fracking**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/270980/Developing\\_Onshore\\_Shale\\_Gas\\_and\\_Oil\\_Facts\\_about\\_Fracking\\_140113.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270980/Developing_Onshore_Shale_Gas_and_Oil_Facts_about_Fracking_140113.pdf)

### **Fracking UK Shale: Climate change**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277220/Climate\\_Change.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277220/Climate_Change.pdf)

### **Fracking UK Shale: local air quality**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277220/Climate\\_Change.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277220/Climate_Change.pdf)

### **Fracking UK Shale: planning permission and communities**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/283832/Planning\\_v3.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283832/Planning_v3.pdf)

### **Fracking UK Shale: regulation and monitoring**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/283834/Regulation\\_v3.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283834/Regulation_v3.pdf)

### **Fracking UK Shale: Safety from design to decommissioning**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/283835/Safety\\_v3.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283835/Safety_v3.pdf)

### **Fracking UK Shale: understanding earthquake risk**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/283837/Seismic\\_v3.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/283837/Seismic_v3.pdf)

### **Fracking UK Shale: water**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/277211/Water.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/277211/Water.pdf)

### **Background note on shale gas and hydraulic fracturing**

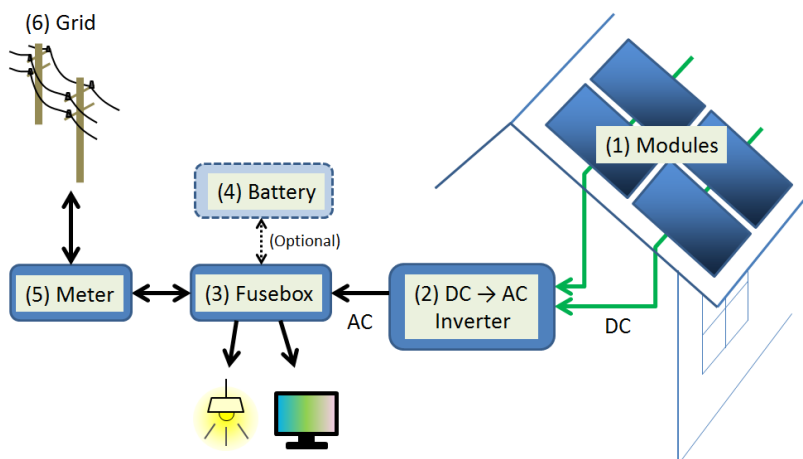
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/304755/5057-background-note-on-shale-gas-and-hydraulic-fractur.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/304755/5057-background-note-on-shale-gas-and-hydraulic-fractur.pdf)

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<sup>5</sup> <http://bit.ly/1F71IIV>

## Photovoltaic (PV) Briefing Paper for Rushcliffe Borough

The Local Government Association defines Photovoltaic as systems that “consist of photovoltaic cells that, in simple terms, produce electricity when exposed to sunlight. Each cell is made up of layers of a semi-conducting material. Light falling on the cell creates an electrical potential (voltage) across the layers, causing electrical current to flow in a connected external electrical circuit”<sup>1</sup>.



Solar Cells and their Applications Second Edition, Lewis Fraas, Larry Partain, Wiley, 2010, ISBN 978-0-470-44633-1, Figure 10.2

“The 2009 Renewable Energy Directive set a target for the UK to achieve 15% of its energy consumption from renewable sources by 2020”. “This compares to 4.1% in 2012. Solar PV is one of the eight key renewable energy technologies that can help to create a clean, balanced UK energy mix”<sup>2</sup>.

“As of June 2013, the UK now has 2.4GW installed capacity”. “The extensive deployment of solar PV across the UK has become increasingly visible to the public at all scales and is among the most popular renewable energy technologies”<sup>2</sup>.

The DECC report UK Solar PV Strategy Part 1: Roadmap to a Brighter Future states “We need to ensure that this level of support can be maintained – including by ensuring that solar PV is appropriately sited, and allow for greater community engagement. We do, however, expect on-going deployment of the technology to continue at all scales”<sup>2</sup>.

“Solar PV can be deployed in a variety of locations and contexts including domestic roofs, commercial and industrial properties, and on the ground in brownfield and greenfield sites. It enables consumers and businesses to independently generate electricity, providing greater competition in the market; increases consumer choice; and given the relative cost and ease of installation in comparison to other renewable energy electricity technologies, makes an attractive option for homeowners, helping them save on their energy bills while contributing towards the delivery of our renewables target. Solar PV is not just important because of its energy generation potential – it can also contribute to UK economic growth”<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> LGA, *Solar panels – photovoltaics* online at [http://www.local.gov.uk/compare-renewables/-/journal\\_content/56/10180/3592447/ARTICLE](http://www.local.gov.uk/compare-renewables/-/journal_content/56/10180/3592447/ARTICLE) - accessed 3 March 2015

<sup>2</sup> DECC (2013) *UK Solar PV Strategy Part 1: Roadmap to a Brighter Future*, online at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/249277/UK\\_Solar\\_PV\\_Strategy\\_Part\\_1\\_Roadmap\\_to\\_a\\_Brighter\\_Future\\_08.10.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/249277/UK_Solar_PV_Strategy_Part_1_Roadmap_to_a_Brighter_Future_08.10.pdf)

“Solar photovoltaic (PV) technology is a mature, proven technology and is a reliable source of renewable energy with an important role to play in the UK energy generation mix”<sup>2</sup>.

### Cost and funding in the domestic sector

Typical costs for PV are up to £4,000 per kW for systems integrated in new build projects up to £5,250 per kW for systems retrofitted on existing buildings. However, costs are reducing rapidly and larger systems can cost less than £3,000 per kW. Payback for PV is currently between eight to 13 years depending on the size of the project and whether you use the generated electricity or export it to the grid.

PV is eligible for the feed-in tariffs (FITs). This is a government scheme where a payment is made to producers of electricity from renewable sources; the amount paid is guaranteed for 25 years and based on the predicted output. There have been significant changes to FITs recently and in future the payment will be considerably less than it has been – 21p per kW<sup>1</sup>

Solar PV needs little maintenance –panels need to be kept relatively clean and not overshadowed. The panels should last 25 years or more, but the inverter is likely to need replacing some time during this period, at a current cost of about £800<sup>3</sup>.

The power of a PV cell is measured in kilowatts peak (kWp). That's the rate at which it generates energy at peak performance in full direct sunlight during the summer<sup>3</sup>.

### Small-scale roof-top (less than 50 kWp)



“Installing solar PV on housing (systems typically <4 kWp) is the largest sub-sector of the UK solar PV market, both in terms of number of installations and the total capacity installed. Recent data shows that more than half a million homes now have solar panels”<sup>4</sup>.

“The main drivers for the growth in the domestic sector have been the introduction of the Feed-in Tariff in 2010” plus falling material costs<sup>3</sup>.

“PV installed on buildings allows the electricity to be both generated and used on site, giving benefits such as reduced

<sup>2</sup> EST (2015) Solar panels online at <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/domestic/content/solar-panels>  
Domestic PV on a house in West Bridgford

<sup>4</sup> DECC (2014) *UK Solar PV Strategy Part 2: Delivering a Brighter Future*, online at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/302049/uk\\_solar\\_pv\\_strategy\\_part\\_2.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/302049/uk_solar_pv_strategy_part_2.pdf)

electricity bills and, by reducing pressure on the grid, scope for greater overall levels of deployment and lower distribution losses” and does not require previously undeveloped land<sup>3</sup>.

As at the end of December 2014, in Rushcliffe there were 1649 domestic PV installations, this is 354.9 domestic PV installations per 10,000 Households<sup>5</sup>. This compares to England which has 206 domestic PV installations per 10,000 Households<sup>6</sup>.

Rushcliffe Borough Council has encouraged domestic PV installations through projects such as ‘Rushcliffe Solar’ – a community led promotion project, run by Transition West Bridgford which provided advice to homeowners on whether their property was suitable for PV and what levels of generation were likely.

The council also supported the ‘Greening Campaign’, local environmental initiatives, which in Radcliffe-on-Trent led to a bulk purchase scheme for solar installations. A video of this project is available (online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewOjWQDZRMo>).

### **Mid-size projects on commercial and industrial rooftops including public buildings (50 kWp – 1 MWp). Requires 6 to 9m<sup>2</sup> per kWp**

Mid size projects are built onto the roof of buildings, often on warehouses, shops, offices and farm barns, but also on schools and hospitals, leisure centres, community halls and church buildings.

“Solar PV systems for commercial and industrial use have similar benefits to those of domestic systems – lower electricity bills, protection against future electricity price rises, and a smaller carbon footprint - but with the added advantage of generating larger amounts of electricity and generally being able to better match on-site generation with on-site demand”<sup>4</sup>.

“Some sectors – retail, transport and agriculture, for example – have made some excellent progress in seizing the opportunity of generating their own electricity”<sup>4</sup>.

In the UK, about 5-20 per cent of solar deployment is in the commercial and industrial sector. In Germany it is about 50%<sup>3</sup>. “The Government wants to see public buildings at the forefront of the move to renewable energy”<sup>4</sup>.

Gaynor Hartnell, of the Renewable Energy Association states "Solar PV has suffered from poor publicity since the reduction of the Feed-in Tariffs and the implementation of a new system of tariff depression by the Government". "This is unfortunate, given its spectacular cost reduction. PV is now on track to become one of the cheapest forms of renewable electricity generation”<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> DECC (2015) *Domestic Solar Photovoltaic Installations by Local Authorities* online at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/405394/decc\\_local\\_authority\\_data.xlsx](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/405394/decc_local_authority_data.xlsx)

<sup>6</sup> DECC (2015) *Sub-regional Feed-in Tariffs confirmed on the CFR statistics* online at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/397443/December\\_2014\\_Sub\\_regional\\_Feed\\_in\\_Tariffs\\_confirmed\\_on\\_the\\_CFR\\_Statistics.xls](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397443/December_2014_Sub_regional_Feed_in_Tariffs_confirmed_on_the_CFR_Statistics.xls)

<sup>7</sup> online at <http://www.evoenergy.co.uk/blog/11699/local-authorities-encouraged-to-turn-to-solar-power/>, downloaded Mar 2015



Solar PV has been installed widely on Local Authority estates.

On 6 November 2011, Rushcliffe Borough Cabinet considered installing solar panels on council owned buildings. This was rejected at the time due to concerns about the continuation of the Feed in Tariff scheme (FITS) and the length of payback time. It was agreed to “reconsider the issue if a more convincing business case demonstrating a significant reduction in the payback period, for example five years, could be developed in the future”<sup>8</sup>.

However, the planned Rushcliffe Arena Leisure Centre and Council offices development which comprises of leisure facilities including two swimming pools, changing areas, fitness suites, sports and bowls hall, squash courts together with council and civic offices arranged over two floors.

With the current emphasis placed on energy conservation, the Leisure and Civic Relocation Members Group recommended that in order to enhance the development’s sustainable credentials and to deliver additional revenue savings this development should include 300sqm of Photovoltaic panels which would be installed on the office roof. The final proposal regarding this element will be presented to cabinet on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2015.

### **Large-scale ground-mounted Commercial Photovoltaic**

These are large developments often built on farms and therefore have been criticised for displacing food crops and intrusive development in the countryside. Concerns have also been raised about potential impacts on ecology, although data is not yet available for or against these potential impacts.



Commercial Ground Mounted Photovoltaic

Large-scale ground-mounted solar deployment has been much stronger than anticipated in government modelling. This can have impacts on visual amenity, and siting and design are important<sup>3</sup>. The government is considering measures to reduce public fund support for this sector to ensure a diverse renewables market.

Up to Jan 2015 there have been 10 planning applications for large scale PV schemes and advice / screening opinion has been provided 6 times (see map below). Of these 9 solar farms have been approved at Rempstone Road, East

Leake; Costock Road, Wysall; Langar Lane, Colston Bassett; Blackberry Farm, Cotgrave; Stragglethorpe Road, Holme Pierrepont; Grantham Road, Radcliffe On Trent; Longhedge Lane Orston; Main Road Shelton and at Elton.

<sup>8</sup> RBC (2011) *Minutes Of The Meeting Of The Cabinet Tuesday 6 September 2011* online at <http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy/meetingsandminutes/agendasandminutes/2011/september/6septembercabinet/>

Three local authorities in the UK have / are developing their own large scale PV systems<sup>9</sup>.

In addition to the three main markets, there is an emerging and growing market for **building-integrated photovoltaics** (BIPV)<sup>4</sup>. These are systems installed into buildings during construction, using solar PV materials for the building fabric as opposed to being mounted on buildings.

## Planning Policy

DECC will work with the Department for Communities and Local Government on extending permitted development rights in England for building-mounted solar PV to rooftop systems up to 1 MW<sup>4</sup>.

Most domestic, roof mounted systems are now permitted development as long as they don't protrude more than 200mm beyond the plane of the wall or the roof slope. Domestic stand-alone systems are permitted unless they are: more than 4 metres in height installed less than 5 metres away from any boundary above 9m<sup>2</sup> situated on a wall within any part of the curtilage of the dwelling house and would be visible from a highway in Conservations Areas and World Heritage Sites<sup>1</sup>.

Systems that do not fit these criteria still need to apply for planning permission. Systems also need to comply with building regulations. Further details are available online at <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/solarpanels>

Non-domestic systems will need to apply for planning permission. PV developments with a capacity of more than 0.5MW need a 'screening opinion' to assess whether or not an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required.

DCLG's planning guidance on large-scale solar farms sets out particular considerations for solar farms, such as their visual impact<sup>3</sup>. DECC and Defra will work with industry to understand better the effects (both positive and negative) of solar farms on biodiversity<sup>4</sup>.

