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Our reference:
Your reference:
Date: Monday, 3 October 2022

To all Members of the Cabinet

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Cabinet will be held on Tuesday, 11 October 2022 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford to consider the following items of business.

This meeting will be accessible and open to the public via the live stream on YouTube and viewed via the link: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RushcliffeBC>
Please be aware that until the meeting starts the live stream video will not be showing on the home page. For this reason, please keep refreshing the home page until you see the video appear.

Yours sincerely

Gemma Dennis
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 July 2022 (Pages 1 - 10)
4. Citizens' Questions

To answer questions submitted by citizens on the Council or its services.

5. Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

To answer questions submitted by Opposition Group Leaders on items on the agenda.

NON-KEY DECISIONS

6. Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Financial Update Quarter 1 (Pages 11 - 30)

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Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
8.30am - 5pm
Wednesday
9.30am - 5pm
Friday
8.30am - 4.30pm

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The report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services is attached.

7. Customer Access Strategy 2022-25 (Pages 31 - 48)

The report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services is attached.

8. Aslockton Conservation Area Consultation (Pages 49 - 76)

The report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth is attached.

Membership

Chairman: Councillor S J Robinson

Vice-Chairman: Councillor A Edyvean

Councillors: A Brennan, R Inglis, G Moore and R Upton

Meeting Room Guidance

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 at the far side of the plaza outside the main entrance to the building.

Toilets: Are located to the rear of the building near the lift and stairs to the first floor.

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

Microphones: When you are invited to speak, please press the button on your microphone, a red light will appear on the stem. Please ensure that you switch this off after you have spoken.

Recording at Meetings

The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 allows filming and recording by anyone attending a meeting. This is not within the Council's control.

Rushcliffe Borough Council is committed to being open and transparent in its decision making. As such, the Council will undertake audio recording of meetings which are open to the public, except where it is resolved that the public be excluded, as the information being discussed is confidential or otherwise exempt



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET

TUESDAY, 12 JULY 2022

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and livestreamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors S J Robinson (Chairman), A Edyvean (Vice-Chairman), A Brennan,
R Inglis, G Moore and R Upton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors R Jones, R Mallender, S Mallender and J Walker

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
D Banks	Director of Neighbourhoods
K Marriott	Chief Executive
G Pearce	Solicitor
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager
S Whittaker	Service Manager - Finance

APOLOGIES:

There were no apologies

8 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

9 Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 June 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 June 2022, were declared a true record and signed by the Chairman.

10 Citizens' Questions

There were no citizens' questions.

11 Opposition Group Leaders' Questions

Question from Councillor J Walker to Councillor Edyvean.

“When, how, who and how many were the selected external stakeholders consulted in paragraph 4.6 of the papers on the Shared Prosperity Fund?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by stating that a wide range of stakeholders had been consulted in the weeks leading up to the Strategic Growth Board

meeting on 4 July, invites had been sent out to key stakeholder groups, with representatives from nine of those groups attending that meeting, and views sought from a further four groups, who had been unable to attend. Local MPs had been consulted, and the Strategic Growth Board itself was attended by a number of Councillors with cross party representation.

Councillor J Walker asked a supplementary question to Councillor Edyvean.

“Will the Cabinet be writing to the Government about the impossible timescales associated with the Shared Prosperity Fund?”

Councillor Edyvean responded by advising that he believed that representations had already been made to the Government and confirmed that the Local Government Association had also made its concerns clear that it considered some of the timescales to be over prescriptive.

12 **Current and Future Pressures in Disabled Facilities Grant Delivery**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor Upton presented the report of the Director – Neighbourhoods outlining the current and future pressures in Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Delivery.

Councillor Upton advised that this issue was close to his heart and stated that this Conservative administration strove to improve the lives of all of its residents, as people with disabilities were often hidden from the public gaze. Cabinet was reminded that the Council had a fine record in providing adaptations; however, a financial watershed had now been reached.

Councillor Upton referred to an emerging financial problem concerning a legal requirement to give means tested grants towards essential adaptations. Cabinet noted that the budget for those grants in 2022/23 was £853k, which comprised of an allocation from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUC) towards the cost, which was calculated on a set formula, and the Council’s own contribution. Councillor Upton confirmed that the allocation from the DLUC was only intended to contribute, and not to cover the entire cost.

Cabinet was advised that until 2020/21 the Council had been able to keep within its budget; however, a combination of events, including an ageing demographic, increased demand and rising costs had meant that this was no longer possible, and immediate, short-term action was required, to ensure that the Council could comply with its legal duty to keep within budget this financial year. Of the six recommendations in the report, Councillor Upton stated that perhaps the key ones related to a one-off transfer of £500k from the Support for Registered Housing Providers Budget into this year’s DFG budget, the suspension of the discretionary funding and asking the DLUC to have a more equitable distribution of the Better Care Fund.

In conclusion, Councillor Upton advised that going forward a more permanent solution to the increasing demands on the Council’s DFG budget would be required.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan agreed that disability could happen to anyone, too often people were hidden away from public consciousness, and it was important that the Council did all that it could to provide the best facilities possible for those residents. Although the issue was becoming increasingly challenging, it was pleasing to note that the Council was continuing to prioritise this provision, as could be seen in the very innovative and creative recommendations outlined in this detailed report.

Councillor Moore confirmed that the budget would not be altering, money was being transferred over, which was a sensible use of an existing budget, and the Finance team was already looking at next year and future budgets and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Leader referred to Table 1 in the report, which set out the allocation and underspend for each district/borough and was staggered to see the level of underspend, particularly in one district of over £1m. Cabinet was reminded that Rushcliffe's allocation was also substantially less than many other areas, which was difficult to accept, when as had been mentioned, disability could happen to anyone and transcended everything.

Councillor Upton agreed with those sentiments and advised that officers had been in preliminary talks with other districts/boroughs in the county regarding the possible pooling of resources; however, those had not been particularly positive up to now.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) calls upon partner authorities in the County to explore transformational change to support a more equitable distribution of the BCF, which will assist in meeting local need and align with the aspirations to progress a County deal project with pooled resources;
- b) transfers £500,000 from the Support for Registered Housing Providers (RHP) budget (funded through the receipts set-aside from Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) of housing stock) to support DFG costs;
- c) develops and implements an operational waiting list to prioritise applications in line with budget provision;
- d) amends the current Council DFG Policy to suspend the use of discretionary DFG funding until a review of the national formula is undertaken, or the adoption of an alternative county model to administer DFG applications;
- e) ensures an assessment is undertaken to consider the likely future demand and impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and capital resources. The MTFS to be updated for 2023/24; and
- f) makes representations to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUC) to review the Better Care Fund and national DFG formula to achieve a more equitable distribution of resources based on updated health and social care needs to achieve better health and

wellbeing outcomes.

13 Endorsement of the Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Levelling Up Funding Bid

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Business and Growth, Councillor Edyvean presented the report of the Chief Executive outlining the endorsement of the investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Levelling Up Funding bid.

Councillor Edyvean thanked the Director – Development and Economic Growth, the Economic Development Team, and in particular the Service Manager Economic Growth and Prosperity for the significant work undertaken, again under very challenging timescales

Councillor Edyvean referred to the launch of UKSPF in April 2022 and stated that it was intended to replace the EU Structural Funds, which had been allocated to Rushcliffe through the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Rushcliffe's allocation would be £2,571,462 for three years, with a breakdown of the figures for each year highlighted in the report.

Cabinet was advised that in order to receive this money, an Investment Plan had to be completed to identify how the money would be spent against the three priority areas, and Councillor Edyvean advised that Rushcliffe was able to work with other neighbouring councils and upper tier authorities if projects could deliver over a wider area. Cabinet noted that a specific pathway had been set out by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUG), and any unspent money would be returned to Central Government. Councillor Edyvean confirmed that the Council had engaged with a wide variety of stakeholders, and an outline Plan had been made, which required further refinement prior to submission.

In conclusion, Councillor Edyvean advised that the recommendations also dealt with a submission of the Levelling Up Funding bid, and it was important to recognise that the terms of the bid required projects with immediate deliverability. Cabinet was asked to endorse the bid to deliver new infrastructure requirements on the Rushcliffe side of the River Trent in relation to the new pedestrian bridge being built by Nottingham City Council, details of which were highlighted in Section 4.23 of the report.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Brennan welcomed the report, stated that it was pleasing to see that the Government was committed to replacing the funding from the EU Structural Funds, and emphasised the necessity of spending the money, rather than it being returned to the Government. Councillor Brennan agreed that it was a very short timescale, and it was good that projects had been identified and officers were thanked for their hard work in pulling this together. As the funding increased overtime, Councillor Brennan was pleased to see that in the list of longer term potential projects, new areas, or at least areas that had not received funding for some time had been included, to help bring the Levelling Up agenda to life. Councillor Brennan welcomed the creative ideas that had come through and that the Council's partners had been involved, and fully endorsed the

recommendations.

The Leader concurred with previous comments, referred to previous meetings with partners, which had been extremely constructive, and advised that the meeting last week with local MPs had been very productive. Cabinet noted that Rushcliffe was far more advanced than many other areas, and it was a great credit to the hard work of officers that the August deadline would be met. The Leader advised that this was a review process and would be looked at regularly to reflect the needs of the Borough. The Leader stated that he had been keen to see the funding spread out across the Borough, to ensure that everyone could enjoy the funding, and that had been achieved.

Councillor Upton reiterated his thanks to officers and stated that he was very optimistic that this bid would be successful.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) endorses the identified priority interventions for Rushcliffe's Investment Plan and the local principles for the allocation of funding;
- b) endorses the identified long list of interventions for Rushcliffe's Investment Plan for year 1 in Appendix B;
- c) delegates sign off of the Investment Plan to the Leader, Chief Executive and S151 Officer, including refinement of projects for year 1 and allocations for years 2 and 3, with both revenue and capital implications reported in future Financial reports to Cabinet and the MTFS to Full Council; and
- d) endorses the submission of the Levelling Up Funding bid with the Capital Programme to be updated accordingly and reported in future financial reports.

14 Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor Upton presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth, outlining the Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order (LDO).

Councillor Upton referred to the significance and complexity of this project, and thanked the site owners, Uniper, Arup Consultants, the Planning Policy Manager, the Director – Development and Economic Growth, members of the Local Development Framework Group and many others for the work that they have already put into this project, against a very challenging timeline.

Councillor Upton referred to the previous Cabinet decision in November 2021, that an LDO should be prepared, which would grant planning permission for the site's redevelopment, subject to any conditions applied by the Order. Cabinet noted that the LDO would have the aspiration of creating an industrial park, focused on advanced manufacturing, including technology required to transition to net-zero, green and low carbon energy generation, and energy storage.

Cabinet noted that consultations had already been undertaken with non-statutory consultees, and if approved in draft tonight, it would then be published for a six-week statutory consultation. Councillor Upton confirmed that the report detailed the justification for the benefits of preparing an LDO for this site, together with the approval process, and stated that the final decision to adopt the LDO would be taken by Full Council.

Councillor Upton informed Cabinet that the proposed draft LDO and Statement of Reasons document attached as Appendix 1 of the report had been written as a final version of the LDO; however, it would be subject to revisions to consider feedback from the statutory consultation, and a further review prior to its final adoption.

Cabinet was reminded that there was a risk that the site could remain undeveloped following its decommissioning; however, the adoption of this LDO should help to significantly mitigate that risk, by providing a framework for development, simplifying, and streamlining the planning process and by creating more certainty for investors, whilst enabling the Council to retain control over the future use and development.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Inglis welcomed this exciting major project and referred to the many significant advantages that this proposal would bring to the area. Councillor Inglis agreed that an LDO would provide greater control and assurance over future development and should meet any time constraints before the deadline to qualify for full Freeport benefits in September 2026. A scenario in which any possible development could be delayed or not take place at all had to be avoided, and Councillor Inglis stated that the LDO would mitigate that and thanked all parties for the hard work already undertaken.

Councillor Brennan also welcomed this exciting project and stated that this was yet another example of how quickly and creatively this Council could work in order to maximise any investment. Councillor Brennan stated that once this process had been completed, it would be interesting to see what had been learnt and if LDOs could be used elsewhere.

The Leader referred to the timelines for the Freeport going forward and agreed that the completion of this LDO would be a key milestone. The Leader stated that the consultation process was very important, given the sensitivity of this key local, regional and national strategic site. Cabinet was reminded that this was the first LDO that the Council had worked on, and the Leader agreed that it was good to see how the Council had adapted so quickly and thanked all those involved.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) approves in draft the Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order and Statement of Reasons (Appendix 1), the LDO Design Guide (Appendix 2) and the LDO Parameter Plans (Appendix 3);
- b) approves the draft LDO Statement of Consultation (Appendix 4) and the

publication of all supporting documents for the LDO;

- c) agrees that the draft Ratcliffe on Soar Local Development Order (LDO) and LDO supporting documents be published for consultation;
- d) agrees that, in conjunction with the consultation on the Ratcliffe on Soar LDO, views be sought on the decision-making and delegation arrangements for determining LDO Certificate of Compliance applications; and
- e) delegates authority to the Director for Development and Economic Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, to make any necessary final minor textual, graphical, and presentational changes required to the draft Ratcliffe on Soar LDO prior to publication for consultation.

15 Revenue and Capital Outturn 2021/22

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Access, Councillor Moore presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services outlining the year-end financial outturn position for 2021/22, linked to the closure of the accounts process and previous financial update reports.

Councillor Moore referred to the very difficult year and welcomed this good set of accounts, which showed a good financial position, with a surplus of £211k, having considered movements to reserves and the need to carry forward for various capital investments.

Councillor Moore referred to Table 1 in the report and advised that the balancing and reconciling of all of those funds had added additional complexity to the closing of accounts process. Cabinet was advised that the transfer amounts appeared large, and they would be placed in the Collection Fund Reserve, with the balance to be released over the next few years, to offset the deficit of £3.2m arising in later years. Councillor Moore referred to further reserve transfers, including the vehicle replacement fund, utility inflation, and possible future pay increases. Councillor Moore referred to Table 2 in the report, which listed both the main adverse and favourable variances, details of which were highlighted in the report.

Cabinet was reminded that having a well-managed budget enabled the Council to make the most of any opportunities and manage downside risks, including using £845k to cover various schemes and initiatives, details of which were highlighted in Appendix E of the report. Future years would be challenging and having a sound financial position would enable the Council to deal with future challenges.

In conclusion, Councillor Moore referred to the financial pressures being faced by all councils and advised that Rushcliffe was not immune to those pressures; however, the Council had reserves to support in the short term, no debt, and a positive Transformation Programme to help mitigate risk and enable sensible management, to ensure that the Council could still deliver excellent service to its residents. To reach this financial position took a great deal of work and

Councillor Moore thanked the Director – Finance and Corporate Services and the Service Manager - Finance for producing an excellent set of accounts.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Edyvean referred to two capital projects, the Bingham Hub, and the Crematorium, where money had been deferred into next year's budget, and reminded Cabinet that although there were slight variations in expenditure, both projects would be delivered on budget and on time. Councillor Edyvean referred to the recent decision to move Streetwise in house, with promised improvements and savings, and stated that it would be important to demonstrate that those outcomes were being achieved and looked forward to seeing that.

The Leader reiterated that the Council remained debt free, which give it the resilience, particularly when entering such challenging times, having to absorb those variances, including the changes to income profiles, and increased energy and employment costs associated with rising inflation. The Leader commented that some other councils would struggle during such difficult times, and it was a real testament to the Service Manager - Finance and her team that each quarterly report highlighted what robust and resilient finances the Council had.

Councillor Upton stated that since joining the Council in 2015, he had read many financial reports, which had always been positive and the Council should be very proud of that, particularly given the difficult circumstances that have been faced, and the uncertainty ahead. Councillor Upton considered that going forward, the Council should be determined to ring-fence its current financial strengths ,against any future efforts to change local government organisation.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- a) notes the 2021/22 revenue position and efficiencies identified in Table 1, the variances in Table 2 and approves the carry forwards and appropriations to reserves in Appendix E;
- b) approves the other changes to the earmarked reserves as set out at Appendix B;
- c) notes the re-profiled position on capital and approves the capital carry forwards outlined in Appendix C; and
- d) notes the update on the Special Expenses outturn at paragraph 4.12 and in Appendix D.

16 Exclusion of Public

It was resolved that under Regulation 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

17 **Acquisition of Land to Support the Delivery of a Permanent Gypsy and Traveller Site in Rushcliffe**

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor Upton presented the report of Director – Development and Economic Growth outlining the acquisition of land to support the delivery of a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site in Rushcliffe.

It was RESOLVED that Cabinet gives approval for officers to undertake negotiations with the landowners of the preferred sites for the acquisition of one site for a Gypsy and Traveller site, subject to meeting the criteria set out in the report, with delegated authority given to the Asset Investment Group.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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Cabinet

Tuesday, 11 October 2022

Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 – Financial Update Quarter 1

Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Access, Councillor G Moore

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report presents the budget position for revenue and capital as at 30 June 2022.
- 1.2. Given the current financial climate, particularly the inflationary increases and impact on residents' cost of living, it is imperative that the Council maintains due diligence with regards to its finances and ensures necessary action is taken to ensure a balanced budget is maintained.
- 1.3. There is a predicted net revenue budget efficiency of £1.073m for 2022/23 mostly as a result of Business Rates Pool and additional new burdens grants (7.67% of Net Service Expenditure). This is proposed to be earmarked for additional cost pressures discussed below. The position is likely to change as further variances are identified during the year.
- 1.4. There is a capital budget efficiency expected of £6.17m due to some rephasing of leisure schemes in relation to Keyworth and Cotgrave leisure centres and West Park (£1.465m), budget efficiency on Bingham Leisure hub (£1m) and support for registered housing providers (£1.894m) where options are being assessed.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approve the attached report noting:

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £1.073m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures (para 4.1);
- b) the capital budget efficiencies of £6.170m including the re-profiling of provisions totalling £1.465m to 2023/24 for Cotgrave Leisure Centre, Keyworth Leisure Centre, and West Park (para 4.7);
- c) the transfer of £0.15m from the Streetwise Loan Provision to Capital Contingency (para 4.7);
- d) the expected outturn position for Special Expenses to be in line with the budget (para 4.5); and

- e) the Council positively engaging in securing external funding with regards to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling-up and Safer Streets (paras 4.14 to 4.16).

3. Reasons for Recommendations

To demonstrate good governance in terms of scrutinising the Council's on-going financial position and compliance with Council Financial Regulations.

4. Supporting Information

Revenue Monitoring

- 4.1 The Revenue Monitoring statement by service area is attached at **Appendix A** with detailed variance analysis as at 30 June 2022, attached at **Appendix B**. For this financial year, the overall budget variance is expected to be an efficiency of £1.073m with proposals to utilise this for in-year pressures. Whilst the budget was set anticipating a rise in inflation, the predicted inflation and pay costs at this stage far exceed expectations. In terms of pay a £1,925 per person pay rise (offered by the national employers) equates to as much as 10% for some lower paid staff and as little as 2% for higher paid staff. On average it equates to 6.5% (further information at paragraph 4.9). The Government are committed to employers paying the national living wage and the employers offer is to help meet this objective. Cabinet on 12 July 2022 approved additional allocations from 2021/22 underspends to mitigate the impact of the additional pressure.
- 4.2 Table 1 below summarises the main variations from revenue efficiencies and pressures. The grant income budget efficiency position of £127k is due to additional new burdens funding and final balance of test and trace admin grant.

Table 1: Main Items Impacting on the Current Revenue Budget

	Pressure/ (efficiency) 2022/23 (£m)	Reason
Projected in year costs/(efficiencies):-		
Agency costs	360	Additional agency in Planning, Refuse and IT
Income Crematorium	176	Income lost from delayed opening of the Crematorium
Income Bingham Arena	58	Income lost from delayed opening of Bingham Arena
Investment Income	(267)	Increase in investment receipts linked to increased interest rates and higher balances
Planning Fees	(176)	Increase in planning applications
Vehicle Maintenance	30	Cost of repairs linked to older vehicles
IT contracts	38	Replacement contract for IDOX
Home Alarms	27	Replacement/upgrade of home alarm equipment not covered by BCF

Rental Income	64	Rental income at Bingham Enterprise Centre and the Point
Court Costs	(33)	Council Tax court costs
Edwalton Golf Course	(35)	Increased usage and income
Other	(32)	Minor variances eg training and recruitment costs
Contingency	(167)	Underspend offsets lost income from Crematorium and Bingham
Net Revenue Cost/ (Efficiencies)	43	
Grant Income	(127)	New Burdens and Test and Trace additional grants
Business Rates	(989)	Increase in Net Rates payable
Financial Pressures	1,073	Pay, inflation and pooled funds
Total Net Projected Budget Variance	0	

- 4.3 Whilst the allocation from 2021/22 underspends for additional inflationary pressures £120k and pay costs £250k have been included in the revised budget, there remains a risk that further cost pressures over and above this will arise later in the year. It is therefore proposed to earmark £0.673m of the projected underspend for these risks. A further £0.4m is proposed to be earmarked for reductions in the value of the pooled investments (see paragraph 4.12). Unavoidable delays in the projects for Bingham Leisure Hub and the Crematorium means there are delays in projected income streams (see paragraph 4.12).
- 4.4 **Appendix A** details the revenue position and also includes grant income, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (funded by the New Homes Bonus) and income from Business Rates and Council Tax. **Appendix B** gives further explanations of both positive and adverse variances, in addition to those detailed at Table 1.
- 4.5 **Appendix E** shows the Quarter 1 position on the Special Expenses budget. The expenditure is currently expected to be on budget; however, this position may change later in the year as variances are identified.