Support for solar PV should ensure proposals are appropriately sited, give proper weight to environmental considerations such as landscape and visual impact, heritage and local amenity, and provide opportunities for local communities to comment on decisions that affect them<sup>4</sup>.

## Further Reading



Government documents online at <https://www.gov.uk/search?q=pv>

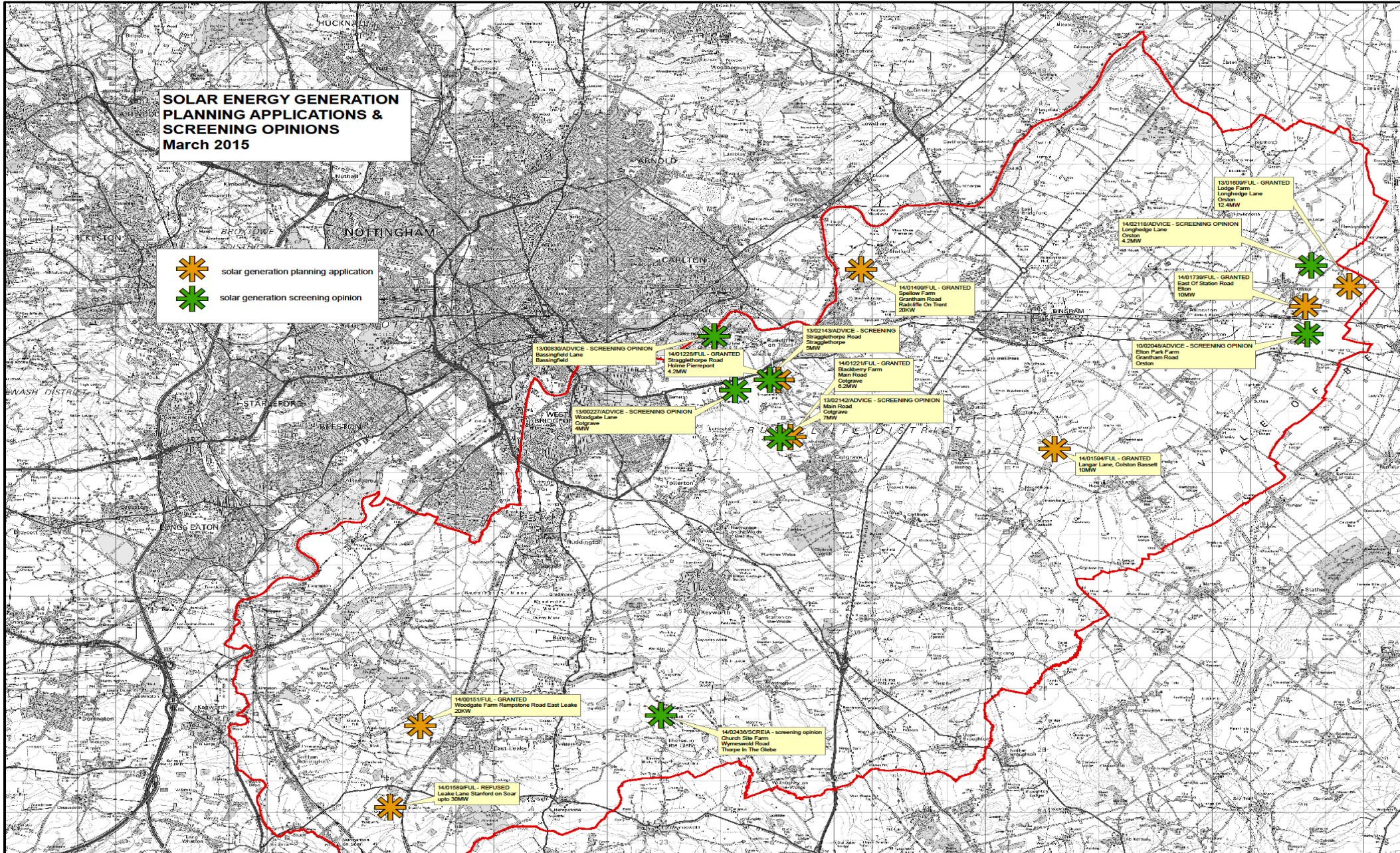
Public Sector Energy newsletter online at <http://www.publicsectorenergy.co.uk/renewable-energy-technologies/solar>

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<sup>9</sup> Public Sector Energy (2015) *Work starts on the first council-owned solar farm in Wales* online at <http://www.publicsectorenergy.co.uk/85-articles/news/solar/877-work-starts-on-the-first-council-owned-solar-farm-in-wale>

**SOLAR ENERGY GENERATION  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS &  
SCREENING OPINIONS  
March 2015**

-  solar generation planning application
-  solar generation screening opinion





# Member Briefing Note

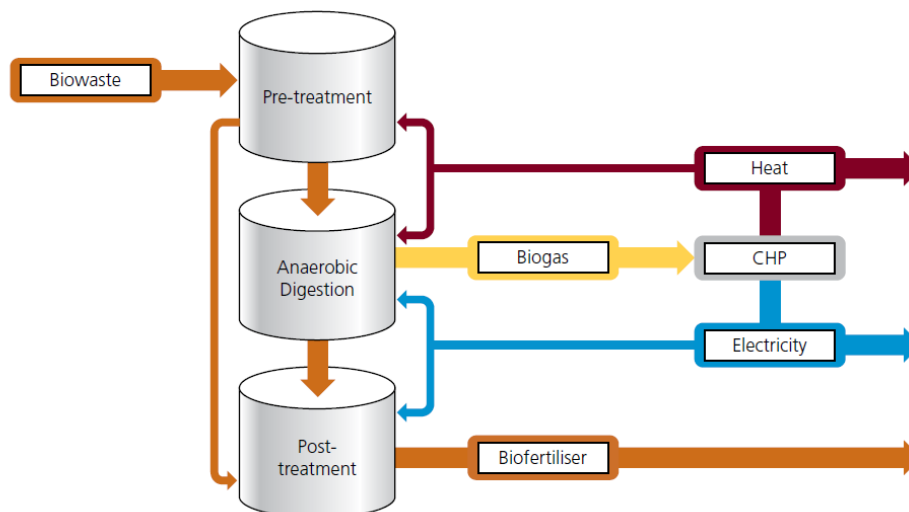
## Anaerobic Digester Briefing Note

### Introduction

This briefing note provides members with an overview of Anaerobic Digestion, explaining what it is and how it is used by businesses in Rushcliffe.

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) defines Anaerobic Digestion (AD) as 'a natural process in which microorganisms break down organic matter, in the absence of oxygen, into biogas (a mixture of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and methane) and digestate (a nitrogen-rich fertiliser)'<sup>1</sup>.

**Organic 'waste' → Methane + Carbon Dioxide + digestate + waste water**



**Figure 1: Flow diagram for an Anaerobic Digestion Plant**

The organic material used in Anaerobic Digestion can include farmyard manure, straw or silage and other grown crops or sewage or food 'waste'

The biogas can be used directly in engines for Combined Heat and Power (CHP), burned to produce heat, or can be cleaned and used in the same way as natural gas or as a vehicle fuel. The digestate can be used as a renewable fertiliser or soil conditioner<sup>1</sup>.

Anaerobic Digestion is not a new technology, and has been widely applied in the UK for the treatment of sewage sludge for over 100 years. However, until quite recently it has not been used here for treating other waste or with purpose-grown crops<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> DEFRA (2011) *Anaerobic Digestion Strategy and Action Plan*, DEFRA, London, online at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/69400/anaerobic-digestion-strat-action-plan.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69400/anaerobic-digestion-strat-action-plan.pdf)

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs are promoting Anaerobic Digestion as a solution to deal with organic wastes and a source of renewable energy

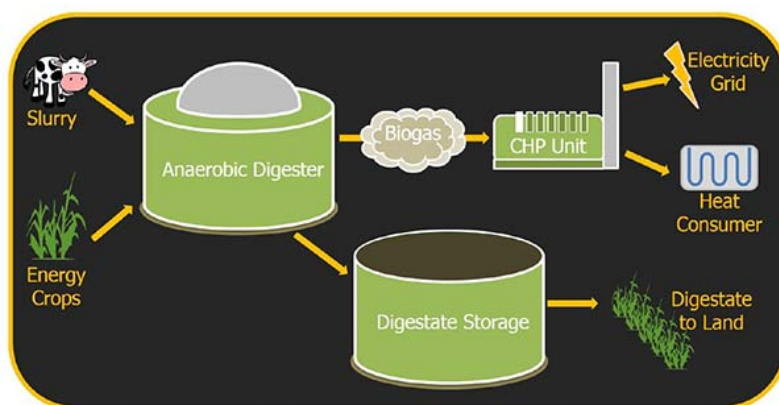


Figure 2: pictorial diagram of an Anaerobic Digestion plant<sup>2</sup>

### On Farm generated feedstocks

Farmyard manure and slurry or crops grown specifically for use as feedstock for Anaerobic Digestion, can be used or a combination of feedstocks.

Technology for these feedstocks is fairly simple, with little or no requirement for pre-treatment.



Feedstock will either be free of charge or purposely grown and therefore incur a marginal production cost<sup>1</sup>. Consideration is required whether the feedstocks are classed as waste and require appropriate licences 'as well as authorisation under the Animal By-Products Regulations (ABPR) where appropriate'<sup>1</sup>.

Funding has been made available to support On Farm Anaerobic Digestion. Funding is available through the Renewables

Obligation, a financial support set up by the Government too generators of renewable electricity or Feed-In Tariffs (FITs) for smaller scale generators. The Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) provides support for other renewable energy producers. Additionally in October 2013 an Anaerobic Digestion Loan Fund was set up to provide farmers funding to set up small anaerobic digestion (AD) plants<sup>3</sup>.

### Off farm generated feedstocks

'Around 16 million tonnes (Mt) of post-farm gate food and drink waste arises annually in the UK. The most environmentally preferable treatment options for food waste are usually Anaerobic Digestion or composting'. 'Anaerobic Digestion is generally preferable because it produces both renewable energy and a biofertiliser, which together do more to offset Green House Gas emissions than producing compost'<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cropwellbishopplan.co.uk/pdf\\_files/Stragglethorpe%20AD%20plan%20Oct14.pdf](http://www.cropwellbishopplan.co.uk/pdf_files/Stragglethorpe%20AD%20plan%20Oct14.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/loan-fund-to-turn-farm-waste-to-energy>

'To be treated by 'wet' Anaerobic Digestion systems, food waste needs to be collected separately at source; to be treated by composting, or 'dry' Anaerobic Digestion systems, it can either be separately collected at source or mixed with green waste'<sup>1</sup>.

'Figures from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) for March 2011 indicate that separate weekly collections of food waste are provided to approximately 3 million households (out of 22.5 million in England) in 71 local authority areas'<sup>1</sup>.

Anaerobic Digestion 'is one of the most important methods for treating sewage sludge and roughly two thirds of the country's sludge is already treated in this way. The water industry



Figure 4: Stoke Bardolph Anaerobic Digestion Plant  
<http://www.edie.net/news/4/Severn-Trent-Water-to-invest-in--15m-AD-plant/>

has a well-established infrastructure of Anaerobic Digestion plants and extensive knowledge of the technology and its operation. In 2008, of 1.6 Mt of sewage sludge produced annually by the industry, 66% was treated by AD and 60% of the biogas produced by this process was used to generate renewable heat and power using a CHP engine'. The water industry produces an estimated at 115 megawatts (up to 1 Tera Watt hours (TWh)) or electricity from Anaerobic Digestion. In the UK, this 'contributes 90% of the energy produced from Anaerobic Digestion'<sup>1</sup>.

Other sources of feedstock include, food by products, animal by-products and by-products from the drinks industry and garden or horticultural waste.

### Anaerobic Digestion in Rushcliffe

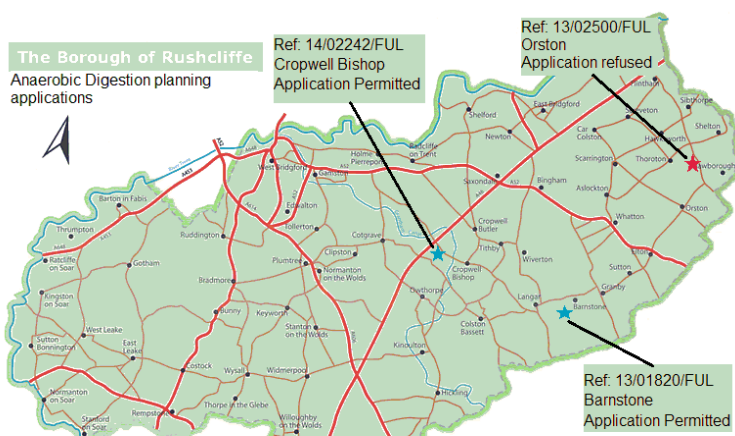


Figure 5: Anaerobic Digester planning application to 2015

Within Rushcliffe three planning applications have been received for on farm Anaerobic Digestion, up to January 2015, two were approved, at Cropwell Bishop and Barnstone; one was rejected at Orston.

On farm Anaerobic Digestion can be controversial, with concerns about odour, leachate pollution, transport noise and congestion, visual impact of plant and loss of

food production. Campaigns against the proposals at Barnstone and Orston were mounted with details online<sup>4</sup>.