Capital Monitoring

- 4.6 The updated summary of the Capital Programme monitoring statement and funding position is shown at **Appendix C** as at 30 June 2022. **Appendix D** provides further details about the progress of the schemes, any necessary re-phasing, and highlights efficiencies.
- 4.7 The original Capital Programme for 2022/23 was £14.611m, with £10.646m carry forwards and other adjustments of £0.146 giving a current budget of £25.403m. The projected outturn is around £19.2m – resulting in an estimated underspend of £6.170m. Primarily, this arises from:

- the provision for Support for Registered Housing Providers not wholly committed at this stage (£1.894m) whilst options continue to be assessed;
- an anticipated saving of £1m on Bingham Leisure Hub; and
- schemes for Cotgrave Leisure Centre, Keyworth Leisure Centre, and West Park totalling £1.465m are recommended to be re-phased to the 2023/24 Capital Programme.

Capital Contingency currently sits at £506k and this will be increased to £656k by transfer of the Streetwise Loan provision (£150k). This level of contingency will smooth out any capital implications of Streetwise in-sourcing.

- 4.8 The Council is due to receive capital receipts of £11.4m in the year, primarily from the disposal of surplus operational and investment property: land at Hollygate Lane; the deferred receipt from the disposal of the Depot land; and from an overage agreement in place for Sharphill Wood site. The current projected overall variance is likely to mean that any borrowing requirement can be met from internal resources with no recourse to borrow externally this financial year. There is; however, a risk if the anticipated receipts are delayed which will mean a higher level of short-term, internal borrowing.

Pressures Update

- 4.9 Staff pay negotiations are currently underway between National Employers and the Unions along with any other in-year operational staffing changes. The anticipated costs to the Council, if agreed, would be in the region of £0.8m. The budget for 2022/23 includes £0.33m for pay increases and a further £0.25m was allocated from 2021/22 underspends in anticipation of an increase in excess of the budget. The remaining shortfall of approximately £0.252m will be met from projected underspends in 2022/23 and will need to be included in the budget moving forward. However, this represents a significant annual cost pressure to the Council which will need to be funded. The pay negotiations will also have an adverse impact on areas where staff are lower paid, for example in areas such as leisure, manual work and lower level clerical work. This is likely to have an impact on a range of contracts going forward and we are currently monitoring these areas.
- 4.10 Furthermore inflation is predicted to reach 15% later this year with significant risk that the cost to the Council and again an impact on both contracts that are index linked and those due for renewal, and on fuel and utilities. An uplift for inflation was included in the original budget and this was further increased from underspends in 2021/22. The impact of the continued increase will be monitored closely and considered during budget setting for 2023/24.
- 4.11 There is also the potential knock-on effect that this may have on collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates and on fees and charges as households struggle with the increase in the cost of living. Sundry Debtors are being monitored for reductions in collection and is currently at 98% (in line with target). The potential financial impact is that it could lead to an increase in Collection Fund deficit, ultimately a pressure on the budget. Based on Quarter 1 performance (reported to Corporate Overview Group) 29.93% of Council Tax has been collected, compared to 29.46% last year (an increase of 0.47%). For Business Rates, currently 43.19% has been collected compared to 38.45% last year. There is some distortion where £150 Energy Grants have been credited

to Council Tax accounts; and similarly for Business Rates, awarding Covid Additional Restrictions relief in 2021/22, has led to a large carry forward of credit onto the current year meaning effectively that charges have been prepaid. The position on collection rates will continue to be monitored. Given the challenges on residents and businesses this represents a relatively positive position.

- 4.12 The two most significant items in the Council's Transformation Programme for 2022/23 are the Crematorium (£0.2m) and Leisure Strategy (£0.232m) mostly linked to Bingham Arena. The realisation of these targets is linked to the successful opening of the facilities in line with the project plan. It has already been reported to Cabinet that due to external factors with the contractors (notably shortage in labour resources and materials) these projects have been delayed, which will therefore impact upon achieving the Transformation Plan targets. The projection is currently a shortfall of £0.176m and £58k for the Crematorium and Bingham respectively. £0.167m was allocated from 2021/22 underspends to mitigate some of this loss.
- 4.13 The value of the Council's Multi Asset investments or pooled funds had recovered at the end of March 2022. However, there continues to be fluctuations on these funds relating to the current economic climate and at Quarter 1 were reporting a net reduction of £0.846m. However, in the last month this has recovered by £0.283m demonstrating how sensitive the values are to market forces. An allocation of £0.2m was made from 2021/22 underspends to smooth the impact of the movements in value. A further £0.4m is proposed to be utilised from 2022/23 projected underspends. It should be noted that whilst the value of the assets does fluctuate, the returns from these investments are stable and represent a significant proportion of the Council's overall return on investments. When the capital appreciates in value the Council's revenue position will benefit. They are long term investments and form part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy approved by Full Council as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). It should also be noted that the statutory override currently in place could be extended in which case the need to fund any adverse financial position from April 2023 may not be required. In doing so we are being prudent.
- 4.14 A report was taken to Cabinet on 12 July 2022 covering the endorsement of the Investment Plan for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Rushcliffe's allocation from the £2.6bn fund is £2.5m allocated across three years: £0.312m 2022/23; £0.624m 2023/24; and £1.635m 2024/25. Rushcliffe has submitted an Investment Plan which has yet to be approved and, once in place, budget adjustments (capital and revenue) will be made and fully funded by application of this grant. These will be reported with the MTFS to both Cabinet and Full Council in February and March 2023, respectively.
- 4.15 The Cabinet report also endorsed the submission of a Levelling Up funding (LUF) bid which has three investment themes: Transport, Regeneration and Town Centre, and Cultural. The Council has submitted a LUF bid to deliver new infrastructure and improvements to existing walking and cycling routes on the south of the river. The Capital Programme will be updated in line with any approval.
- 4.16 The South Notts bid for Safer Street Funding (SSF) was approved by the Government in July 2022 (this project covers Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe).

For Rushcliffe the fund will, over a three-year period, provide £250k for crime prevention work in the Trent Bridge area. The SSF prevention work will focus on ASB, burglary and vehicle crime and will target specific areas with a high level of reported crime. A proportion of the bid involves the appointment of a project manager to support all three districts. The Council will be the host for the project manager post and funding of £52k will be transferred from the SSF to the Council to cover the costs.

Conclusion

- 4.17 The financial position in the revenue budget is stable, and due to the Business Rates Pool allocation there is a projected overall budget efficiency of £1.073m. Pay and utilities inflation and the consequential rising costs of living present significant risks to the Council's budget. The financial impact cannot be contained within existing budgets if the trend of cost increases continues. In addition, as mentioned above, the value of the Council's pooled funds has reduced significantly and, if the statutory override ceases as planned April 2023, could result in additional pressure on the General Fund. The Council must ensure it can support any adverse budgetary impact and proposes to utilise the £1.073m projected underspend to mitigate these risks.
- 4.18 The position on capital is currently positive with no major delays anticipated on larger schemes and no need to externally borrow this financial year. Challenges can arise during the year, such as sourcing materials and inflated costs, which may still impact on the projected year-end position and this will continue to be reported throughout the year.
- 4.19 Currently there is political uncertainty regarding who the Prime Minister will be (at the time of writing) and also the fiscal and monetary direction of the Government and thereafter the impact on local government. There maybe an emergency budget and we will await the Autumn Statement with interest. It would appear Business Rates retention and Fairer Funding changes seem further away than ever, although levelling-up remains a priority. A two year settlement was referenced by Michael Gove MP, although he is no longer a minister which emphasises the uncertainty.
- 4.20 The Council still has its own challenges such as meeting its own environmental objectives and positively upside risks to provide more employment opportunities, and economic and environmental development in the Borough by actively championing the Freeport and Development Corporation. Against a very volatile economic background it is imperative that the Council continues to keep a tight control over its expenditure, identifies any impact from changing income streams, maintains progress against its Transformation Strategy and retains a healthy reserves position to help manage risks.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

There are no other options proposed for consideration.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

- 6.1 Failure to comply with Financial Regulations in terms of reporting on both revenue and capital budgets could result in criticism from stakeholders, including both Councillors and the Council's external auditors.
- 6.2 Areas such as income can be volatile and are particularly influenced by public confidence and the general economic climate and Government legislation. The impact of this remains to be seen at this stage but is being closely monitored. The impact on income and expenditure likely to be affected by the inflationary increases will be taken into account during budget setting for 2023/24.
- 6.3 Any delay in anticipated capital receipts will mean that a higher level of temporary internal borrowing will be required. This can, however, be accommodated due to the level of cash reserves. There will be an opportunity cost by way of lost interest on sums invested.
- 6.4 There are significant budget risks going forward: most immediately relating to inflation increases and pay costs and the resulting impact on income receipts and in the medium term linked to potential changes to the Business Rates system and Fairer Funding by Central Government (although this is now unlikely to materialise until 2024/25 and heightened by political uncertainty); government policy in relation to waste collection which is still under review; the potential impact of the power station closure (now 2024), and the Council's commitment to the Freeport and Development Corporation.
- 6.5 Business Rates is subject to specific risks given the volatile nature of the tax base with a small number of properties accounting for a disproportionate amount of tax revenue. Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station is due to close in 2024 however due to the successful appeal earlier this year the impact of the closure on the Council has been reduced. Furthermore, changes in Central Government policy influences Business Rates received and their timing, for example policy changes on small Business Rates relief.
- 6.6 The Council needs to be properly insulated against potential risks hence the need to ensure it has a sufficient level of reserves, as well as having the ability to use reserves to support projects where there is 'upside risk' or there is a change in strategic direction. Sufficient reserve levels are critical in ensuring the Council can withstand the financial shocks and maintaining sufficient reserves to address significant risks remains a key objective of the Council's MTFs and is good financial practice.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

Financial implications are covered in the body of the report.

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. It supports the delivery of a balanced budget.

7.3. Equalities Implications

None.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

None.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The budget resources the Corporate Strategy and therefore resources all Corporate Priorities.
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	
The Environment	

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet approve the attached report noting:

- a) the expected revenue budget efficiency for the year of £1.073m and proposals to earmark this for cost pressures (para 4.1);
- b) the capital budget efficiencies of £6.170m including the re-profiling of provisions totalling £1.465m to 2023/24 for Cotgrave Leisure Centre, Keyworth Leisure Centre, and West Park (para 4.7);
- c) the transfer of £0.15m from the Streetwise Loan Provision to Capital Contingency (para 4.7);
- d) the expected outturn position for Special Expenses to be in line with the budget (para 4.5); and
- e) the Council positively engaging in securing external funding with regards to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling-up and Safer Streets (paras 4.14 to 4.16).