Reasons for the refusal of planning permission for the Orston Plant were:

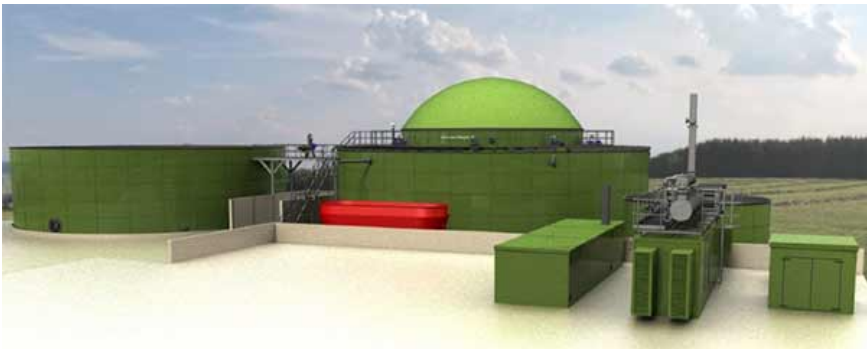
1. The proposed development would generate a significant level and intensification of traffic and vehicle movements...

<sup>4</sup> See <http://nobarnstonead.weebly.com/>

2. The proposed development would result in a significant adverse effect on the amenities of nearby residents and the surrounding area particularly from odours from the site ... and undue noise and disturbance to residents...
3. The proposed development, in the form of a large scale gas production plant which would have an industrial appearance, would represent inappropriate development in the countryside...
4. It has not been adequately demonstrated that the activity would not lead to pollution through disposal of liquid digestate to surrounding soils and groundwater/watercourses, or that the process, including associated vehicle movements, will give rise to significant benefits in terms of a reduction in CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>5</sup>

For the Barnstone application, conditions were imposed, some of which were:

1. Feedstock only to be from 'plant based material and farm manure and no food waste material'.
2. Restrictions on where feedstock could be imported from.
3. Restriction on timing of import and export of materials.
4. Noise monitoring.
5. Odour controls.
6. Waste water controls.<sup>6</sup>



Figures 6 and 7: Pictures submitted in support of the Cropwell Bishop plant<sup>2</sup>

### Further Information

<http://www.biogas.org.uk/>

<http://www.biogen.co.uk/>

<http://www.rase.org.uk/index.php/innovation/anaerobic-digestion>

<http://www.wrap.org.uk/category/subject/anaerobic-digestion>

<sup>5</sup> [https://planningon-line.rushcliffe.gov.uk/online-applications/files/DEBED30D33EDF89C030330E8ABEA5999/pdf/13\\_02500\\_FUL--346459.pdf](https://planningon-line.rushcliffe.gov.uk/online-applications/files/DEBED30D33EDF89C030330E8ABEA5999/pdf/13_02500_FUL--346459.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> [https://planningon-line.rushcliffe.gov.uk/online-applications/files/ECB6B22F3EC02283445F4B56092A6AE1/pdf/13\\_01820\\_FUL--43392.pdf](https://planningon-line.rushcliffe.gov.uk/online-applications/files/ECB6B22F3EC02283445F4B56092A6AE1/pdf/13_01820_FUL--43392.pdf)





David Mitchell  
Rushcliffe Borough Council

**Our Ref:** DNL-10291

**Your Ref:**

**Date:** 20/03/2015

Dear David

**Enquiry regarding: Rushcliffe Community Development Scrutiny on Alternative Energies**

Thank you for your enquiry which was received on 25/02/2015.

We respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

The Environment Agency can confirm that there are currently no applications for permits which relate to shale gas exploration in Rushcliffe.

However if any applications are received in the future, we hope the following information is useful.

**The Role of the Environment Agency with regard to On Shore Oil and Gas.**

We are the environmental regulator for onshore oil and gas operations in England. We will help ensure that oil and gas operations are conducted in a way that protects people and the environment. We do this by issuing permits. We will not allow companies to start work unless they can demonstrate how they will provide a high level of protection to people and the environment.

We manage the use of water, the protection of groundwater and the management of wastes such as drilling muds, flow back fluid, gases and any naturally occurring radioactive materials (NORM).

We have the authority to stop the operation if a significant risk or actual risk becomes apparent.

The investigation for and eventual exploitation of hydrocarbon minerals will require several permits from the Environment Agency, the exact nature of these will vary depending on what activities are proposed but it is likely that the site will require the

following permits from the Environment Agency for both exploration and/or production testing/production:-

- Section 199 Water Resources Act Notice
- Mining Waste Permit
- Groundwater Discharge Activity Permit
- Abstraction Licence (GW Investigation)
- Discharge consent
- RSR Permit
- Flood Defence Consent
- Installation-Industrial Emissions Directive

In answer to your questions, please note the following.

**1. Has Ruscliffe Borough got sufficient water resources to enable shale gas exploration to take place or would the water need to be imported?**

We regulate water supply to ensure that there will be enough water for people, business and the environment. If companies wish to take water direct from groundwater or rivers then operators will need to apply for an abstraction licence in the normal way.

This will be reviewed on a site specific basis as the availability of non mains water is reliant on the geology of an area or the proximity to a water course, it is also dependant on whether water is available under the Environment Agency's Abstraction Licensing Strategies. These can be found at the following link Map 4 provides information regarding this issue in Rushcliffe.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/water-abstraction-licensing-strategies-cams-process>

An operator can obtain water for hydraulic fracturing from their local water company or can apply for an abstraction licence from the Environment Agency. To date only one operator has carried out hydraulic fracturing (Cuadrilla at Preese Hall, Lancashire) and they sourced water from the local water utility company. At the exploratory phase, we would expect most companies to do this.

If the water is supplied by the local water company, the water company will consider the impact on local resources. If there is not enough resource locally, the water company might not be able to provide the amount requested.

**2. If imported what would be the likely number of daily lorry movements?**

The number of lorry movements would depend on the type of activities proposed for any one site.

The Environment Agency does not have a role regarding traffic movements. Impacts from site traffic travelling to and from the site are the responsibility of the Mineral Planning Authority and will be taken into consideration as part of the planning permission.

Impacts from movements on site (eg:-dust and noise) however are our responsibility.

A site's permit sets out the conditions for operation of the site and will include but not be limited to conditions on groundwater, surface water, emissions, safe storage of waste, noise and air pollution caused by site operations.

**3. Would the added strain on the water supply occasioned by fracking lead to drought and domestic water restrictions?**

Hydraulic fracturing for shale gas typically uses 10 to 30 million litres per well.

At this early exploratory stage, there is great deal of uncertainty about how the industry may develop in the UK but if the industry were to scale up significantly, the amounts of water used would still only be a small proportion of the total quantity of water currently used by households, industry and agriculture each year.

If a drought were to occur it would be caused by a lack of rainfall.

In times of drought the Secretary of State has powers to stop or restrict specific industries from abstracting water or using mains water by issuing drought orders. Production of oil and gas may be considered essential however because of the need for power and deliveries of essential supplies. It would be up to the Secretary of State to consider the impact of such an order on maintaining the economic and social well being of people in the area affected.

**4. How will used water be purified for recirculation?**

It is for the shale gas industry to propose treatment methods for flowback fluid. They will have to demonstrate to the Environment Agency that such methods would result in an injection fluid that performs the same function and poses no greater risk to the environment.

As we have not received any such proposals for re-use it is difficult to say what the exact treatment specification might be, but the removal of solids and gases and mixing with approved chemicals and fresh water are likely to be key.

We consider that that reuse is the best option for managing flowback fluid from shale gas drilling operations at the production stage, providing that this serves a genuine purpose and is not a means of disposing of the returned fluid as waste. However, at the exploration stage, it is unlikely that re-use of fracking fluid will be practical.

**5. What will be the method of disposal of used sand and how will it be cleansed?**

It is for the shale gas industry to propose treatment methods for used sand and to demonstrate to the Environment Agency that such methods would pose minimal risk to the environment.

As we have not received any such proposals for re-use it is difficult to say what the exact treatment specification might be.

## **6. What safeguards would be in place to prevent chemicals leaching into the water supply?**

We will require operators to have a groundwater permit unless they can demonstrate that there will be no, or trivial impact on groundwater (this is known as the “de minimis exclusion”). In all other cases, we will require a permit to regulate any actual impact on groundwater or the risk of an impact.

The type and conditions in the permit will depend on the nature of the activity, geological conditions and risks to drinking water supplies. We will not permit activities where there is a significant risk that pollution to groundwater will occur.

All operators must notify the Environment Agency of their intention to drill a borehole and operators must provide details of how they intend to protect water resources, including groundwater, in the construction and use of the borehole. If we are not satisfied, we may serve a notice on the operator to take appropriate measures to conserve water quantity and quality.

We will not permit the use of ‘hazardous substances’ [as described in Schedule 22 of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010] for any activity, including hydraulic fracturing where they would or might enter groundwater and cause pollution.

Should pollution of groundwater occur, the Environment Agency can take enforcement action to prevent or remedy pollution of groundwater caused by the actions of operators.

The Health and Safety Executive regulates the health and safety risks to people. In particular they are responsible for ensuring the appropriate design and construction of a well casing for any oil and gas boreholes. HSE requirements for ensuring well integrity also contribute to mitigating environmental risks.

## **7. What provisions are there for researching and testing the chemicals?**

*The Environment Agency has been tasked to implement the Water Framework Directive. Under the Water Framework Directive, the environmental objectives for groundwater and surface water bodies include:-*

Prevent any deterioration in the status of water bodies, improve their biological and chemical status and prevent further pollution.

Hazardous substances **must** be prevented from entry into ground and surface water and the entry into groundwater of all other pollutants must be limited to prevent pollution.

The way we assess whether a chemical is hazardous or not to groundwater has been developed under European Union environmental legislation. You can find more information on this methodology at <http://www.wfduk.org/legislative-background-and-classification-results>

As part of the methodology for the assessment of chemicals, we consulted on a number of chemicals in 2013. You can find the results at <http://www.wfduk.org/substance-classifications-and-public-consultation-results>

## 8. Are any of these chemicals carcinogenic?

Preese Hall site is the only shale gas site to have been hydraulic fractured to date in the UK.

Details of the chemicals which we assessed as non hazardous and permitted for use are listed on Cuadrilla's website. They are:

- 99.75% of the shale gas fracking fluid is made up of water and sand, beyond that a very limited number of chemicals are used:
- Polyacrylamide friction reducers (0.075%), commonly used in cosmetics and facial creams, suspended in a hydrocarbon carrier;
- Hydrochloric acid (0.125%), frequently found in swimming pools and used in developing drinking water wells,
- Biocide (0.005%), used on rare occasions when the water provided from the local supplier needs to be further purified.

Cuadrilla only utilised the polyacrylamide friction reducer in their operations.

## 9. What chemicals are incorporated into the lining of the fracking shafts and could there be a danger to public health if allowed to leach into the surrounding area?

Production sites use cement and steel boreholes

The cement well casing cannot be visibly inspected, however it is pressure tested after placement. It is also recommended that the height and quality of cement behind the casing sealing the oil or gas bearing rock be verified using sonic or ultra-sonic tools.

Where leakage from a well into rock formations is suspected, acoustic tools are available to locate the leak and steps can be taken to seal it.

Under the EA/HSE 'working together' agreement, we will be jointly inspecting and sharing information on sites where hydraulic fracturing is taking place.

**10. What effect might fracturing underground have on the surface-potential earth tremors?**

There are controls in place to manage the risk for inducing seismicity due to the inflow of frack fluid. Operators will have to assess the location of faults before fracking, monitor seismic activity in real time and stop if even minor earth tremors occur.

DECC will regulate seismic risks from shale gas fracking through a traffic light monitoring system. Future hydraulic fracturing operations will have to have a real-time monitoring system before, during and after fracking to identify any seismic events. If a seismic event of magnitude greater than 0.5 on the Richter Scale is detected, the operation must be shut down.

**11. It appears groundwater quality and ground stability area areas for concern. We are given to believe that Licensing authorities, Department for Energy and Climate Change, the Coal Authority and the Environment Agency are developing a science evidence base to manage these new developments and minimise their impact-What progress has been made?**

The Office of Unconventional Gas and Oil (OUGO) is the strategic body that oversees exploration and extraction of shale gas and coal bed methane in the UK. It sits within the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) and works closely with other parts of government with an interest or responsibility in this area.

DECC licenses each drilling and development activity. No exploration or production activity can start without this licence. DECC is also responsible for managing any earthquake risks as well as granting permission to companies to undertake hydraulic fracturing.

The Health and Safety Executive regulates the health and safety risks to people. In particular they are responsible for ensuring the appropriate design and construction of a well casing for any oil and gas boreholes. HSE requirements for ensuring well integrity also contribute to mitigating environmental risks.

In addition, permission is needed from the local Minerals Panning Authority. This is usually, but not always, the county or unitary local authority. They will also be responsible for any other planning permissions needed for proposed oil and gas sites.

We have produced a joint working statement with the Health and Safety Executive which sets out how we will work together to ensure a joined up approach and that there is appropriate monitoring and inspection of operations.

There is a regulatory roadmap on GOV.UK to explain the roles of the different organisations and the permissions and permits required.

With regard to the evidence base we have published a comprehensive risk assessment of the environmental risks of shale gas exploration-available at the following link

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/296949/LIT\\_8474\\_fbb1d4.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/296949/LIT_8474_fbb1d4.pdf)

We have also published reviews of:-

Well Casing

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/291485/LIT\\_7311\\_514be9.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291485/LIT_7311_514be9.pdf)

Methane Emissions And Monitoring

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/291523/scho0812buwk-e-e.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291523/scho0812buwk-e-e.pdf)

Quantifying Fugitive Methane Emissions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/considerations-for-quantifying-fugitive-methane-releases-from-shale-gas-operations>

In addition, we have collaborated as part of an international network for environmental regulators to learn best practice from around the world

[http://www.inece.org/unconv\\_gas\\_report.pdf](http://www.inece.org/unconv_gas_report.pdf)

We have also joined an independent research consortium, led by Durham University, to look at the environmental impacts of fracking in Europe.

<https://www.dur.ac.uk/refine/>

I have attached our Standard Notice or licence which explains the permitted use of this information.

Please get in touch if you have any further queries or contact us within two months if you'd like us to review the information we have sent.