For more information contact:	Peter Linfield Director – Finance and Corporate Services 0115 914 8439 plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers Available for Inspection:	Council 3 March 2022 – 2022-23 Budget and Financial Strategy Cabinet 12 July 2022 – Financial Outturn Report
List of appendices (if any):	Appendix A – Revenue Outturn Position 2022/23 – June 2022 Appendix B – Revenue Variance Explanations Appendix C – Capital Programme 2022/23 – June 2022 Appendix D – Capital Variance Explanations 2022/23 June 2022 Appendix E – Special Expenses Monitoring June 2022

Revenue Outturn Position 2022/23 – June 2022

	Original Budget £'000	Revised Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Outturn Variance £'000
Chief Execs	2,021	2,054	2,037	(17)
Development and Economic Growth	88	365	501	136
Finance & Corporate	4,330	4,738	4,433	(305)
Neighbourhoods	6,749	7,430	7,659	229
Sub Total	13,188	14,587	14,630	43
Capital Accounting Reversals	(1,895)	(1,895)	(1,895)	0
Minimum Revenue Provision	1,293	1,293	1,293	0
Total Net Service Expenditure	12,586	13,985	14,028	43
Grant Income (including New Homes Bonus & rsg)	(1,861)	(1,861)	(1,988)	(127)
Business Rates (including SBRR)	(3,958)	(3,958)	(4,947)	(989)
Council Tax	(7,667)	(7,667)	(7,667)	0
Collection Fund Deficit	4,365	4,365	4,365	0
Total Funding	(9,121)	(9,121)	(10,237)	(1,116)
Net Transfer to/(-)from Reserves	(3,465)	(4,864)	(3,791)	1,073
Amounts Committed from underspend				
Pay Award			(252)	(252)
Utilities			(421)	(421)
Pooled Investments			(400)	(400)
Total Committed from underspend			(1,073)	(1,073)
Net Budget (Deficit)/Surplus	(3,465)	(4,864)	(4,864)	0

Revenue Variance Explanations

ADVERSE VARIANCES in excess of £25,000			
Service	Income / Expenditure Type	Reason	Projected Outturn Variance £'000
Crematorium	Income	Reduced income due to slippage in build	176
Depot & Contracts	Employee Expenses	Agency	104
Depot & Contracts	Transport Related Expenses	Older Vehicle Repairs	30
ICT	Employee Expenses	IT agency	27
ICT	Supplies & Services	Idox	38
Planning & Growth	Employee Expenses	Planning agency	229
Property Services	Income	Rental income at Bingham Enterprise Centre (delayed opening) and the Point (vacancies)	64
Strategic Housing	Supplies & Services	Replacement home alarm equipment	27
Leisure	Income	Bingham Hub	58
TOTAL ADVERSE VARIANCES > £25k			753
FAVOURABLE VARIANCES in excess of £25,000			
Service	Income / Expenditure Type	Reason	Projected Outturn Variance £'000
Financial Services	Income	Investment Income	(267)
Revenues & Benefits	Income	Court Costs	(33)
Planning & Growth	Income	Planning income	(176)
Financial Services	Contingency	Allocation for Crem and Bingham lost income (offsets reduced income)	(167)
Depot and Contracts	Third Party Payments	Reduced costs due to increased usage and income	(35)
TOTAL ADVERSE VARIANCES > £25k			(678)
OTHER MINOR VARIANCES			(32)
TOTAL VARIANCE			43

Capital Programme 2022/23 June 2022

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY	Current Budget £000	Actual £000	Projected Variance £000	Explanations
Development and Economic Growth	15,847	14,259	(1,588)	Variance primarily arises from anticipated underspend on Bingham Hub.
Neighbourhoods	8,537	4,611	3,926)	Support for RHPs not wholly committed as options continue to be assessed. £1.5m expenditure on CLC, KLC, and West Park has agreed to be deferred to 23/24 to allow priority schemes to be delivered.
Finance & Corporate Services	513	363	(150)	Loan for Streetwise not required and will be transferred to contingency to support the insourcing of Streetwise.
Contingency	506	0	(506)	Capital Contingency balance not yet allocated. This has been increased by carry forwards to give greater flexibility to the programme for the insourcing of Streetwise.
	25,403	19,233	(6,170)	
FINANCING ANALYSIS				
Capital Receipts	(11,540)	(8,071)	3,469	CLC, KLC, and West Park schemes deferred to 23/24 plan to be financed by capital receipts.
Government Grants	(2,724)	(2,900)	(176)	
Use of Reserves	(1,763)	(1,780)	(17)	
Grants/Contributions	(2)	(2)	-	
Section 106 Monies	(2,874)	(980)	1,894	Release of S106s for Affordable Housing, commitments not yet identified.
Borrowing	(6,500)	(5,500)	1,000	Potential Saving on Bingham Hub
	(25,403)	(19,233)	6,170	
NET EXPENDITURE	-	-	-	

Capital Variance explanations 2022/23 June 2022

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - June 2022								
	Original Budget £000	Current Budget £000	Budget YTD £000	Actual YTD £000	Variance £000	Projected Actual £000	Variance £000	
DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH								
Manvers Business Park Enhancements	300	300				300		Works planned for later in the year.
Colliers BP Enhancements		8		1	1	25	17	Opportunity to install new water supply pipework to mitigate liability issues, currently considering best options. £17k to be requested from Capital Contingency.
Traveller Site Acquisition	1,000	1,000				1,000		Projected actual to be refined when spending plans clearer. A grant application has been made for costs totalling £1.914m with 50% funding £957k.
Cotgrave Phase 2	500	500	125	64	(61)	125	(375)	Main contract completed early 21/22. Peripheral works still to be commissioned: car charging points, teen shelters, landscaping, and frontage works. Savings anticipated.
Bingham Leisure Hub	2,000	7,673	1,918	1,345	(573)	6,673	(1,000)	A delay is now expected for completion and handover to very late summer. Contract and RBC Contingency sums not yet allocated may mean potential significant saving.
Water Course Improvements	60	60				60		Procurement options being considered. May be cost pressures for the work.

The Point	200	240				240		Planned works to upgrade office lighting; balcony waterproofing; and auto doors.
Bingham Market Place Improvements		68				68		Tender exercise re-run; tenders being evaluated.
The Crematorium	3,000	5,973	1,025	574	(451)	5,743	(230)	Total provision including purchase of the land £8.5m. Contractor appointed, site/ground works commenced. Potential cost pressures for materials and skilled labour. £230k saving from non-payable VAT in 21/22, may be further savings from contract contingency.
Keyworth Cemetery	25	25				25		Works to be agreed with the Diocese.
	7,085	15,847	3,068	1,984	(1,084)	14,259	(1,588)	
NEIGHBOURHOODS								
Vehicle Replacement	926	948	589	594	5	910	(38)	3 Refuse Freighters and a 2nd hand glass recycler acquired. Planned purchases: 1 Medical Waste Box Vans. Electric Ford Transit, and 2 vehicles for RCP. £22k for BARTEC Units.
Support for Registered Housing Providers	2,620	2,056				162	(1,894)	Commitments £162k: £80k for 50% due on Practical Completion for 10 units of affordable housing on Garage Sites Ph 2; £36k 2 Affordable Rent units Ruddington; and £46k for 50% SOS 2 Affordable Rent units RAF Newton. RBC has received £3.8m for land north of Bingham. Cabinet 12.07.22 approved £500k Capital Receipts backed budget to be transferred to Mandatory DFGs.

Assistive Technology	40								The original £40k provision transferred to support spending pressures on Mandatory DFGs meaning there are no funds available to support the £40k planned investment in Smart Hubs. Other options for financing the Hubs are being assessed.
Discretionary Top Ups	100	100	25	17	(8)	100			Due to spending pressures on Mandatory DFGs, Cabinet 12.07.22 approved amendment of the policy to temporarily suspend use of the Discretionary pot until a review of the national formula allocation is undertaken.
Disabled Facilities Grants	530	1,253	313	188	(125)	928	(325)		Budget movement comprises: £56k b/f; £40k provision from Assistive Technology and £25k from WHOP diverted here; £102k from historic underspends; and an additional £500k from Support for RHPs as approved by Cabinet 12.07.22.
Hound Lodge Enhancements	125	125					(125)		The future of Hound Lodge is currently being assessed.
Arena Enhancements	75	155				75	(80)		£75k committed to upgrade reception and corridor floors.
Car Park Resurfacing	95	215				215			Scope of works being finalised, works to be undertaken alongside EV Charge Points.
CLC Enhancements	675	675					(675)		Agreed deferral of work until Dec 2023 to allow delivery of corporate priorities: Bingham Hub and The Crematorium. Cabinet to approve rephasing to 23/24 Capital Programme.
EGC Enhancements	30	30				30			Options still under consideration.

KLC Enhancements	470	470					(470)	Agreed deferral of work until Dec 2023 to allow delivery of corporate priorities: Bingham Hub and The Crematorium. Cabinet to approve rephasing to 23/24 Capital Programme.
BLC Improvements		97					97	To support any emerging Health and Safety enhancements.
Gresham Sports Park Redevelopment		51					51	Allocated towards environmental improvements associated with the swale.
Gamston Community Centre Enhancements Special Expense		13					13	
Lutterell Hall Enhancements Special Expense		77					77	
LAD2 Green Energy Grants		407					407	New initiative, fully funded by Government Grant. Scheme to facilitate external wall insulation, solar PV panels, and loft insulation in homes of non-standard construction. Commencing November, to be delivered in partnership with EON. Timescale has been extended due to COVID19, completion now allowed by 30 June 22 and paperwork by 31 July 22.
HUG and LAD3 Green Energy Grants	770	770					770	New initiative, fully funded by Government Grants. New Home Upgrade Grants and an extension of LAD2 (see above). Funds to be spent by 31 March 2023.
Gresham Sports Pavilion		32					32	Changing rooms and flooring options to be decided.