Yours sincerely

June Rolland  
Customers & Engagement Officer  
Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Leicestershire

For further information please contact the Customers & Engagement Team on 0115 846 3696/3691.

Direct e-mail:- [DNLenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:DNLenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

This matter is being dealt with by:

**Tim Turner**

Reference: PP&CS/TT/

T 0115 993 2585

E tim.turner@nottscc.gov.uk

W nottinghamshire.gov.uk

Mr D Mitchell  
Executive Manager (Communities)  
Rushcliffe Borough Council  
Rectory Road  
West Bridgford  
Nottingham  
NG2 6BN

23 March 2015

Dear Dave

### **Rushcliffe Community Development Scrutiny on Alternative Energies**

I have only recently been given your letter of 23 February 2015 addressed to the Head of Planning within which you seek clarification on a number of issues relating to onshore oil and gas operations. I have left a message asking for you to call. Ahead of a reply I have, insofar as I am able, responded to the questions raised below. If you require clarification of any of the points raised or any additional information please do not hesitate to contact me.

#### **Would there be controls over hours of operation, noise and air pollution?**

If planning permission is granted for onshore oil and gas development then any permission will include conditions controlling the hours of operation and noise. These would be tailored to the specific circumstances of the site and the operations proposed to be carried out over the duration of the development to ensure that the local amenity and environment are protected.

The planning permission would also control dust associated with operations being carried out as part of the development.

However, the detailed control of emissions to air from the drilling process, flare stacks etc are subject to separate control regulated by DECC (flaring and venting) and the Environment Agency (emissions to air). The Minerals Planning Authority will however take advice on these issues as part of its consultation process ahead of determining the planning application.

#### **By what method would shale gas be transferred to the collection storage point?**

At present the development of shale gas is in its infancy in the UK and discussions have largely focused on the issues associated with exploration and appraisal. There are a number of potential options to transfer gas from the development site and these will be dependent on the specific sites chosen but it is likely that transfer will be via pipeline to a central collection point for cleaning and introduction to the national gas grid. Until shale gas development proceeds further this is of course speculative.

#### **In planning terms, is shale gas drilling treated the same as any other hydrocarbon industry?**

In simple terms shale gas development will be dealt with in the same way as conventional oil and gas development. However, where this involves hydraulic fracturing some changes are imposed under new provisions contained within the Infrastructure Act 2015. These relate to the requirement for additional confirmations of approval from regulators and pre-development monitoring needed before the Secretary of State can issue a well consent.

Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall, Loughborough Road, West Bridgford,  
Nottingham NG2 7QP



The onshore oil and gas industry have also given commitments to provide monies to the local community at sites involving hydraulic fracturing. The precise mechanism for this, who will receive the monies and who will administer this is yet to be finalised. I understand that this will not be dealt with under Planning and any payments will not be a material planning consideration.

**There is no statutory definition of 'material considerations' can you provide clarify on this?**

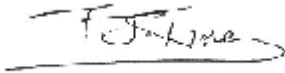
Material planning conditions are not defined in statute and those of relevance have been developed and confirmed as case law has developed. I attach an explanatory note prepared by Planning Aid which I hope provides some assistance on those matters which are and which are not material planning considerations.

**At the end of last year applications were being considered for the issue of further exploratory licences- were new licences granted in the Rushcliffe area and id so where?**

The Government put a significant number of Petroleum Development Licences (PEDL) up for sale last year which included new areas in much of Nottinghamshire and indeed the country. The date for applications has now closed and DECC (the Government body responsible for this) are currently reviewing all applications made in accordance with their criteria for awarding such licences. I suspect that it will be a number of months yet before any licences are awarded.

I trust that the above are of assistance. If you need anything further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mr T J Turner  
Senior Practitioner, Monitoring & Enforcement  
Nottinghamshire County Council

Enc. Material planning considerations Planning Aid guide

## Report of the Executive Manager - Transformation

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. At the Community Development Group meeting in May 2014 an update report and presentation on the work of the newly established Economic Development Team was given. This team is a cross cutting team from across the council. The Corporate Development Group supported the proposed priorities for the coming year.
- 1.2. An Economic Growth Manager has since been appointed and is responsible for leading and coordinating the economic growth activity for the Council.
- 1.3. This report gives an update on the work done by the Economic Development Team and the newly appointed Economic Growth Manager and the priorities for 2015/16. It will be accompanied by a presentation which will be given by the Economic Growth Manager.

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that

- a) Members endorse the actions and priorities proposed for the coming year; and
- b) Members recognise the work officers are doing to progress this strategic priority within the resources available.

### 3. Supporting Evidence

- 3.1. The priorities presented to Community Development Group in May 2014 included:
  - Strengthening links with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to maximise our opportunity to access funding
  - Bringing forward development on our key strategic sites
  - Making an application to the Local Infrastructure Fund
  - Adopting the Local Plan
  - Securing the future of Bridgford Hall – securing a new tenant
  - The delivery of 100 new apprenticeships in Rushcliffe this year
  - Rolling out Broadband in the identified areas in Rushcliffe

- Increasing the offer for the visitor economy e.g. Rushcliffe Food Fair
- 3.2. The presentation will provide more detail about the work that has been completed, is being delivered and is planned against all of these priorities. Some of the work e.g. the Local Plan is undertaken and overseen by Members through different scrutiny groups. It is however an integral part of economic development and is therefore included in the team's plan.
- 3.3. The following priority areas of work have been identified for 2015/16:
- The establishment of Strategic and Local Growth Boards
  - Submitting final business cases to secure Growth Deal money for 2016/17 and 2017/18 (for the A46 corridor schemes)
  - Identifying projects that accord with the investment strategy and the associated funding available.
  - Developing the business pages on the website
  - Implementing the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) client based approach on all developments – this commits developers to providing skills and training opportunities on sites being developed
  - Extending the remit of the Cotgrave Employment Partnership to develop the employment and skills offer across the Borough.

#### **4. Risk and Uncertainties**

- 4.1. The Economic Growth Manager works with colleagues across the Council and the County to maximise the value that can be brought to economic development work. Some projects (eg bringing forward development sites) can be long term and take significant support and negotiation. Where possible the Council will seek external funding to help secure growth opportunities.

#### **5. Implications**

##### **5.1. Finance**

5.1.1. There is a commitment to match Growth Deal funding. The majority of this across the three sites is accounted for with the Developer costs and investment, which includes S106 contributions, this equates to approx. £450m across the three sites.

5.1.2. In addition £2m of New Homes Bonus will be required to be allocated across the sites. This is a key infrastructure project for the Borough and therefore is an allocation in line with Cabinet's previous recommendation for the use of NHB funding. The funding relates to 2016/17 onwards and will be integrated within the confines of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, to be presented to Full Council in March 2016, covering 2016/17 to 2020/21.

## 5.2. Corporate Priorities

5.2.1. Supporting economic growth to ensure a sustainable, prosperous and thriving local economy is identified as a corporate priority within the Corporate Strategy 2012 - 2016.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Name Catherine Evans Job title Economic Growth Manager 0115 914 8552 email <a href="mailto:cevens@rushcliffe.gov.uk">cevens@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	

## Report of the Executive Manager - Communities

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy is a partnership document of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (the Strategy Group), which brings together statutory agencies and voluntary bodies, with the Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust playing leading roles, but encompassing the results of wide-ranging consultations with individuals, groups and organisations.
- 1.2. The Council is represented on the Strategy Group by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment and by the Environmental Sustainability Officer.
- 1.3. The strategy is produced by the Strategy Group, guiding the work of all the partners. It has been adopted by the Borough Council and directs the councils work on Biodiversity and Nature Conservation.
- 1.4. Council resolved on 5 March 2015 that Cabinet investigate the possibility of a trees and woodlands policy in consultation with the Community Development Group.
- 1.5. The current Nature Conservation Strategy runs to the end of 2015. The updated draft strategy for 2016 – 2020 incorporates tree and woodland policies both in a dedicated section and as a recurring theme throughout the document.

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that

- a) Members make comment and input into the draft Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy particularly in relation to trees and woodlands.
- b) Endorse the approach of incorporating a tree and woodlands policy into the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy.

### 3. Supporting Information

- 3.1. The strategy, first produced in 2003 and then updated in 2010, aims to protect and enhance Rushcliffe's wildlife interest, whilst helping achieve the

Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan objectives, placing a particular emphasis on species-rich grassland and wetland habitats, both typical of Rushcliffe but now much reduced in area. The strategy identifies a wide range of issues that affect Rushcliffe's wildlife.

3.2. This draft strategy covers the following:

- Overview of Rushcliffe's Wildlife
- Successes of the 2011-2015 Strategy
- Principal Habitats Found in Rushcliffe
- Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)
- Designated Wildlife Sites
- Nature Reserves
- Rushcliffe's Landscapes
- Green Infrastructure
- Climate Change
- Community Involvement
- Planning Policies and the Protection of Wildlife and Habitats
- Other Policies Drivers
- Nature Conservation Aims and Objectives
- Key Target Indicators

3.3. The section on Principle Habitats sets out the importance of the main habitats found in Rushcliffe, including for Woodland and Trees and what policies partners should take to protect and enhance these habitats. This includes a commitment to:-

- Promote appropriate new woodland planting, particularly where linked to existing woods
- Develop tree-planting schemes, carbon offset schemes and community orchards
- Promote sympathetic woodland management
- Use tree preservation orders for threatened valuable amenity trees
- Promote tree wardens where appropriate

3.4. Work by partners on the 2011-2015 strategy achieved, bringing in to appropriate management and creation of at least 22.6ha of woodland; 16.3ha of wildlife grassland; 38ha of wetland; 465m<sup>2</sup> of ponds and 2025m of hedgerows.

3.5. Other achievements of the 2011-2015 strategy are listed on page 6 of the draft strategy.

3.6. Targets for new management and creation of habitats in the draft 2016-2020 strategy are 10 ha's woodland, 30 ha's grassland and 10 ha's wetland.

3.7. Other targets of the draft 2016-2020 strategy are listed on page 21 of the draft strategy.

- 3.8. The Strategy Group is now consulting on the draft strategy and would value the input and comment of members of the Community Development Group.
- 3.9. A wider public consultation will follow; this will be primarily via partner websites (including the council's website) and social media. Interested organisations including parish councils and Borough Council members will be written to and invited to contribute.
- 3.10. A final draft version of the strategy will be returned to Community Development Group in September 2015 for endorsement and a commitment for Rushcliffe Borough Council to help deliver the strategy.

#### 4. **Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1. To show Rushcliffe Borough Councils commitment to biodiversity and ensure that the best appropriate practical measures are taken to protect and enhance biodiversity.

#### 5. **Implications**

##### 5.1. **Finance**

5.1.1. No implication at this stage

##### 5.2. **Legal**

5.2.1. Supports the duty of the council in exercising its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity, enacted by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

##### 5.3. **Corporate Priorities**

5.3.1. This supports two of the priorities of the Council's Corporate strategy:

- Supporting economic growth to ensure a sustainable, prosperous and thriving local economy
- Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Paul Phillips Environmental Sustainability Officer 0115 914 8595 email <a href="mailto:pPhillips@rushcliffe.gov.uk">pPhillips@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	<i>Draft Nature Conservation Strategy 2016 - 2020</i>

# Draft Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy 2016 – 2020

## FOREWORD

Consultations with the community since 1993 have consistently shown that there is a great deal of interest in the natural environment of Rushcliffe. When residents are aware that sensitive wildlife sites are threatened, they are quick to show their concern. This strategy not only sets out to try to safeguard existing known sites of interest, but also to encourage the development and improvement of new sites. The strategy also seeks to preserve the existing links between wildlife sites and to establish new links to allow the spread of plants and animals.

The objective of the strategy is not only to benefit wildlife; visitors and residents will also benefit through the opportunities to observe and enjoy nature. A wildlife-rich environment also reflects an environment that is good for humans. Properly pursued, the strategy will benefit not only those who live and work in Rushcliffe now, but also future generations.

Public interest must be translated from words to action. Everyone has a responsibility to do their bit and this strategy outlines actions that statutory and voluntary organisations, businesses and individuals working together can implement.

This strategy replaces previous strategies produced in 2003 and 2010. The strategy has been developed by the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNC SIG), which brings together statutory agencies and voluntary bodies, with the Borough Council and Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust playing leading roles, but encompassing the results of wide-ranging consultations with individuals, groups and organisations. This strategy supports the work of the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, implementing the county Biodiversity Action Plan at the borough level.

Changes in government guidance on sustainable development, biodiversity and planning and changes in legislation all emphasise the importance of effective environmental protection and wildlife conservation for meeting the aims of sustainable development, and the need to provide a good quality environment in which people can live and work.

The major organisations shown below commend this strategy to everyone who reads it. We will do our bit, so please join us and do yours.





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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN DOCUMENT

BG	British Gypsum
BTC	Bingham Town Council
TCV	The Conservation Volunteers (Previously BTCV)
BTO	British Trust for Ornithology
BuC	Butterfly Conservation
CA	Countryside Agency
CLA	Country Land & Business Association
CPRE	Campaign to Protect Rural England
CRT	Canal & River Trust (Previously British Waterways)
CTC	Cotgrave Town Council
CE	Crown Estate
DEFRA	Dept. of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
FC	Forestry Commission
FoG's	Friends of Groups
FoRCP	Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park
GPC	Gotham Parish Council
IWA	Inland Waterways Association
KPC	Keyworth Parish Council
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site (Previously SINCs)
MFDS	Manor Farm Donkey Sanctuary
NBAG	Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group
NBGRC	Nottinghamshire Biological & Geological Records Centre
NCC	Nottinghamshire County Council
NE	Natural England
NFU	National Farmers Union
NFaW	Nottinghamshire Farming and Wildlife
NBW	Nottinghamshire Birdwatchers
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NRV	Notified Road Verges
NU	University of Nottingham
NWT	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
PCs	Parish/Town Councils
RBC	Rushcliffe Borough Council
RCAN	Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire
RNCSIG	Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
RuBOP	Rushcliffe Barn Owl Project
SBPC	Sutton Bonington Parish Council
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
STW	Severn Trent Water
TVIDB	Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
Vol's	Volunteers
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

## 1) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The object of this strategy is to protect and enhance Rushcliffe's wildlife interest, whilst helping achieve the Nottinghamshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan objectives, placing a particular emphasis on species-rich grassland and wetland habitats, both typical of Rushcliffe but now much reduced in area. The strategy identifies a wide range of issues that affect Rushcliffe's wildlife. It identifies that Rushcliffe's most important wildlife is found in a scattered network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Rushcliffe is an important area for some species: Black poplar, barn owls, water voles and great crested newts are found in Rushcliffe, but are rare in most of Nottinghamshire.