RCP Visitor Centre	75	542	295	93	(202)	542		Phase I Enabling/Civils work £90k completed. New Rangers Vehicle Store/Workshop bought 21/22 £25k and will be installed this year as part of Phase II. Wind turbines decommissioned. Expected completion in July 22.
External Door/Window Upgrades Various Sites	35	46				46		
Alford Road Football Goals	10	10				10		Goal posts on order.
Capital Grant Funding		15				15		One final grant of £15k committed.
Adbolton Play Area Special Expense	75	85				85		Planned enhancements Adbolton Play Area.
Boundary Rd Cycle Track Special Expense		3	3	2	(1)	3		Height barrier installed.
West Park Julien Cahn Pavilion Special Expense	320	320					(320)	Agreed deferral of work until Dec 2023 to allow delivery of corporate priorities: Bingham Hub and The Crematorium. Cabinet to approve rephasing to 23/24 Capital Programme.
Skateboard Parks		40	40	40		40		Final Skatepark Grant £40k released to Keyworth PC.
Warm Homes on Prescription	25	2	2	3	1	3	1	The original £25k transferred to support spending pressures on Mandatory DFGs meaning there are no funds available to support WHOP this year. £3k residual spent projected met by a budget adjustment from historic underspends on BCF.
	6,996	8,537	1,267	937	(330)	4,611	(3,926)	
FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES								

Information Systems Strategy	230	363	57	8	(49)	363		Rollout of the ICT Alignment Strategy to meet business needs and embrace changing technology. Cloud Based Solutions now being assessed.
Streetwise Loan 21/22	150	150					(150)	Loan not required. Cabinet approval requested transfer provision to Capital Contingency to support the insourcing of Streetwise.
	380	513	57	8	(49)	363	(150)	
CONTINGENCY								
Contingency	150	506					(506)	£150k original estimate bolstered by £150k Streetwise Loan not required from £21/22 and £206k unspent contingency in 21/22. £17k to be requested for Colliers BP.
	150	506					(506)	
TOTAL	14,611	25,403	4,392	2,929	(1,463)	19,233	(6,170)	

Special Expenses Monitoring June 2022

Budget Monitoring for Special Expense Areas - Quarter 1				
	Original Budget 22/23	Forecast P3	Forecast Variance	Reasons for variance
	£	£	£	
<u>West Bridgford</u>				
Parks & Playing Fields	437,500	437,500	0	
West Bridgford Town Centre	91,400	91,400	0	
Community Halls	78,500	78,500	0	
Annuity Charges	94,000	94,000	0	
RCCO	75,000	75,000	0	
Sinking Fund (The Hook)	20,000	20,000	0	
Total	796,400	796,400	0	
			0	
Keyworth			0	
Cemetery	7,900	7,900	0	
Annuity Charge	1,300	1,300	0	
Total	9,200	9,200	0	
			0	
Ruddington			0	
Cemetery & Annuity Charges	11,100	11,100	0	
Total	11,100	11,100	0	
			0	
TOTAL SPECIAL EXPENSES	816,700	816,700	0	

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Cabinet

Tuesday, 11 October 2022

Customer Access Strategy 2022-2025

Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Access, Councillor G Moore

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. The Council's last active Customer Access Strategy expired in 2017 – at that time the Council's Customer Services offering, and the demand on that service, had been stable for a number of years. Given the significant changes in resident behaviour brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, it was felt necessary to review where we are now, the direction in which to develop access to customer services in the coming years, and also how best to ensure that all customers that wish to access our services can do so at a time and in a way that suits them.
- 1.2. A draft Customer Access Strategy is included at Appendix One for consideration and adoption.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approves the adoption of the Customer Access Strategy 2022-2025 at Appendix One.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

The Council does not currently have a clear and approved approach to Customer Access. In addition, the Council has seen significant changes in the ways in which customers are accessing Council services as a result of behaviours influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Customer Access Strategy 2022-2025 has been drafted to encapsulate the current position with regard to customer access and set out how the Council intends to develop Customer Services over the next three years in line with customer demand.

4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. Rushcliffe Borough Council is committed to enabling residents who require help from the Council to access that help in a way that suits them and at a time that suits them. This means that our Customer Services offering extends past the call centre and front desk operations of past strategies and embraces the changes brought about by increased access to technology and ever improving acceptance of use of technology as an efficient way of contacting the Council.

4.2. When comparing pre-Covid data against more recent figures across all of our contact channels this shift can clearly be seen:

Channel	Pre-Covid monthly average	Current monthly average	Trend
Phone	9,094	7,381	↓
Face-to-face - WB	816	276	↓
Face-to-face – Contact Points	109	72	↓
Email	1,352	1,921	↑
Web	478	692	↑
E-forms	4,353	7,009	↑

4.3. Nationally suggests that Smartphone ownership amongst adults is as high as 84%. Many customers are now seeking help electronically first and only contacting the Council in person when they have been unable to ‘self-serve’ ie fix the problem themselves. However, there remain customers who are unable or unwilling to contact the Council electronically. These are likely to be some of our most vulnerable customers and it is important that we continue to provide services that meet their needs also.

4.4. Therefore, the Council’s draft Customer Access Strategy 2022-2025 does not cast aside its face-to-face or telephone access. It continues to offer these vital contact channels whilst focusing development in its growth area of self-service via electronic means. These contact channels are more cost effective and scalable enabling the Council to do more against a reduced budge.

4.5. Over the life of this Strategy, the Council will look to:

- Explore proactive text messaging as an information delivery tool (much in the same way your dentist may now send a reminder that you have an appointment tomorrow)
- Investigate new contact channels such as automated chat-bots (as are used by energy companies and online banks to help customers find the answers, they are looking for online or respond to simple requests such as ‘when is my next bin collection’)
- Develop our self-serve offering at contact points to assist customers when we are not physically present (in the same way that you now order your items on a digital touch screen rather than with a piece of paper in Argos)
- Undertake the My Account phase two project to integrate back office systems and provide greater access to information for individual customers through the website (from ‘who’s my Councillor’ to ‘when is my next bin collection’ and ‘when is my next benefit payment due’)
- Launch a new corporate website for the Council which makes it easier for customers to find the information they need and transact the business they need to undertake
- Identify and develop new online services by using data to recognise common areas of contact through traditional means and creating additional

online services where required – or increasing awareness of existing services

- Installing free Wi-Fi at customer access points
- Monitor customer services standards across the organisation to ensure equitable access for all
- Review our existing service level agreements with partners to identify areas in which we could expand or enhance services to benefit our customers
- Continually seek customer feedback through mystery shopper and satisfaction surveys to improve the customer experience
- Review existing technological solutions to ensure usage and digital capability is maximised
- Work towards reducing the Council's reliance on print and postage as a means of contacting customers.

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

The Council could have continued to operate its Customer Services offering without a clear strategy, but this could have led to the Council failing to maximise the benefits of changing customer behaviours brought about by the pandemic which may ultimately lead to more accessible and more cost-effective services.

6. Risks and Uncertainties

There are no risks or uncertainties involved with forwarding the draft Customer Access Strategy to Cabinet for consideration. However, there are significant risks to the Council in not developing services that meet resident needs and that allow customers to access Council services in a variety of different ways to suit their personal needs and circumstances.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

The developments outlined in the draft Customer Access Strategy are covered by existing and future looking budgets.

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications contained within the recommendations of this report.

7.3. Equalities Implications

The Council is actively seeking to ensure all customers can access the services they require in a manner and at a time that suits them. This increases equality for all residents.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no Section 17 implications contained within the recommendations of this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Customers should be able to access the services they need when they need them, and in a way that suits them. Satisfaction with the Council and the services it provides are substantial factors in contributing towards a good quality of life.
Efficient Services	Development of further access to Council services through electronic means will lead to improved processes and more efficient services.
Sustainable Growth	
The Environment	

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approves the adoption of the Customer Access Strategy 2022-2025 at Appendix One.

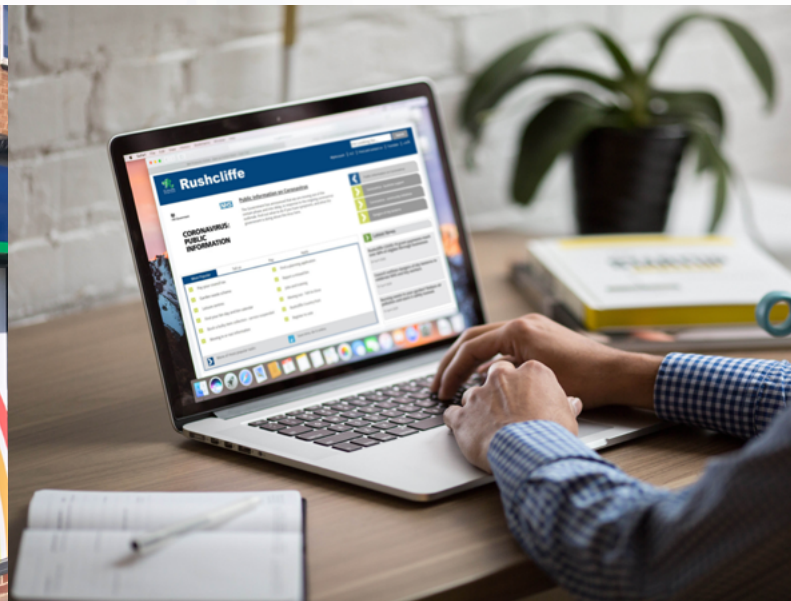
For more information contact:	Peter Linfield Director – Finance and Corporate Services 0115 914 8439 plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	
List of appendices:	Appendix One – draft Customer Access Strategy 2022-2025



Rushcliffe
Borough Council

Rushcliffe Borough Council

Customer Access Strategy 2022 - 2025



Foreward - Cllr Gordon Moore

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Access

"This strategy sets out Rushcliffe Borough Council's Customer Access Strategy for 2022-2025 to deliver contemporary, efficient and easy to use contact channels to enable our customers to access our services where and when they need them, enhanced by increasing digital access to services.

"It will respond to our customer's current and future needs and tailor services within existing budgets whilst identifying and exploring innovative digital options customers can understand and relate to.

"Our customers require services that are easy to access, simple to use, reliable and cost effective.

"Therefore we need to increasingly adapt to new technologies to help us deliver these services whilst understanding the expectation that existing traditional methods of communication face to face and over the phone remain.

"We also need to explore services in a post lockdown COVID environment with our partners and communities to assess if there is agreements and partnerships that can increasingly benefit our stakeholders.

"Increasing free available internet access and mobile technology across Rushcliffe mean that customers expect to access services and be able to communicate with us anytime and anywhere.

"They are also more willing to use self-service channels because of the greater convenience they offer and this channel shift needs to be explored further in the timeframe of this strategy.

"The shift to digital channels and self-service needs to continue to be addressed, building on research and best practice that it is driven by customer needs, delivering part of this strategy that highlights it is fit for purpose and timely and measurable to meet the changes in customers' demands.

"This Customer Access Strategy will support delivery of the Council's priority of efficient services whilst complementing its linked External and Internal Communications Strategy."



Our vision and commitment to our customers

To provide solutions that engage, empower and enable our customers to retain a great quality of life

Our Corporate objectives and customer focus

Our Cabinet, Executive Management Team, Councillors and staff are committed to customers accessing our services in methods that suit their needs. Whilst increasing digital services will continue as part of this strategy, focus will remain on the balance to engage with customers face to face at our sites and explore customer offer with partner organisations.



This Customer Access Strategy will support delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy priorities in 2019-2023 that specifically include assisting with quality of life and efficient services through ensuring access is timely, convenient and easy to use whether digital, over the phone or in-person.



Context

Rushcliffe has over 119,000 residents with varying needs spread across urban centres of six large towns and villages matched with significant rural areas.

We continue to strive to be a well run council despite increasing customer demands on all digital channels in recent years matched with the same demand via phone and a slightly reduced demand for face to face services, compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels.