The strategy considers the importance of the wider countryside (not just nature reserves) and urban areas in supporting our wildlife. It examines the issues surrounding a variety of habitats, and considers opportunities for community involvement and the role of the planning system in conserving our natural heritage. The level of sympathetic land management, plus the small size and isolation of the wildlife sites, are major factors limiting wildlife in Rushcliffe. There is great scope for enhancing the Borough for wildlife with appropriate funding, in the long-term, but whether it is the creation and management of a nature reserve or the construction of a garden pond, every action has a value in enhancing Rushcliffe's wildlife resource.

Over the past decade, progress has been made on developing nature conservation projects in a co-ordinated way, but prior to this was largely ad-hoc; hence the fragmented distribution of nature reserves in Rushcliffe. The aim of this strategy is to continue to develop an approach to nature conservation that targets specific areas, to gain maximum benefit.

The strategy proposes action to promote good management of sites, habitat creation and improved green infrastructure. Such projects are not only beneficial for wildlife, but provide an impetus for greater community involvement in nature conservation and improved quality of life.

Full and up to date knowledge of what we have in the Borough is a continuing problem, we have improved our understanding by updating and digitising the Phase 1 survey data for Rushcliffe, however we cannot effectively protect what we do not know about, therefore continuing to survey the borough is vital.

The principal objectives for this strategy are to:

- Promote an appropriate standard of management on nature reserves (see Appendix 1) in order to maintain and enhance their biodiversity.
- Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas.
- Support a continuing programme of surveying and reporting of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.
- Increase understanding of wildlife and nature conservation through raising awareness and improved access to sites.
- Influence the impact of development on wildlife and their habitats.
- Target resources to reduce habitat fragmentation and contribute to landscape scale conservation, assisting wildlife in reacting to climate change.
- Support and develop Nature Conservation in Rushcliffe.

The role of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) is to ensure that the strategy becomes more than a list of good intentions; it produces an annual report on the progress made towards improving nature conservation in Rushcliffe. Progress requires the co-operation of a variety of organisations, groups and individuals.

## 2) OVERVIEW OF RUSHCLIFFE'S WILDLIFE

The Borough of Rushcliffe is largely rural, with a diverse landscape. The rivers Devon, Trent, Soar and Smite form much of the Borough's boundaries, with the Leicestershire Wolds and the Vale of Belvoir running along the southern edge of the Borough. Alluvial soils, with significant sand and gravel deposits, as at Holme Pierrepont, characterise the areas of flood plain, whilst sand and gravel deposited by glaciers lie around East Leake. Much of the soils are the slightly calcareous clays of the Mercia Mudstones, but a thin band of hydraulic limestone outcrops along the escarpment from Gotham to Bunny, with heavy boulder clay in the south-west of the Borough, whilst more calcareous Lias clays typify the extreme south-east.

As a result of this varied geology and topography, overlaid by the heavy influence of mankind over millennia, Rushcliffe contains a rich diversity of wildlife. Fragments of semi-natural habitats within the farmed landscape support plants such as cowslip and orchids, whilst otters are recolonising Rushcliffe's watercourses and badgers are widespread. There are large woodland areas on the hills above Gotham and West Leake, but most of the semi-natural woodland habitat is contained within small copses scattered across the Borough.

Small pockets of species-rich grassland are dotted around Rushcliffe, often on post-industrial sites or the limestone hill tops between Gotham and Bunny. Road verges provide a useful supplement, particularly in the south of Rushcliffe. There are no natural lakes in Rushcliffe, but excavation and gravel extraction has provided several large water features and the Grantham Canal is, in wildlife terms, currently a series of narrow lakes and ponds. Wildlife has readily colonised mineral workings and disused railway lines, whilst a wealth of species are also found in urban areas.

Many species have suffered due to modern lifestyles. Special efforts to conserve species, such as barn owls and schemes such as Countryside Stewardship are reducing these losses. Wider influences, such as climate change, will add to the pressure on our local wildlife. The principle of good stewardship, demands that we must protect our natural heritage, for the sake of ourselves, our children and for the generations to come.

Whilst wildlife is found throughout Rushcliffe's 41,000 hectares, the network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) covering 62 hectares and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), previously called Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's), with an area of around 2,000 hectares, represents Rushcliffe's wildlife hotspots. It is notable that whilst approximately 8% of Britain is designated as SSSI, only 0.15% of Rushcliffe is similarly designated and the coverage of LWS is around 5%, making conservation effort all the more important.

### 3) SUCCESSES OF THE 2011 – 2015 STRATEGY

The 2011 – 2015 strategy built on the previous strategy leading to advances in the protection and enhancement of Rushcliffe's wildlife resources. The Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) was set up to be this partnership in 2003 to implement the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy and consists of a range of organisations and groups with an interest in Rushcliffe's wildlife.

Successes supported by this group include:

- ✿ In 2004 there were twenty two sites across the borough managed predominantly as nature reserves, thirteen of which had current management plans. As of April 2014 there are forty four nature reserves, thirty of these sites have current management plans (77%). Five sites have management plans in preparation. The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has acquired extra land to extend its Skylarks from 10 hectares to 47 hectares.
- ✿ Ongoing management continues on borough council nature reserves at Sharphill Wood; Meadow Covert, Edwalton; The Green Line, West Bridgford; Meadow Park, East Leake and The Hook, Ladybay; this work is supported by 'friends of' groups involving local people in the management of these sites.
- ✿ Rushcliffe nature grants, since 2004 have supported 71 projects and with a value totalling £37,363.
- ✿ Volunteer nature conservation work across the borough has increased from an estimated 3138 hours for the year 2004, to 8378 hours in 2014. This volunteer work was valued at £156,585 for 2014, based on Volunteering England guidance.
- ✿ Work we have directly carried out or financed as a partnership since 2011 has led to the following habitat being created, restored or brought under active conservation management. Wildlife Grassland: 16.3ha; Woodland: 22.6ha; Wetland: 38ha; Ponds: 465m<sup>2</sup>; Hedgerows: 2025m. Partners will have also carried out their own work not included in these figures.
- ✿ The wildlife extent of Rushcliffe has been digitally mapped and analysis carried out looking for opportunities to improve or extend biodiversity in Rushcliffe, this Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping will be used to in preparing this nature conservation strategy, guide planning and for developing new projects and making grant applications.
- ✿ A leaflet showing publically accessible green spaces in Rushcliffe has been published and can be downloaded from [www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/greenspaces](http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/greenspaces)
- ✿ Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trusts education officer has worked with 6 schools each year on behalf of the partnership, leading group activities and advising on improvements to school grounds for wildlife
- ✿ An indicator of the ecological health of the borough is shown by the population of Barn Owls in the borough, Barn Owls can only survive where there is plenty of places for it to roost and plenty of wild habitat for it to hunt its prey and plenty of prey living in that habitat. The exact number of owls is not known, but the number of owls in artificial Barn Owl boxes can be used as a proxy measure. In 2002, 16 young owls were raised from 88 available owl boxes; by 2014 this had risen to 182 owls raised from 160 available owl boxes.

Further details of our achievements are available in the annual reports published by RNCSIG and published online at [www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation](http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation)






Figure 3: The Green Line

**3.3) Urban**


Urban areas are small but are important for wildlife. Gardens can be particularly important, supporting many birds and butterflies, although larger urban wildlife sites do exist. Buildings also support wildlife such as bats and birds (including house martins and swallows). Temporary sites and derelict industrial sites often develop as important wildlife habitats.

 **We will seek to: Raise awareness of urban wildlife, protected species and invasive non-native species. Protect and enhance urban wildlife sites and encourage recreational use where possible. Encourage wildlife-friendly gardening and seek new and existing buildings enhance their potential use by wildlife.**

**3.4) Species Rich Grassland**

Traditional flower-rich meadows are rare, almost 99% having been lost in the UK in the last 100 years, however, some remain along with old pastures. Roadside verges are another refuge for grassland species especially the wide verges of the old drove roads. There are four 'Notified Road Verges' (NRV), in Rushcliffe and these receive special management.

Sensitively managed graveyards are also important. Lime-rich habitats exist where there are old gypsum works and around hill tops in the Nottinghamshire Wolds. Grasslands support fauna including butterflies, common lizard, grass snake, harvest mouse and badgers.

 **We will seek to: Protect and manage remaining fragments of species-rich grassland. Encourage sympathetic management of other grassland and examine options to create/extend species rich grassland. Support the County Notified Road Verge scheme and ensure road verges receive appropriate mowing regimes and are protected from excessive winter salting.**

**3.5) Rivers, Standing Water and Marsh**

Wetlands feature strongly in Rushcliffe; with the River Trent, River Soar, its tributaries, catchments and floodplains, however most of the rivers are classed as poor or moderate ecological condition due to the impact of pollutants from sewage, agriculture or industrial processes; the Grantham Canal and farm ponds also provide habitat, however these are at risk due to drying out and lack of use. Invasive species such as himalayan balsam and mink, present difficulties. Wetlands support endangered species such as water voles and great crested newts. They are also important for dragonflies, wading birds and kingfishers.


 **We will seek to: Protect the remaining marshland fragments and encourage the development and management of wetland sites. Carefully consider and liaise over the future redevelopment of the Grantham Canal and its surroundings. Promote farm and garden pond creation. Work to stop the decline of water voles and to support the return of the otter. Control invasive non-native invasive species. Seek the good ecological status of our rivers, streams and watercourses.**




Figure 4: Wilwell Cutting



Figure 5: Meadow Park, East Leake


### 3.6) Hedgerows

Hedgerows both provide useful habitat and link wildlife sites. Many of the hedges in Rushcliffe date back to the Enclosure Acts of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and consist of hawthorn and elder. Older hedges exist along ancient lanes and parish boundaries, these are usually more diverse. Hedgerows can be at risk from removal or neglect; protection for hedgerows is provided by the Hedgerow Regulations.

 **We will seek to: Promote conservation, replanting and appropriate management of hedgerows. Use the Hedgerow Regulations as appropriate**

### 3.7) Amenity Land

There are significant areas of parks, recreation grounds and school playing fields in Rushcliffe. Appropriate management can support a range of grassland plants as well as invertebrates, small mammals, foxes and birds of prey.

 **We will seek to: Ensure all amenity land is sympathetically managed and continue to develop 'Blue Butterfly' sites.**

## 5) NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN (LBAP)



Biodiversity includes the variety of plants and animals around us and the places in which they live. The Rio Earth Summit in 1992 was the first international agreement to protect the planet's biodiversity. 'Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group Report' (HMSO, 1995) and 'Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' (DEFRA, 2011) sets clear objectives for the conservation of

biodiversity to which Local Authorities and their partners are encouraged to subscribe.

In 1998 the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group, a partnership of over 50 organisations working to protect and enhance biodiversity across Nottinghamshire, launched their local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). The plan identifies rare, important and threatened habitats and species in Nottinghamshire and provides action plans for their conservation. Several of these habitats and species occur in Rushcliffe. Rushcliffe Borough Council is a signatory to the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan and an active partner organisation within the Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group (BAG).

In 2013, work began to produce a map of where opportunities exist to enhance biodiversity within Rushcliffe, as part of a county wide project delivered by the BAG. This Biodiversity Opportunity Map (BOM) required the digitising of previous paper based data and updating this data in consultation with the wide range of amateur and professional experts in the area. The output of this process is maps identifying where the most likely opportunities are found within the borough. This work should help to guide where future work is focused and will be used to in preparing this nature conservation strategy, guide planning and for developing new projects and making grant applications.



## LBAP HABITATS FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

LBAP habitat	Example Sites
Arable field margins	Many sites
Canals	Grantham Canal
Ditches	Many sites
Eutrophic & mesotrophic standing waters (including ponds)	Wilford Claypits, Skylarks Nature Reserve, Kinoulton Marsh, Gresham Marsh, Barnstone Pits, Holme Pierrepont
Hedgerows	Many Sites
Lowland calcareous grassland	Gotham Hills Pastures
Lowland fen	Kinoulton Marsh
Lowland neutral grassland	Wilwell Cutting, Wilford Claypits, Gresham Marsh, Keyworth Meadow, Normanton Pastures, Bingham Linear Walk
Lowland wet grassland	Wilwell Cutting
Marsh and Swamp	Gresham Marsh, Kinoulton Marsh
Mixed ash-dominated woodland	Bunny Wood, Sharphill Wood, Meadow Covert, Wilford Hill Wood, West Leake Hills, Cotgrave Wood
Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land	Cotgrave Colliery
Reedbed	Skylarks Nature Reserve
Rivers & streams	Trent, Soar, Smite, Devon, Fairham Brook, Kingston Brook
Traditional orchards	Many sites
Urban habitats	many parks and open spaces
Wet woodland	Skylarks Nature Reserve
Wood pasture and parkland	Flintham Hall, Stamford Hall

## IMPORTANT LBAP SPECIES FOUND IN RUSHCLIFFE

Atlantic Salmon	Dingy & Grizzled Skippers
Autumn Crocus	Grass Snake
Barn Owl	Great Crested Newt
Bats	Harvest Mouse
Black Poplar	Otter
Corn Bunting	Slow Worm
Deptford Pink	Water Vole

NB. This list includes many LBAP species found in Rushcliffe for which there is a Species Action Plan. It is not a comprehensive list of UK BAP or LBAP species found in the borough.

**We will seek to: Identify and promote projects that contribute to the Nottinghamshire LBAP and increase awareness of the LBAP in the Borough. Monitor LBAP related works and report back to the Biodiversity Action Group. Promote LBAP species found in Rushcliffe and the habitats in which they live. Ensure that due weight is given to the importance of LBAP species through the development control system. Encourage the use of local provenance planting. Continue to audit the Borough's natural capital and look to maintain the Biodiversity Opportunity Map.**

For more details of Local Biodiversity Action Plan targets visit the Biodiversity Action Group's, Action for Wildlife website at [www.nottsbag.org.uk](http://www.nottsbag.org.uk).

For more details on DEFRA's biodiversity work visit [www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/biodiversity-2020-a-strategy-for-england-s-wildlife-and-ecosystem-services)

## 6) DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SITES

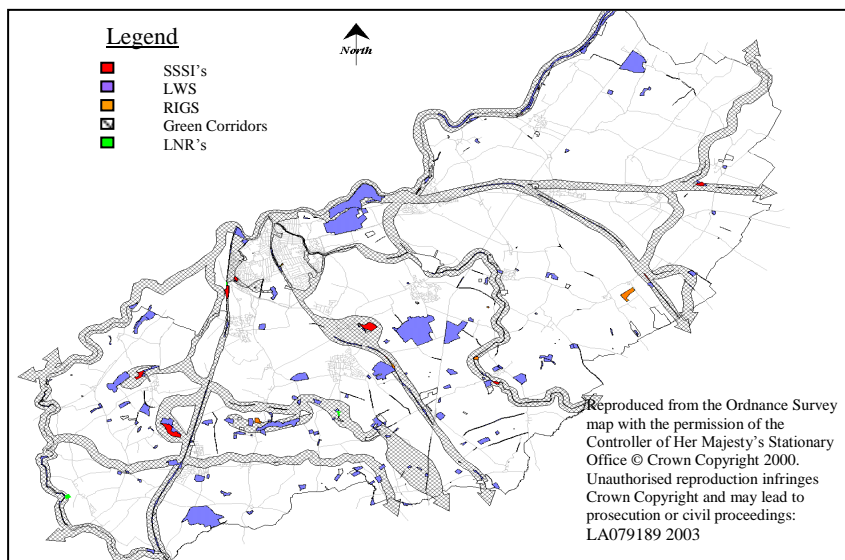


Figure 6: Protected sites in Rushcliffe

In Rushcliffe (in 2015) there are 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), 214 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS – previously called SINCS) and six Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

These are important sites that could not easily be restored once lost. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 imposes strong duties for Local Authorities to further the conservation and enhancement of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). National Planning Policy Framework - Part 11 – 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' makes specific reference to the need for appropriate protection

of 'locally designated sites', which includes Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

All of these sites are important and need protecting. Targeting the areas with the greatest numbers of important sites can help to protect them, ensuring their long term survival and development.

A series of green corridors linking sensitive wildlife areas and towns and villages has been identified. Some of these sites are publicly owned and some are privately owned.

### Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) In Rushcliffe

Type of Habitat	Number of Sites	Total Area (hectares)	Average Size (hectares)
Grassland	90	518	6
Woodland	30	604	20
Ponds & Lakes	45	272	6
Streams, Rivers, Canals & ditches	17	83	5
Ex Industrial, including quarries	21	388	19
Fen & Marshland	7	28	4
Hedgerow	3	3	1
Ruderal	1	7	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>1903</b>	<b>9</b>

### SSSI's in Rushcliffe

Barnstone Railway Cutting - geology  
 Gotham Hill Pastures - grassland  
 Kinoulton Marsh – marsh  
 Normanton Pastures - grassland  
 Orston Plaster Pits - grassland  
 Rushcliffe Golf Course - grassland  
 Wilford Claypits - marsh / grassland  
 Wilwell Cutting – marsh / grassland

**We will seek to: Ensure protected sites are properly managed; this may require management agreements and plans, advice and grants. Identify and designate new sites. Extend existing sites to provide buffer zones and reduce isolation. Monitor sites to prevent degradation, using regulations where necessary. Review the green corridor network. Aim to create a new large reserve in Rushcliffe.**

## 7) NATURE RESERVES

There are 40 sites (in 2015) in Rushcliffe that are managed as nature reserves, with an area of over 460 hectares. The majority of them are designated as LWS or SSSI's and around two thirds have some form of community involvement, whether this is wardening, reserve work parties and Friends Groups. Ownership and management is very varied - privately owned, companies, Parish Councils, Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and Rushcliffe Borough Council - although in some case sites are owned by one organisation and managed by another. When you compare the area designated as nature reserves with the total coverage of LWS (1,900 hectares) or of Rushcliffe (41,000 hectares) as a whole, it is clear that the management of nature reserves, whilst important cannot be regarded in isolation – wider 'Green Infrastructure' linking; reserves, LWS and SSSI's is essential to long term sustainability.

Ideally nature reserves should be actively managed to preserve and where possible improve their wildlife value. Fundamental to good management is the existence of an up to date management plan to guide the work on the site and resolve contradictions between various requirements. The majority of these sites have recent management plans. However a management plan is only as good as the resources available to make it happen and as always such resources are thinly stretched. Some of these resources are provided by professional staff (Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, Rushcliffe Borough Council), but much of the work (and site management) is carried out by volunteers – although they are supported by help and advice from professional staff.

Finance can also be an issue; obtaining grant funding can be difficult and time consuming. Rushcliffe Borough Council provides small grants to provide small amounts of money, with a minimum of paperwork and fuss.

Because many reserves are set up to be reasonably accessible, they are also particularly useful in giving people formal (guided walks, or species specific studies) and informal access to wildlife. A leaflet showing many publicly accessible nature reserves can be downloaded from [www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/greenspaces](http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/greenspaces)

**We will seek to: Ensure that reserves have current management plans and seek sufficient resources (both financial and volunteer) to support implementation of the plans. Seek to build the capacity of the nature conservation sector (both professional and voluntary) in Rushcliffe.**

## 8) RUSHCLIFFE'S LANDSCAPES

### Landscape Ecology

Landscape affects species viability, of particular concern is the ability of species to move through the landscape and the size of wildlife sites and habitat within the particular landscape.

Landscape ecology suggests the greatest value for wildlife can be gained by developing further similar habitats to those already present. Woodland planting is best concentrated into areas of existing woodland; in Rushcliffe, this would be the Nottinghamshire Wolds and in the Cotgrave area. In the South Nottinghamshire Farmland and the Vale of Belvoir it would be more important to improve farmland habitats by developing grasslands, farm hedgerows and margins, stubble and ponds.

Areas that allow wildlife to move through the Borough are known as green corridors (shown in Figure 6). Green corridor maps help to focus efforts to reduce fragmentation.

**We will seek to: Update and maintain the Green Corridor map, clearly defining important corridors. Protect existing green corridors. Pursue opportunities to enhance the corridor network and encourage land managers to improve connections between habitat sites. Identify clusters of wildlife sites and seek to reduce fragmentation and isolation of sites.**

## Mature Landscapes

Areas with landscape features that have been long established tend to be better for wildlife. County Council's Mature Landscape Survey identifies landscapes considered to be amongst the most precious landscapes within Nottinghamshire, which have remained relatively unchanged since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. These were reviewed in 1997.

**We will seek to: Protect mature landscape areas as far as possible from adverse development.**

## Landscape Character

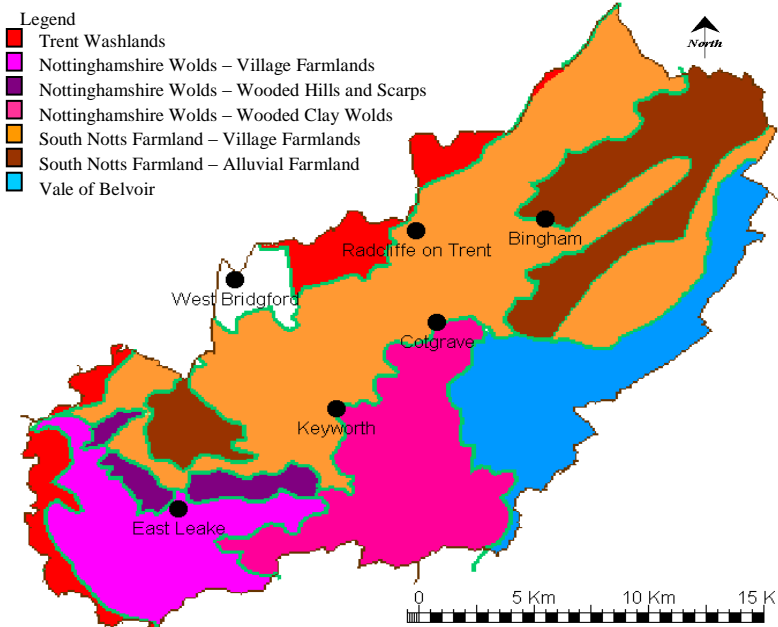


Figure 7: Simplified Regional Character of Rushcliffe's, after Notts CC, 2009

Nottinghamshire County Council produced landscape character assessments of Nottinghamshire in 1997 and updated them in 2009. These appraisals can be used to identify the key parts of our countryside and to identify the priority for nature conservation work in each area. The Borough has been divided into character areas based on its geology, topography and land use. For each area we can identify key actions. See <http://cms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/environment/landimprovements/landscapecharacter.htm> for more details.

### Trent Washlands

These are the valleys formed by the River Trent and River Soar, it is an area of pebbles overlain with soils deposited by the river (alluvium). These are rich

soils and have supported farming for a long time. Hedgerows and riverside willow pollards are important features. Some pasture and meadows have survived, but arable farming has replaced the grasslands in many places. Woodlands are not common except around Kingston Hall and on the steep outcrops or bluffs on the edge of the Trent.

**We will seek to: Encourage the protection and restoration of mixed hedgerows and field margins, hedgerow and riparian habitats and trees including willow pollards. Protect pastures and meadows where they survive. Consider recreating grassland (especially wet pasture) and marsh. Protect the parkland landscape around Kingston Hall. Maintain and develop woodlands on steep bluffs and create small wet woodlands within the river valleys.**

### Nottinghamshire Wolds

– Village Farmlands

This is an area of good farmland, with frequent large villages. Gypsum extraction has heavily influenced this area. There are low amounts of woodland except around Stanford Hall. Strong field systems exist with improved grassland and arable farming. Kingston Brook is an important feature. Country lanes with good verges and hedgerows are noteworthy.

**We will seek to: Encourage field hedgerows and trees. Develop grasslands on gypsum. Protect woodland and veteran trees in the parkland landscape at Stanford Hall. Encourage riparian habitats and trees (especially willow pollards) and shrubs along with grassland along the Kingston Brook corridor and discourage arable farming to the brook edge.**

#### – Wooded Hills and Farms

Woodlands, pastures and rough grass define this area. Calcareous grassland is important in areas of gypsum. Ancient Woodlands are found to the south and west of Gotham and Bunny. Hedgerows are important around fields.

**We will seek to: Maintain alternating pattern of pasture and woodland. Protect and develop pasture and rough grassland. Maintain and extend ancient woodlands, Create new native woodlands on hilltops and escarpments.**

#### – Wooded Clay Wolds

Traditionally an area of enclosed grassland with hedgerows and trees, now often converted to arable farmland. Lanes are prominent features. Small broadleaved woodlands are common and large conifer plantations exist at Cotgrave Forest and Borders Wood. Ridge and furrow grasslands are found around Willoughby on the Wolds and Wysall.

**We will seek to: Increase broadleaved woodland cover especially on hilltops using field patterns as a guide. Look to diversify the woodland around Cotgrave. Encourage hedgerow management. Protect remaining grasslands especially ridge and furrow.**

### South Nottinghamshire Farmland

#### – Alluvial Farmland

This is the area near the rivers Smite and Devon and the area of Ruddington Moor (once an extensive area of grass moorland). This is mainly an arable area where the field structure has largely broken down, forming large expanses perhaps reminiscent of the pre-enclosure moorlands. Trees are contained in occasional copse and riparian corridors. The River Smite has been partly canalised.

**We will seek to: Seek improvements to the River Smite (re-profiling and encouraging aquatic and emergent vegetation). Improve riparian structure along the rivers Smite and Devon. Consider enlarging copse and repairing remaining hedgerows. Consider the creation of wet grassland especially within Ruddington Moor. Encourage the creation of beetle banks, game cover strips, headlands and maintenance of winter stubble on arable farmland. Encourage pond creation and management to help support wetland species.**

#### – Village Farmland

A strong, largely arable, agricultural landscape, dominated by hedgerows. The Grantham Canal and disused railways in this area form important habitats. Parklands are found at Whatton Manor, Flintham, Tollerton, Bunny and Ruddington.

**We will seek to: Protect and develop hedgerows and hedgerow trees. Encourage the creation of beetle banks, game cover strips, headlands and winter stubble on arable farmland. Encourage ponds creation and management. Protect and enhance parkland habitats. Protect and enhance the Grantham Canal and disused railway habitats.**

### Vale of Belvoir

An area of mixed farming, hedgerows and lanes. The Hickling area is rich in unimproved pasture, ridge and furrow and species-rich hedgerows with trees. Wooded parkland is found at Colston Bassett and Staunton. The Rivers Smite and Whipling have important riverside habitats with good trees.