Since re-opening all customer sites since June 2021 there has been a significant rise in the number of people contacting us via use email or websites to complete enquiries, interactions and processes.

At the same time, the number of people using mobile technology is increasing as are the volume of stakeholders now going online using different devices in any location. This change is also reflected in the way customers access our website.

Since 2019 there has been a shift from using PCs to access our website to using tablets and phones instead with 84% of adults now estimated to own a smartphone.

We need to respond to these changes in our customers' habits by ensuring that more of our services are designed to be delivered digitally, aided by review of the Council's existing website options.

This will provide quicker and more convenient access for those customers who choose to use digital services and allow for further identification where those who can't or choose to not access services digitally can be encouraged to do so.










Contemporary channels such as the website are well established and therefore there is clearly even further potential to encourage more customers to make the switch from face to face and phone exchanges to aid ever more efficient services for the customer.



Channel shift in light of COVID-19

COVID-19 made a significant impact on service delivery and created less emphasis on access on face to face enquiries from customers.

This strategy builds on this with an acceptance that there is a dichotomy between greater digital access and also protecting the more vulnerable. Importantly, since the pandemic began in 2020, customer satisfaction has not been adversely effected.

<p>Email:</p> <p>1,921 June 2021-March 2022 average per month.</p> <p></p> <p>1,352 Pre Covid average per month.</p>	<p>Web Enquiries:</p> <p>692 June 2021-March 2022 average per month.</p> <p></p> <p>478 Pre Covid average per month.</p>	<p>Phone:</p> <p>9,094 Pre Covid average per month.</p> <p></p> <p>7,381 June 2021-March 2022 average per month.</p>
<p>Face to face - West Bridgford:</p> <p>816 Pre Covid average per month.</p> <p></p> <p>276 June 2021-March 2022 average per month.</p>	 <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council</p>	<p>Face to face - Contact Points:</p> <p>109 Pre Covid average per month.</p> <p></p> <p>72 June 2021-March 2022 average per month.</p>
<p>Web form usage:</p> <p>7,009 June 2021-March 2022 average per month.</p> <p></p> <p>4,353 Pre Covid average per month.</p>	<p>Total interactions:</p> <p>18,154 June 2021-March 2022 average per month.</p> <p></p> <p>17,451 Pre Covid average per month.</p>	<p>Total postal enquiries:</p> <p>1,249 Pre Covid average per month.</p> <p></p> <p>803 June 2021-March 2022 average per month.</p>



As of Summer 2022, the majority of customers contact us via:

Phone - 8,115 calls a month*

Email - 2,166 a month*

Web enquiries to www.rushcliffe.gov.uk - 855 a month*

***Face to face with our advisors at four sites across the Borough:
Rushcliffe Customer Service Centre, West Bridgford - 480 visits a month****

Cotgrave Library, Cotgrave Hub - 46 visits a month*

East Leake Library - 24 visits a month*

Bingham Medical Centre - 62 visits a month*

****April-June 2022 average***



Developing understanding to help our customers even more

Developing increased better understanding of our customers forms a key part of this strategy.

As we move towards ever more accessible services and efficient communication, we will look to adapt this document to any of the changing requirements of our customers and communities and the ways in which local people want to interact with the Council.

Therefore we will continue to highlight, identify and be clear about who our customers are, the level of service they actually want, how customers currently access our services and how they might access those services in the future.

Therefore the strategy as created a rationale to have these overarching aims before identifying set objectives to ever increase this understanding of customers' needs to access services effectively.

Our rationale:

To improve services for our customers, we need to continue to have better understanding of who they are and how they expect services to be delivered.

Traditional methods of contact, such as face to face can be more expensive and time consuming.

Understanding why certain customers prefer these channels can help us to help them to move to quicker and more efficient channels.

Examining the customer journey and the cost of delivering each process can identify key areas for improvement as well as the areas customers consider to be less important and identify where we prioritise service resources.

Using customer insight, feedback and consulting with different customer groups and partner organisations will help us to understand the requirements of our customers and develop end to end digital transactions to encourage use and ease of access to online services allowing in person and telephone queries to be focused on vulnerable customers or those with complex needs or cases.

Identifying these customer groups for which digital services and self-service may not be the most suitable type of access, will enable us to develop our services to meet all of our customers' needs and ensure no one is excluded from accessing services.

Understanding our customers and our services during will enable us to make decisions based on real data and real customer feedback instead of making assumptions about what our customers want.

We will achieve these aims by...

- Continuing to develop more understanding of who our customers are through analysis of our ESB Customer Relationship Management and other systems' data on enquiries
- Understand further why services are used in the way they are by customers whether for convenience or if they are unaware of, for example, other digital routes to have their query resolved.
- Understand further and define the needs and expectations of customers across different communities. For example this could mean assessing if there are different needs of customers at our urban Customer Service Centre versus those at our Customer Contact Points located closer to our more rural communities
- Continue to capture accurate customer data to guide which services can be channelled more effectively digitally
- Understand further the cost of delivering our services and where we can identify partner organisations who can benefit from shared services or space at our sites.
- Develop our systems to collect and monitor customer feedback and satisfaction from all access channels
- Regularly review of Freedom of Information requests, complaints and compliments

Our Customer Access Strategy Key Themes



Customer Services Action Plan 2022-2025

	Theme: Building on and exploring innovation	Theme: Embedding further self-service	Theme: Building on and exploring innovation
What are we going to do?	Identify and explore new communication and contact channels such as chat bots, whats app , text and other channels stakeholders use frequently to improve the range of options of how to contact Customer Services in line with the Council's website development.	Further develop self-serve terminals at customer sites to further educate and inform customers they can interact with services ever quicker and easier to resolve their queries.	In line with My Account phase two and website projects, explore ways to showcase further digital solutions to queries at point of contact with residents at Customer Service sites.
Why? page 43	So customers can utilise channels they are familiar with and can relate to, making communication contemporary and convenient in line with constantly evolving methods of engagement.	To ensure customers continue to have the option of how to access our services through digital means. Upskilling individuals at our sites means they can resolve queries themselves or be aware how to use the digital alternatives online.	Building on self-serve terminals campaigns, outline where common reporting tools being available online to aid channel shift as digital awareness of services is heightened.
How will we know when we have achieved it?	Summer 2024 and analysis of any newly introduced channels .	Volume of customers switched to using self-service terminals than relying on face to face queries. 1,000 customers a year prompted to try self-service option for their queries.	Lower volumes of calls and face to face queries year on year as more customers switch to more convenient digital ways to engage with services.
Decision to be made by?	Summer 2022 - exploring new channels work ongoing.	October 2022 - customers will be engaged to familiarise themselves with self-serve terminals in annual dedicated campaign.	October 2022 - customers to be engaged at point of contact at face to face sites

Customer Services Action Plan 2022-2025

	Theme: Building on and exploring innovation	Theme: Reviewing and building on partnerships	Theme: Building on and exploring innovation
What are we going to do?	Identify and explore where services can be increasingly channelled to a online option such as garden waste service and licensing in line with service proposals, systems and processes.	Review existing contact point locations to ensure customers can access face to face services easily and conveniently.	Introduce free wi-fi at our customer sites to increase visitor experience and aid speed and convenience to access online information and access.
Why? page 44	To build on and maximise the channel shift and behaviour changes since 2020 that sees ever increasing customers use online options. Also to 'nudge' customers to use these more convenient options that can decrease administrative face to face time.	To ensure customers have sites that can be accessed more easily whether through nearby public transport stops or car parking.	To ensure customers can be supported in being informed on their own digital device of how to have their queries answered even more conveniently.
How will we know when we have achieved it?	Analysis of services that are partly or wholly switched to online service.	In line with existing leases and service level agreements with partners, review each site annually to assess its location meets customers' needs.	The volume of sites achieving free wi-fi status and communicated on site to customers
Decision to be made by?	Summer 2023 - agree which services will be signposted to partly or wholly online to aid their evolution,	October 2022	Summer 2024

Customer Services Action Plan 2022-2025

	Theme: Listening and responding and Reviewing and building on partnerships	Theme: Reviewing and building on partnerships	Theme: Listening and responding
What are we going to do?	Consult with Customer Service Advisors to further explore key themes and insights as to where the service could be ever more adaptable to customers' needs.	Signpost programmes to help customers develop digital skills, co-ordinated from our partners across Nottinghamshire.	Communicate clear Customer Service Standards across channels and sites so customers are aware of likely response times and keep these under continued review.
Why? page 45	Ensure advisors' views are recorded to help shape the service, listening to where interactions and access to services can be improved to aid the customer experience with RBC.	So customers can receive access to new skills that can aid them accessing services more easily and increase their wider digital learning.	So customers feel the service is approachable and clear with standards and responds they can relate to and match their expectations.
How will we know when we have achieved it?	Ongoing channels to feedback views, culminating in annual check list of points, highlighting what changes have been made.	Volume of customers signposted to programmes. Target of 1,000 customers a year to receive information on local courses and information.	Standards communicated prominently at point of contact to service on phone, website or face to face query.
Decision to be made by?	Summer 2022	Summer 2022	December 2022 in line with Customer First project.

Customer Services Action Plan 2022-2025

	Theme: Reviewing and building on partnerships	Theme: Listening and responding	Theme: Building on and exploring innovation
What are we going to do?	Review service level agreements with partners to identify further areas where services can be shared or enhanced.	Build on ways to routinely monitor customer feedback and satisfaction such as mystery shopper project and skills audits.	Regularly evaluate Liberty Converse phone system, ESB Customer Relationship System and all related software for a modern, responsive service.
Why? page 46	In order to ensure the agreements best suit the needs of the service and identify where existing resources and sites can be used to the benefit of the Council and partners.	Ensure customer service standards are consistently met through learning and further evaluation of existing skills.	Ensure the software is giving Customers Services advisors the best experience to ensure they can answer enquiries ever more effectively.
How will we know when we have achieved it?	December 2022 and ongoing. Partner list identified, contacted and consulted to ensure options are explored.	Annual mystery shopper project and annual team skills audit reviews.	In line with existing contracts, annual review of latest options of all software to ensure latest updates or upgrades are reviewed.
Decision to be made by?	Summer 2022 and ongoing.	Summer 2022 and ongoing.	Summer 2022 and ongoing.

Customer Services Action Plan 2022-2025

	Theme: Embedding further self-service	Theme: Embedding further self-service
What are we going to do?	Reshape postal communications as a key access channel. Signpost further how customers can access services and communicate with the Council digitally, in line with environmental approach on reducing print and postage.	Embedding a culture of self-service through automated processes, ease of access and ongoing staff and councillor training regarding systems.
Why?	In line with one of the four Corporate Priorities on the Environment, look to reduce paper usage and reduce carbon footprint. Highlight to customers they can join the Council on its aim to be carbon neutral by 2030.	To further educate key stakeholders in staff and councillors how they can champion the ease and convenience of self-service to customers. Their direct and indirect connections to customers can play a role in highlighting how to access digital options.
How will we know when we have achieved it?	Volume of post received reducing each year of the strategy.	Number of staff and councillors referring customers to digital options increasing each year of the strategy.
Decision to be made by?	Summer 2022 and ongoing.	Summer 2022 and ongoing.