**We will seek to: Promote pasture and hay meadows especially along the river edges, grass headlands, hedgerows, hedgerow trees, riparian buffer strips and trees. Encourage wood planting on escarpments. Seek improvements to the River Smite (re-profiling and encouraging aquatic and emergent vegetation). Protect and enhance parkland habitats.**

## 9) GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Green Infrastructure is used to describe the land around us which has not been built on or cultivated. This may be recreational, landscape and ecological in nature, but in the same way as roads and electricity wires are called infrastructure because they benefit people, these areas can also provide a range of benefits. This includes aquatic or blue infrastructure features.

Natural England defines Green Infrastructure as “a strategically planned and delivered network comprising the broadest range of high quality green spaces and other environmental features”. It identifies key benefits as “able to deliver multiple environmental functions, and to play a key part in adapting to and mitigating climate change” and “support healthier lifestyles by providing green routes for walking and cycling, and green spaces for exercise and play” (Natural England, (2009) Green Infrastructure Guidance).

Components of Green Infrastructure can include; woodlands, hedgerows, playing fields, parks, gardens, old railways, rivers and streams, ponds, allotments, cemeteries and graveyards etc. If these are managed in an appropriate way, they can meet a range of environmental, social and economic needs and help support the natural environment.

The benefits to society potentially include improved health and mental wellbeing, reduced crime, reduced fear of crime and antisocial behaviour, opportunities for exercise, sport, recreation and spiritual well-being, informal educational opportunities, increased land values and attraction for house buyers and businesses and opportunities for community involvement and cohesion. In addition these areas can help to prevent flooding, reduce air pollution, maintain economic land value and help to maintain biodiversity by providing habitats for wildlife to live and move through, these benefits are known as ecosystem services.

By looking at the Green Infrastructure we already have, it is possible to identify what needs to be maintained and enhanced, as well as identify where there are gaps and opportunities to improve our GI. Small size and habitat fragmentation has long been recognised as one of the major problems facing wildlife in the UK and a coherent GI strategy would help reduce the problem. The pressure for new housing developments in Rushcliffe highlights the importance of planning our GI.

**We will seek to: maintain an inventory of our Green Infrastructure, develop a strategy on managing and enhancing this resource and develop projects to improve the Green Infrastructure of Rushcliffe. Work with the planning authorities and developers to ensure wildlife friendly Green Infrastructure is included in all new developments.**

## 10) CLIMATE CHANGE

The climate of our world is changing due to man's activities and this will impact on both our society and the natural world. For example in the UK oak trees are opening their leaves up to fortnight earlier than 50 years ago, species that are dependent on oak trees which cannot adapt to this change will struggle to survive. Similarly butterflies are moving northwards, species once found only in the South of England can now be found in our area, but species that lived in the north may be forced to retreat into limited refuges with nowhere else to go.

We all have a responsibility to reduce our impact on the environment, but we must also help our wildlife to adapt to the changing climate. This means there needs to be a range of good quality and varied habitats for species to live in, supported by good linkages to allow movement where required – a coherent GI strategy. We must also seek to minimise the stresses on wildlife which when added to climate change could lead at the very least to local extinctions or worse. But we must also be prepared for new species to become part of Rushcliffe's biodiversity.

**We will seek to: maintain as diverse an environment as we can to support the widest opportunities for our biodiversity to survive. Increase linkages between habitats to allow movement of species. Be prepared to adapt our efforts as the climate changes. Support efforts to mitigate climate change, including the use of wildlife to act as carbon 'sinks', for example by tree planting.**

## 11) COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Public bodies and various community organisations carry out some of the nature conservation work in the Borough, but individuals (especially landowners) carry out much of the work. It is vital to include farmers in nature conservation as they manage most of the land and there are many examples of good stewardship in Rushcliffe.

Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Records Centre (NBGRC) maintain records of survey work.

Access to nature conservation sites and the wider countryside develops awareness of our natural heritage, while also providing other ecosystem service benefits, appropriate access needs to be encouraged and managed, without putting too much pressure on these sites. Natural England advocates 'Access to Natural Greenspace Standards' (ANGSt) so that that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace.

Education, both formally (where taught) and informally (for example using information panels on nature reserves, walks and talks), helps to raise awareness of nature conservation issues. It is important to educate as widely as possible, addressing both adults and young people and by publicising conservation issues and activities locally.

Community involvement in nature is important; nature conservation work improves our natural heritage, our social wellbeing, health and economy. Public involvement is limited by the availability of organisers (voluntary and professional) and funding. There is great potential for more community involvement in Rushcliffe.

Friends of Groups are valuable community groups that care for particular sites, Friends of Groups already exist for many sites in Rushcliffe.

**We will seek to: Support community involvement in nature conservation in Rushcliffe, through voluntary conservation work, wildlife surveying and awareness raising, this requires funding to be sought and training and interpretative material to be provided and activities to attract the public. Support existing 'friends of groups' and seek to develop new groups. Provide access to wildlife sites and support initiatives that care for the environment. Implement Natural England's ANGSt standards. Take care that activity is carried out on sites across the whole Borough, not just popular areas.**

## 12) PLANNING POLICIES AND THE PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE AND HABITATS

A new National Planning Policy Framework was published by HM Government in 2012, setting out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. A principle set out in the NPPF is of "pursuing sustainable development" which includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution".  
(online at [http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/11-conserving-and-enhancing-the-natural-environment/#paragraph\\_117](http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/delivering-sustainable-development/11-conserving-and-enhancing-the-natural-environment/#paragraph_117))

There is major pressure at a national and regional level for significant housing development to occur along the southern edge of Nottingham, thus Rushcliffe's wildlife sites in both urban and rural areas will come under increasing pressure from development in the coming years. A degree of protection is

provided by planning regulations and policies. The local planning policy documents created by the local planning authority set out where and how development will be allowed, they also identify protected areas, legally protected species and important trees, woodlands and hedgerows. These documents also include policies relating to planting schemes that emphasise appropriate local species.

It is important to ensure that where development is permitted, not only are valuable sites (SSSI, LWS and LNR) and other hard to replace sites protected from direct development, but a 'mitigation hierarchy' is followed that seeks to avoid ecological harm, and where necessary mitigates or compensates for losses (Section 118, NPPF). Buffering local sites and including Green Infrastructure in developments reduces the threat of isolation and brings wildlife into new developments.

In terms of nature conservation, there are major contradictions inherent in development planning. Firstly, between the use of brownfield and greenfield sites for development. Brownfield sites can in some cases be valuable wildlife habitats (i.e. disused railways and pitheads). Green field sites may be intensively managed arable and pasture with limited current wildlife value, however they may also have an important visual landscape role and considerable potential for wildlife habitat creation.

Similarly with the status of greenbelt, which was originally created as a mechanism to control (not prevent) urban sprawl. Assuming development will go ahead, is it better to lose greenbelt along the urban fringe or allow development to leapfrog into the wider countryside? Resolving such contradictions is not easy and needs to consider where there will be net biodiversity gain.

See <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/natural-environment/biodiversity-ecosystems-and-green-infrastructure/> for more details on planning issues.

Where levels of pollution may be detrimental to wildlife, sources should be traced and if possible reduced to acceptable levels. Various organisations have specific roles in controlling levels of environmental pollution, principally the Environment Agency and Rushcliffe Borough Council.

**We should: Include wildlife issues in planning policies e.g. in the Rushcliffe local development documents. Ensure planning approvals meet wildlife protection regulations. Follow good practise on planning and biodiversity, particularly following the 'mitigation hierarchy' where compensation for habitat loss should be a last resort. Encourage developers to minimise the impact of their development and encourage eco-friendly building design. Minimise the need to use important nature conservation sites for development. Keep nature conservation on the agenda at county, regional, national and European levels. Enforce pollution regulations and support policies to reduce environmental pollution, for waterbodies seeking to achieve good ecological status. Encourage individuals and companies to adopt safe practices. We will seek to use biodiversity opportunity maps to guide planning policy to improve biodiversity in the area.**

### 13) Other Policy Drivers

In 2006 the **NERC Act (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act)** came into force. Part of the act (Section 40), known as the biodiversity duty states that 'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'. The legislation is intended to raise the profile and visibility of biodiversity within public authorities and to clarify their existing commitments with regards to biodiversity. The duty should make biodiversity a natural and integral part of policy and decision making for all public bodies.

See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/section/40> for more detail



**'Making space for nature' (sometimes called the Lawton Review)** was published by DEFRA in 2010, this reviewed England's wildlife sites and the connections between them, with recommendations to help achieve a healthy natural environment that will allow our plants and animals to thrive.

The report makes the following key points for establishing a strong and connected natural environment:

- That we better protect and manage our designated wildlife sites;
- That we establish new Ecological Restoration Zones;
- That we better protect our non-designated wildlife sites;

These recommendations are often summarised as ensuring our wildlife sites are bigger, better and more connected.

The paper recognised society's need to maintain water-quality, manage inland flooding, deal with coastal erosion and enhance carbon storage, if thought about creatively this, could help deliver a more effective ecological network.

See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/making-space-for-nature-a-review-of-englands-wildlife-sites-published-today> for more details.

**Natural Environment White Paper** - recognised that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the EU and internationally. It set out 92 specific commitments for action.

Including a Biodiversity Strategy update (see section 4 above), a review of planning (see section 10 above), a review of the Common Agricultural Policy agri-environment schemes (see section 3.1 above), establishing a voluntary Biodiversity Offsetting scheme, river and marine protection, support for the green economy and action on people and nature - health and education.

To see progress visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/natural-environment-white-paper-implementation-updates>

The **Water Framework Directive** (WFD) was adopted and came into force in December 2000. The purpose of the Directive is to protect inland surface waters (rivers and lakes), transitional waters (estuaries), coastal waters and groundwater. It was to ensure that all aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands meet 'good status' by 2015. It required establishing river basin districts and for each of these a river basin management plan

The status of waters in Rushcliffe can be found at <http://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/WaterBody> and <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk>

The **Birds Directive** provides a framework for the conservation and management of, and human interactions with, wild birds in Europe. It sets broad objectives for a wide range of activities; in the UK this is delivered through several different statutes. See <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1373> for more details.

The **Habitats Directive** was adopted in 1992. The main aim of the Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance. In applying these measures Member States are required to take account of economic, social and cultural requirements, as well as regional and local characteristics; in the UK this is delivered through several different statutes. See <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1374> for more details.

**The Invasive Non-native Species Framework Strategy**, launched on 28th May 2008 seeks to meet the challenge posed by invasive non-native species in Great Britain.

See <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm> for more details

## 14) NATURE CONSERVATION AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

STRATEGIC AIM: To protect and enhance Rushcliffe's wildlife resources, thereby contributing towards local and national biodiversity targets, help mitigate the effects of climate change on wildlife and provide ready access to wildlife rich green spaces. There will be a particular emphasis on species rich grassland and wetland habitats, and species characteristic of the Borough. This will be achieved through a partnership of key organisations, local special interest groups and individuals.

OBJECTIVES:

### 1) Promote Landscape Scale Conservation to create a more resilient natural environment, by:

a.	Using the Focal Areas identified in the Biodiversity Opportunity Matching exercise to target action for landscape scale nature conservation projects (Partners: RNCSIG, NWT, RBC)
b.	Seeking opportunities for creating at least one large area for wildlife of at least 40 hectares in extent. (Partners: RNCSIG)
c.	Identify and liaise with organisations whose land holdings or interests have a significant role in nature conservation in Rushcliffe. (Partners: NWT, RNCSIG, RBC, NCC, GCR, CRT, NBAG, TVIDB)

### 2) Promote the maintenance and enhancement of nature reserves, by:

a.	Seeking to ensure that all nature reserves have a current Management Plan to conserve and enhance the habitats and interest of the site (Partners: NWT, RBC, PCs, Friends Groups)
b.	Seeking to ensure that all nature reserves have sufficient resources available to deliver the management plan. (Partners: NWT, RBC, PCs, Friends Groups)
c.	Encouraging local community involvement in the management of nature reserves (Partners: NWT, RBC, Friends Groups, PCs, TCV, SNG)
d.	Using Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping as an aid to making nature reserves bigger, better and more connected. (Partners: NBAG, NWT, RBC, Friends Groups)

### 3) Promote sympathetic land management for wildlife in rural and urban areas, by:

a.	Promoting the sympathetic protection and management of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). (Partners: NWT, NFaW, NFU, DEFRA, NBW, CLA, NE)
b.	Encouraging farmers to develop sympathetic management practices and increase the take up of agri-environment schemes. (Partners: NFaW, NWT, NFU, RuBOP, CLA, NE)
c.	Encouraging wildlife friendly management of buildings, corporate landscaping, public open space, school grounds and private gardens. Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, CRT, EA)
d.	Supporting programs to increase the numbers, size, quality and range of relevant Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats (especially neutral and calcareous grasslands, native woodlands and wetlands) as appropriate (Partners: NWT, NBW, RBC, EA, NBAG, TVIDB)
e.	Promoting the management and designation of Notified Road Verges where appropriate. (Partners: NCC, RBC, NWT)

### 4) Support surveying and reporting of Rushcliffe's biodiversity, by:

a.	Supporting the work of the Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Records Centre and the Local Wildlife Sites survey and monitoring programme. (Partners: NBGRC, NWT, NCC, RBC)
b.	Supporting species survey programmes, as well as encouraging local initiatives to record wildlife. (Partners: NBGRC, NWT, RBC, specialist wildlife groups)
c.	Supporting the work of the Notts Biodiversity Action Group and reporting against LBAP targets. (Partners: All)