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Cabinet

Tuesday, 11 October 2022

Aslockton Conservation Area Consultation

Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, Councillor R Upton

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') states:

“69. Designation of conservation areas.

(1) Every local planning authority—

(a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and

(b) shall designate those areas as conservation areas.

(2) It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly”.

1.2 Section 69 [2] of the Act sets out the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas.

1.3 At the request of local residents, the Aslockton Conservation Area has been reviewed in partnership with local community representatives in regard of its architectural and historic interest and is still considered to fulfil the definition within Section 69 [1(a)].

1.4 Section 71 [1 and 2] of the Act encourages local authorities, where possible, to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and consult the public in the area in question, taking into account views expressed.

1.5 This report seeks approval to commence formal public consultation for the purpose of adopting a revised conservation area appraisal and minor modifications to the area boundary for the village of Aslockton in order to fulfil the requirements within Section 71 [1 and 2].

- 1.6 Cabinet is asked to agree the revised appraisal document for the village of Aslockton and to approve a draft character appraisal, containing a proposed updated conservation area boundary and a description of the special architectural and historic character and appearance of that area, for the purposes of public consultation.
- 1.7 The next stage is to obtain consent from Cabinet to take this draft document to public consultation.
- 1.8 Following public consultation any comments and responses will be considered, and any changes to the draft document and proposed boundary made before returning to Cabinet for the formal adoption of a finalised appraisal. If significant changes need to be made as a result of the consultation process it may be necessary to seek approval for a second round of consultation.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) agrees that the village of Aslockton still possesses qualities of special architectural and historic interest, which would warrant its continued designation as a conservation area under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; and
- b) Approves the Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and proposed conservation area boundary for the purposes of public consultation, to last a period of 21 days and to include a public consultation event held in the village.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Aslockton Conservation Area appraisal has been reviewed and Officers have concluded that the village remains a place of special architectural and historic interest, the character and appearance of which it would be desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 3.2 After local residents requested that the Aslockton Conservation Area be reviewed, they led on the work for the production of the draft appraisal, supported at the time by the Council's now Principal Planning Officer – Monitoring and Implementation.
- 3.3 Preparation of a draft appraisal allows for the special architectural character and appearance of the area to be understood and defined and for a proposed conservation area boundary to be drawn.

4. Supporting Information

4.1 A copy of the draft conservation area character appraisal is appended to this report and is the document for which consent is sought to consult the public.

4.2 Within the document is a plan showing the proposed boundary of a conservation area for Aslockton which is considered to represent a boundary appropriate in context of the requirement within paragraph 186 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which states:

“When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.”

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

There is the option not to continue with a public consultation and simply adopt the revised document, the legislation does not create a statutory requirement to consult on proposals for conservation area adoption or review, however best practice strongly encourages doing so to maximise public engagement. There would also be an option to not proceed with updating the appraisal and reviewing the boundary however neither option is recommended as it would not be in accordance with Section 71 [2 and 3] of the Act and published best practice.

6. Risk and Uncertainties

6.1 The only risk associated with the proposal is abortive costs and time should there be significant local opposition to the adoption of a revised conservation area which leads members to decline to formally adopt the reviewed conservation area for Aslockton.

6.2 Whilst there is no requirement in law for consulting the public on the review of conservation areas, best practise acknowledges that conservation areas are most effective where the local community embraces the designation. If there is significant opposition to the proposed changes then there may be limited benefit in simply imposing them.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

The costs of adoption of a conservation area character appraisal consist mostly of officer time. In this instance, much of the investigation and review has been undertaken by local residents, supported by the now Principal Planning Officer – Monitoring and Implementation. It is considered that both the consultation, and any amendments necessary to the draft documentation as a result of that consultation process would be accommodated within the existing capacity of

the newly appointed Project Officer for Conservation Area Review. Beyond officer time, the consultation would require notices to be displayed in the Nottingham Post and site notices advertising the consultation. The eventual formal adoption of a conservation area also requires a notice published in the London Gazette, the cost of which is based upon the length of the notice but would be expected to be around £100.00. In an attempt to limit costs a single notice could be published to cover multiple reviewed areas.

7.2 Legal Implications

Adoption of conservation areas where ‘areas of special architectural or historical interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’ have been identified is a statutory duty placed upon the Borough Council within section 69(1) of the Act. The Act requires the identification and designation of conservation areas. Whilst the legislation does not contain any requirement for public consultation, the undertaking of public consultation is considered to represent best practise. As such there is no minimum requirement for public consultation.

7.3 Equalities Implications

There are considered to be no particular equality implications that need addressing from matters arising from this report.

7.4 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

There are no direct community safety implications arising from matters covered in this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, when dealing with planning applications for development within Conservation Areas, ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’. This is a statutory duty and would ensure that the special appearance and character of the area is preserved or enhanced, thereby protecting the character of the area and quality of life of residents.
Efficient Services	Support and provide guidance to internal and external customers regarding development in Conservation Areas, tree preservation and high hedge legislation.
Sustainable Growth	Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework directs that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, an economic objective, a social objective, and an environmental objective. It is considered that the making of the Conservation Area and the Statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 will ensure

	that relevant consideration is given to development proposals within the area and should ensure that the objectives are achieved, particularly the environmental objective by protecting or enhancing the historic environment.
The Environment	The statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 will ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced, thereby protecting the environment within the area. Whilst the statutory duty does not apply to development outside but adjacent to the Conservation Area, the Borough Council would be required to give regard to the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) agrees that the village of Aslockton still possesses qualities of special architectural and historic interest; which would warrant its continued designation as a conservation area under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; and
- b) Approves the Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal and proposed conservation area boundary for the purposes of public consultation, to last a period of 21 days and to include a public consultation event held in the village.

For more information contact:	Andrew Langley Project Officer – Conservation Area Review 0115 914 8597 alangley@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management Current (2008) Aslockton Conservation Area Character Appraisal Current (2008) Aslockton Conservation Area Boundary
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal: Aslockton

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**Draft Character Appraisal &
Management Plan: Revised
Aslockton Conservation Area
October 2018**



Rushcliffe Borough Council, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 7YG

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Part 1 Character Appraisal

1 Key characteristics

- A linear village with a strong rural character.
- Many of the roads have an enclosed feel, particularly the dense Main Road with walls and properties abutting the road. The approaches to the village are dominated by hedgerows.
- Many of the smaller side streets in the village have their own unique character such as the narrow Dawns Lane.
- An archaeologically important village with strong historical associations with Thomas Cranmer who was born in the village and became Archbishop of Canterbury.
- Many positive buildings which reflect the pre 1900 style of vernacular architecture in the Borough.

2 Introduction

2.1 The Aslockton Conservation Area

The Conservation Area was designated in 2007. The village only has 2 listed buildings but the main body of the village contains a large number of high quality traditional buildings which make a positive contribution to the special character of the village.

The planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 recommends that Conservation Areas and their appraisals should be reviewed 'from time to time' and as a result a review of the Aslockton conservation area was undertaken during 2017/18 for adoption in 2018/19.

The result of that 2017/18 review is this revised Conservation Area Character Appraisal now subject to public consultation. The revision document includes some minor changes to the previously adopted boundary as well as revisions and modifications to the text to reflect the changes which have occurred, both on the ground and in planning policy over the last decade.

The public consultation represents an opportunity to make comments upon the revised appraisal and recommended new conservation area boundary and all such comments are welcomed.

2.2 The purpose of a Conservation Area character appraisal

Local Planning Authorities have a duty to designate as Conservation Areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

The appraisal adopted in 2008 has been revised to reflect changes over the past decade. It looks at the architectural and historic features within the Conservation Area and how their special character could be preserved or enhanced.

The survey and analysis work within the appraisal sections of this document highlight the particular features and characteristics of Aslockton that are worthy of preservation. Work on previous Conservation Areas has identified characteristics which are common throughout

Rushcliffe Borough. These have been fed into a Generic Management Plan for the Borough which states why these features and characteristics should be preserved or enhanced and how this could be achieved.

This document should be used by residents and professionals both as a source of information and as a guide and to inform future proposals so that they make a positive contribution to the character of the area. The document is a tool both for applicants to inform their proposals as well as for the Local Planning Authority to use in making and justifying their decisions on applications.

2.3 The planning policy context

This appraisal provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Aslockton Conservation Area can be assessed, but can also help to inform applications to make them better fit within the character of the area. It should be read alongside the wider development plan policy framework produced by Rushcliffe Borough Council and the National Planning policy Framework (NPPF). The relevant documents include:

- Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy, with specific focus upon:
 - Policy 10 (Design and Enhancing Local Identity) [in part]
 - Policy 11 (Historic Environment)
- Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Development Policies, with specific focus upon:
 - Policy 28 (Conserving and Enhancing Heritage Assets)
 - Policy 29 (Development Affecting Archaeological Sites)
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Revised - 2021)
- The National Planning Practice Guidance (2015 - Subject to Continual Review)
- By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System – Towards Better Practice (2000)
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

3 Location and landscape setting

3.1 Location and activities

Rushcliffe Borough forms the southern tip of the Nottinghamshire District which borders Leicestershire. It is predominantly a rural Borough that contains a mixture of city suburbs, market towns and villages. Rushcliffe is located about ½ Mile South of Nottingham city centre, with the River Trent forming the majority of its northern boundary and the River Soar defining its western boundary.

The A46, runs through the centre of the Borough and leads to Newark in the North and Leicester in the South. It runs mostly alongside of but occasionally along the line of the Fosse Way, an important roman road built to link Exeter (Isca Dumnoniorum) to Lincoln (Lindum Colonia) via Bath, Cirencester and Leicester. In the northern half of the Borough, the A52 forms Nottingham's primary transport link to Grantham and the East of England. Junction 24 of the M1 and East Midlands Airport are located about 1 mile from the western border.

Aslockton is located to the North of the A52 due East of Nottingham and lies along the rail line from Nottingham to Grantham. The village is separated from Whatton by a watercourse which was a previous line of the River Smite. The village contains a primary school, a church, a post office/shop and a public house along with several other small businesses.

The village has its origins, mostly during the Saxon period (c.460-1066) as an agricultural settlement, the low lying relatively flat surroundings being readily adapted to agriculture once cleared of woodland, with the nearby River Smite acting as a source of water rather than transportation (the river was crossable via a ford between Aslockton and Whatton).

The settlement is not in a readily defensible landscape and would not have been founded in this location for any reason other than to exploit the surrounding good quality agricultural land.