### 5) Raise awareness of nature conservation issues by:

a.	Publicising the work of local nature conservation groups, as well as wildlife related issues. (Partners:
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	NWT, RBC, RCC, NBW, NCC, TCV, Friends Groups)
b.	Extending wildlife education opportunities by supporting youth wildlife groups and enhancing wildlife education programmes in schools, colleges and Adult Education. (Partners: NWT, RBC)
c.	Promoting contacts amongst groups and organisations associated with nature conservation locally. (Partners: RBC, NWT, SNG, NBAG, Friends Groups)
d.	Promoting access to wildlife and countryside, specifically promoting disabled access where appropriate. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT)

**6) Seek to influence the impact of development on wildlife, by:**

a.	Ensuring that local planning policies relating to biodiversity and environmental issues are based on the principles set out in the National Policy Planning Framework both in terms of protection and mitigation. (Partners: RBC, NWT, CPRE, NCC, NBAG, EA)
b.	Ensuring that opportunities are taken to benefit people and wildlife through the design of buildings and green infra-structure and seek to Implement Natural England's ANGSt standards. (Partners: RBC, NCC, CPRE, CLA, NFU, NE)
c.	Using Hedgerow Regulations and Tree Preservation Orders to help protect important features. (Partners: RBC, NCC, NWT, CPRE)
d.	Implementing policies to reduce levels of environmental pollution; seek to achieve good ecological status for rivers; and to mitigate and adapt to climate change. (Partners: RBC, NCC, EA, CPRE, NWT, TVIDB)
e.	Seeking to influence Regional, National and European decision making to promote wildlife friendly policies. (Partners: NCC, RBC, NE, NWT, CPRE, EA, NDLNP)
f.	Promoting the use of native local provenance planting (Partners : RBC, NCC, NWT)

**7) Supporting the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy, by:**

a.	Continued support for the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group (RNCSIG) in helping deliver the strategy's objectives. (Partners: RBC, NWT, NBAG, Friends Groups )
b.	Producing an annual report on what has been achieved to progress nature conservation in Rushcliffe and the deficiencies that need to be addressed. (Partners: RNCSIG)
c.	Reviewing the strategy during 2020, or sooner if appropriate. (Partners: RNCSIG)

## 15) KEY TARGET INDICATORS

The following criteria are to be used as an indicator of how much progress has been made in the various sections of the Aims and Objectives. They are intended to be measurable and achievable, but are clearly not comprehensive.

1. % of nature reserves (as listed in our 'Nature of Rushcliffe Annual Reports') with current management plans. Target = 100% sites (Objective 2)
2. Hours of practical work carried out on nature reserves by volunteers. Target = Maintain or increase year on year across the Borough (Objective 2)
3. Increased proportion of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) managed in an appropriate manner. Target = Increase year on year from a base of 32.1% at March 2015 (Objective 2/3)
4. % of SSSI units in favourable condition. Target = increase year on year from base of 24% in 2015 (Objective 2/3)
5. Number of schools in Rushcliffe engaged in NWT related education activities. Target = 6 schools each year (Objective 5)
6. Number of barn owl boxes installed and available for use and number of barn owl chicks raised in boxes. Target = maintain number of boxes available for use and sustain level of barn owl chicks raised (Objective 3/6)
7. % of nature reserves with wildlife related public events (at least one per year). Target = 70% of sites with at least one event per year (Objective 5)
8. % of Parishes / WB Wards with publicly accessible natural green spaces (currently 39% in 2015). Target = 3 more parishes/wards with at least one accessible natural green space by 2020. (Objective 6)
9. No of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). Target = No net loss of SINC sites (Objective 1/2/3/4/6)
10. Area of BAP habitat created, restored or bought under active conservation management in order to link or buffer existing wildlife habitat. Target = 30 ha`s grassland, 10 ha`s woodland, 10 ha`s wetland between 2016 and 2020 (Objective 1/2/3/4)

 <p><b>Rushcliffe Borough Council</b></p>	 <p><b>Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust</b></p>
<p>The Borough Council first published a Nature Conservation Strategy in 1995 and published an updated strategy in 2003 and 2010. This strategy seeks to further protect and enhance our natural environment, building on the work that has already been done. The borough council is committed to working towards the objectives in this strategy.</p> <p>The Borough is a significant landowner of open spaces in the area. This includes a number of wildlife sites (including Wilwell Cutting, Wilford Claypits, Meadow Covert, Sharpill Wood and Rushcliffe Country Park). The Borough is also the Planning Authority for the area.</p>	<p>Part of a national network of county based Wildlife Trusts, NWT exists to protect the biodiversity of the county. It is a charity with a professional staff and a lot of voluntary effort from its 11,000 members. It manages over 2,200 hectares of habitat and is a key player in many nature conservation activities across the county.</p> <p>In Rushcliffe, the Trust owns or manages 5 nature reserves. The South Notts local members group, whose activities are purely voluntary, drives much of the activity in the area. Local members manage nature reserves, organise walks and talks, monitor planning applications and are involved in a wide range of projects.</p>
<p>Rushcliffe Borough Council Civic Centre Pavilion Road West Bridgford Nottingham NG2 5FE</p> <p>(0115) 981 9911 environmentalissues@rushcliffe.gov.uk www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation</p>	<p>Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust The Old Ragged School Brook Street Nottingham NG1 1EA</p> <p>(0115) 958 8242 info@nottswt.co.uk www.nottinghamshirewildlife.org</p>
<p>Contact: Environmental Sustainability Officer</p>	<p>Local group website:  www.southnottswildlife.org.uk</p>



Published on behalf of the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy Implementation Group

Please see [www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation](http://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/natureconservation) for our 'Nature of Rushcliffe Annual Reports', which includes current nature reserves, current projects, achievements and key indicator monitoring.

## Report of the Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. This annual report reviews the work undertaken by the Community Development Group during 2014/15. Each of the Scrutiny Groups prepares an annual report which is presented to Council. Over the year the Community Development Group has scrutinised various topics.
- 1.2. The Community Development Group is asked to review the report and consider if it fully reflects the work undertaken by the Group.

### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. It is RECOMMENDED that the Community Development Group approve the report and forward it on to Council for consideration.

### 3. Implications

#### 3.1. Finance

- 3.1.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

#### 3.2. Legal

- 3.2.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report

#### 3.3. Corporate Priorities

- 3.3.1. The Group's work programme assists the Council in delivering its Corporate Priorities.

#### 3.4. Other Implications

- 3.4.1. There are no other implications

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Name Nicky Mee Marketing & Publicity Relations Officer 0115 914 855 email <a href="mailto:nmee@rushcliffe.gov.uk">nmee@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	Notes of the meetings held in 2014/15
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	Annual Report

# **Community Development Scrutiny Group Annual Report 2014/15**



## **Chairman's foreword**

I am pleased to write this foreword to this year's annual report of the Community Development Group. This year our work has been interesting, challenging and rewarding. We have covered many significant topics in order to ensure Rushcliffe communities thrive and prosper.

Thanks must go to the many staff who gave us presentations throughout the year, with particular thanks to those who have supported this Scrutiny Group.

We have scrutinised many topics ranging from our work in economic development, the role of regulatory services in improving economic prosperity, alternative energy sources, to the rollout and progress of superfast broadband.

I would like to thank all Members for their very active involvement, support and professionalism during the meetings and particularly my Vice Chairman Councillor Barrie Cooper'.

Councillor Tina Combellack  
Chairman – Community Development Scrutiny Group.

## **What are we responsible for?**

The main role of Rushcliffe's scrutiny groups is to:

- Develop a work programme which scrutinises the Council's priorities
- Ensure the Group's work helps implement Council plans and policies
- Review and challenge how the policy, plans and services are implemented and make recommendations to Cabinet and Council on any improvements to services and their performance
- Ensure the work contributes towards value for money, continuous improvement and best practice.

The Community Development Group's remit is to scrutinise:

- Community priorities and proposed solutions
- Engaging and identifying needs of key groups
- Building relationships to ensure that policies empower communities
- Reputation management gained via communications and promotion
- Town and Parish Councils shared working (identifying opportunities whilst establishing priorities)

A major element of the Group's role is to understand the key issues for residents, and encourage them to give their views about matters of importance. The Group also ensures the Council maintains its excellent reputation via effective communications.

## **Our work this year**

During this year the Group considered many service areas and issues within its scrutiny role, particularly:

- Economic Development
- Scrutiny of Public Conveniences
- Role of Rushcliffe Borough Council's Regulatory Services in Encouraging Economic Prosperity
- Update on Delivery of Rural Broadband in Rushcliffe
- Investigation of New Energy Initiatives
- New Energy Initiatives - Solar
- Review of Parish Forums and Conferences
- YouNG update

## **Economic Development**

Members received a presentation on the work carried out to promote economic development over the past year, including setting up a cross-Council team to provide a holistic approach. Members were appraised of the number of businesses starting up and those which had ceased trading, and use of Council assets such as industrial units. Members were updated on Cotgrave regeneration, the impact of the Local Plan on economic activity and a received a presentation on superfast broadband availability. Events were planned for 2015 to stimulate growth such as the second Taste of Rushcliffe Food festival in July, Rushcliffe Business Partnership events, as

well as grants for various initiatives such as to improve shop fronts. Members endorsed the actions and priorities proposed for the coming year and recognised the work officers were doing to progress this strategic priority within the resources available.

### **Scrutiny of public conveniences**

Members discussed the public conveniences, or lack of them in their localities. The Chairman concluded that the Group had considered the item and didn't feel that this should be included within the Group's work programme. However, as this had been identified as an issue that many parishes had considered, it could be discussed at a future parish forum.

### **Role of Rushcliffe Borough Council's Regulatory Services in Encouraging Economic Prosperity**

Members received a presentation showing how regulatory services can help build successful business, rather than being perceived as being a barrier or burden. Members asked many probing questions including about the impact of EU Directives, progress with Pub Watch and the Best Bar Nonce schemes and about shop theft in Trent Bridge Ward. Members heard about the food rating scheme and asked questions about whether it was mandatory for food businesses. Questions were also asked about the Primary Authority scheme and street traders. The presentation also covered aspects of development control and town planning and Members asked questions about various planning applications.

### **Update on Delivery of Rural Broadband in Rushcliffe**

At October's meeting, Members received an update on the rollout of superfast broadband in rural areas. Many probing questions were asked including the benefits of fibre optic cabling, costs, coverage, effectiveness of the communications strategy, how many people had signed up across Notts and alternatives for people who would not benefit from this service.

### **Investigation of New Energy Initiatives**

This topic was discussed so Members could feed back their views and questions on shale gas extraction (fracking) following the visit to the British Geological Survey. Topics discussed included appearance of fracking sites, codes of conduct and skills of staff involved. Members agreed the recommendations contained in the report. A briefing note was developed by the group and circulated to all Councillors' to support their knowledge of this topic in their role as community advocates.

### **New Energy Initiatives – Solar**

Members received a presentation on solar energy at the January 2015 meeting covering topics such as funding for feed-in tariffs, help to let people know what size system they needed and payback periods. Members were appraised by the Nottingham Energy Partnership on factors ranging from what happens when people sell their homes to what schemes and panels were in use on a range of properties

and businesses. A draft briefing note on solar energy has been developed by the group and will be circulated to all Councillors' during summer 2015 to support their knowledge of this topic.

### **Review of Parish Forums and Conferences**

Members discussed the number, type, costs and success of various parish forums and conferences held throughout the year. The Group felt that the forums were an important method of communication with the parishes and Members found them beneficial. Members felt that it was the role of Borough Councillors to encourage all parishes to send a representative to each event.

### **YouNG update**

At the March 2015 meeting, Members were updated on this ground-breaking project and the work that the young people had carried out during the year to date.

Members were appraised of the achievements of YouNG including being shortlisted and winning prestigious awards and they also saw a video made by YouNG. Members learnt about the skills YouNG members developed while working on the initiative, the success of the YouNG Markets and also about the success of their cyber-safety guide and Superheroes Project which provides guidance to young people on how and who to contact when they are ill. Members were informed about the possibilities of YouNG collaborating with Futures Advice, Skills and Employment on careers advice and getting people work-ready and learnt about the advantages of setting up YouNG as a Community Interest Company.

The Community Development Group noted the achievements of the YouNG Group and supported the creation of YouNG as a Community Interest Company.

### **The Year Ahead**

The Group will continue to help review and shape policy, ensuring improvements are implemented. This will be done by developing a challenging work programme linked to the Council's transformation strategy and four-year plan.

**Report of the Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance**

**1. Summary**

1.1. The work programme for the Community Development Group is developed around the corporate priorities that fall within its remit and takes into account the timing of the Group's business in the previous municipal year and any emerging issues and key policy developments that may arise throughout the year. It is anticipated that the work programme for the year will be developed in line with the priorities identified in the 4 year plan for budget savings.

1.2. Members are asked to propose future topics to be considered by the Group, in line with the Council's priorities which are:

- *Supporting economic growth to ensure a prosperous and thriving local economy - Our economy;*
- *Maintaining and enhancing our residents' quality of life -Our residents;*
- *Transforming the Council to enable the delivery of efficient high quality services - Our Council.*

**2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Group notes the report and considers any future topics'

**3. Reasons for Recommendation**

Date of Meeting	Item
14 July 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging Economic Prosperity</li> <li>• Anaerobic Digesters</li> <li>• Nature Conservation - Trees and Woodlands Policy</li> <li>• Annual Report 2014/15</li> <li>• Work Programme</li> </ul>

Date of Meeting	Item
20 October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Delivery Plan</li> <li>• Rural Broadband Update</li> <li>• Work Programme</li> </ul>
26 January 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Programme</li> </ul>
26 April 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Programme</li> </ul>

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Dan Swaine Executive Manager - Operations and Corporate Governance 0115 914 8343 email <a href="mailto:dswaine@rushcliffe.gov.uk">dswaine@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	Nil
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	Nil