3.2 Relationship of the Conservation Area to its surroundings



From just south of the railway line views across open paddock land feature the spire of the medieval parish church at the neighbouring village of Whatton. This is also an area, together with Mill lane to the north, occasional glimpses east from Main Street and west from the footpath forming the western boundary of the conservation area, where views into the surrounding landscape are possible.

The conservation area predominantly covers the parts of the village occupied before 1900. Since then the village has increased through ribbon development along the main roads out of the village. The Conservation Area does not include Cranmer's Mound which is described further below. This area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and as such already receives statutory protection to a far greater degree. The boundary of the Conservation Area does not set out to try and include all open space around the village but where appropriate it does include open space within a logical boundary. For instance the western boundary follows for much of its length the western edge of the public footpath, to include a viewpoint over undeveloped land to the west and towards the former Maltings.

The setting of the conservation area contributes greatly to it by providing a strong connection to the village's rural origins. Most development in Aslockton has been low level ribbon development along the approach roads, thus the conservation area is mostly bordered by open fields, not urban development.

3.3 2017/18 Boundary Review

At the time of the 2017 review of the conservation area appraisal a re-survey of the boundary was undertaken to determine whether the adopted boundary was still considered appropriate or whether any amendments were desirable.

On this occasion one property, Whiteways on Cliffhill Lane, has been identified which was previously just outside of the conservation area boundary but which makes a strong positive contribution to the character of the area such as to warrant its inclusion inside the boundary. This positive contribution had been previously acknowledged within the townscape appraisal. The viewpoint immediately south of the railway crossing identified in the Townscape Appraisal also warrants inclusion.

There were no areas around the periphery of the conservation area which, as a result of changes or alterations, are no longer appropriate for inclusion and as such there are no reductions in the existing boundary proposed.

As a result of this re-assessment it is considered appropriate for the appraisal to be re-adopted with minor boundary changes to extend the conservation area and include within its boundary:

- Whiteways
- The viewpoint immediately south of the railway crossing

4 Historic development and archaeology

4.1 Historic development

Aslockton is first recorded in Domesday Book and would have been an agricultural community; this was the case even after the train station was built in 1850. The 1881 census shows that 45% of the population were farmers or agricultural labourers. The village would have been originally farmed on an open field system with a small number of large open fields surrounding the village. There is remaining evidence of this early agriculture in the form of ridge and furrow paddocks located to the north west of Cliffhill Lane. In Aslockton and Scarrington an Enclosure Act was made between 1779 and 1780 with the actual enclosure taking place in 1781. This resulted in the formation of many of the field boundaries we see today. Even where fields have been subsequently enlarged or combined to accommodate larger agricultural machinery they often have at least 1 boundary which reflects the field pattern created in 1781, which itself would have retained at least some sections of boundary relating to the open fields, usually identifiable as having curving boundaries, such as some of the fields to the north side of Abbey Lane.

The village was a chapelry within the parish of Whatton until 1891. Within large and sparsely populated parishes it was common to find settlements with a 'chapel of ease' created so that the residents did not have to walk considerable distances to the Parish Church on Sundays, in this case the distance to the church at Whatton was not large via the ford but anyone wishing to arrive at church dry would have had to walk a considerable distance to the nearest bridge. In most cases a Chapel of Ease is still administered by the parish, but in this case the Aslockton Chapel was a 'peculiar' of Southwell Minster. In the 15th Century Nottinghamshire was within the Diocese of York and all its parishes under the control of the Archbishop of York. The collegiate church at Southwell was a notable exception, being self-governing and independent of control

from York. It was this collegiate church which established the chapel at Aslockton, as such it was not under the control of the Archbishop but the pre-bendal college at Southwell.

The present day parish church of St Thomas was built in 1891. The church cost £3000 and was paid for by Mrs Sophia Hall of Whatton Manor in memory of her son Thomas Kendrick Hall (former Vicar of Whatton who had died in a shipwreck). A Methodist Chapel was located on Chapel Lane the site of which has since been developed. The 15th Century Holy Trinity Chapel was located on Main Street, and the remains of it can still be seen incorporated into Cranmers Cottage.

Prior to 1891 church worship and burial between the villages of Aslockton and Whatton had always been joined, utilising the churchyard in Whatton. However residents of Aslockton were excluded from being buried in Whatton Churchyard in the 1860's, this led the village to buy a piece of land for use as a cemetery to the northwest of Aslockton. It is likely that the reasons related to overcrowding of the Whatton graveyard. Within 30 years Aslockton was granted status as a separate parish.



The streetscape of the village features several more intimate lanes and rights of way, often well enclosed by buildings, walls and hedging to create intimate a hierarchy of spaces within the public realm adding to the character and variety of the conservation area.

Aslockton has connections with Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) who was born in the village and spent the first 14 years of his life here. He later became Archbishop of Canterbury, appointed by Henry VIII. He played a central role in the Reformation and was responsible for producing the 'Book of Common Prayer', for use in the Church of England and the Anglican Church worldwide. The original house belonging to the Cranmer family has disappeared (the site is now occupied by 'Cranmer House' to the North-West of the village centre). However a series of earthworks, behind St Thomas's Church, known as Cranmer's Mound, are thought to be the remains of sixteenth Century gardens and watercourses, originally belonging to the family, and possibly occupying the site of a small Norman motte and bailey castle.

Sanderson 1834 Map

Aslockton 1900

4.2 Archaeology and scheduled monuments

Cranmer's Mound a Scheduled Ancient Monument located North of Saucer Farm to the East of Main Street. Grid Ref: SK 744 401.

In 1893 the grave of a warrior with sword and spear was discovered at Aslockton, the location of this is shown at the North of the 1900 plan above. Although the settlement of the village itself is thought to date back to the Saxon Period archaeological remains indicate sporadic occupation within the parish, as far back as the 5th century BC.

5 Spatial analysis

5.1 Plan form and layout

The linear nature of the village has been retained with late 20th Century ribbon development following Abbey Lane (formerly Moor Lane), Mill Lane and Cliffhill Lane. This allows periodic views out into the surrounding fields and paddocks which surround the village. These link the village to its origins and define its character. The historic course of the River Smite has always separated the village from Whatton and this has been further reinforced by the construction of the rail line. The 1784 enclosure map shows that the road layout has not changed to any great extent since then, excepting new parallel access roads created as part of modest housing developments.

5.2 Landmarks, focal points and views

The Townscape Appraisal map illustrates these key views along with the many other views and vistas that reveal the rural location of the village. The village doesn't have many focal points, the enclosed nature of many of the streets focus views along the roads. Many of these enclosed lanes have a distinctly rural feel. As an example Abbey Lane from Main Road starts as a tightly enclosed lane with a high proportion of enclosure hedges and trees suggesting an imminent departure from the village into the countryside. This character changes after a few hundred yards as modern development takes over, showing the transition between the pre-1900 village and its modern expansion.

5.3 Open spaces, trees and landscape

The most significant trees, hedges, open spaces, grass verges and gardens are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. There is no significant public open space within the Conservation Area, but there are areas to the South of the village. Whilst parts of the village have an enclosed feel there is still sufficient space in gardens for trees to make an important contribution to the character of the village and give it a mature setting.



Areas within the conservation area are strongly influenced by trees and hedge planting which enclose the public realm and create a less formal rural character such as here in Chapel Lane. Elsewhere, such as in the eastern section of Abbey Lane mature trees and hedging enclose the public realm and give the lane a more enclosed and intimate character than in its more open western section.

5.4 Public realm

The village has a strong rural feel and this is predominantly characterised by Hawthorn hedges which help link the main body of the village along the rural approaches with the countryside beyond. Main Street has a mixture of boundary treatments dominated by brick walls and Hawthorn hedges. Significant walls and hedges are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map.

View looking North along Main Street with a typical mix of hedgerows and walls and one of the rural approaches to the village dominated by hedgerows.

6 The buildings of the Conservation Area

6.1 Building types

Small cottages and farm buildings are the prominent building type. A typical range of buildings in Aslockton.

6.2 Listed Buildings

Listed Buildings are protected by law and consent is required from Rushcliffe Borough Council before any works of alteration, extension, or demolition can be carried out. If a building or structure is included on the government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, then it is Listed. Further information can be found in Rushcliffe Borough Council's publication Listed Buildings in Rushcliffe, which is also available online.

There are 2 listed buildings in Aslockton,; the Church and the waiting room at the railway station.

A complete list of all these buildings and structures is provided in Appendix 1.

6.3 Key unlisted buildings

In addition to the listed buildings, the Conservation Area contains a large number of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to its character. These are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map as 'positive buildings'. Both the NPPF and English Heritage Guidance (English Heritage, 2005) stress the importance of identifying and protecting such buildings.

The positive buildings have been selected using criteria set out in Appendix 2 of English Heritage's *Guidance on Conservation Area appraisals* (2005). In a situation where a building has been adversely affected by modern changes and restoration is either impractical or, in fact, not possible they are excluded.

Almost 50 unlisted cottages, farmhouses and outbuildings have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as having a positive impact on the character of the Conservation Area. The majority of these 18th and 19th Century buildings have a strong relationship with Main Street and other side roads, with many gable walls facing onto the street. This creates a strong sense of place and, in a number of instances, of enclosure.



Before the creation of a separate parish of Aslockton the village had a chapel of ease. The unusual stone wall of the unlisted Cranmers Cottage may represent remnants of that 15th century chapel.

A distinctive stone wall now part of Cranmers Cottage, could be the remains of the 15th century Holy Trinity Chapel.

Since the conservation area was designated in 2008 the greatest change has been the construction of the Thomas Cranmer Centre attached to the north side of the Parish Church.

Outside the conservation area positive buildings such as the Aslockton Bake House and Mill on Mill Lane, Belmont House and Lilac Cottage on Cliffhill Lane, the Maltings on Abbey Lane and

the Railway Villa on Vale Close, make strong contributions to the approaches and setting of the conservation area.

6.4 Building materials and local details

Prior to the arrival of the railway in 1850, building materials were largely locally sourced. Bricks did not often travel far from where they were made, leading to interesting village specific sizes, colours and styles. After 1784 the total volume of a brick was standardised (as the result of the introduction of a 'brick tax' levied as 4s per 1000 bricks –the tax was being undermined by brickmakers who simply started making larger bricks, forcing the government to legislate a maximum size for bricks) as such after the late 18th century local variations in brick sizes cease.

Many buildings were also timber framed. Roofs would have been made from local materials such as thatch, stone and clay. This leads to a local vernacular architecture with a range of styles and materials.

The traditional building materials within the Conservation Area are as follows:

- Walls: Reddy brown bricks dominate, although a number of properties have been rendered or painted cream.

Roofs: Predominantly clay pantiles and with some Welsh slate with plain closed eaves.

Windows: Timber sliding sashes, with many creating a symmetrical façade and having glazing bars, often set below a shallow brick arch. First floor windows are set just below the eaves.

Many windows not topped by arches have chamfered reveals, cills and hood lintels.

Doors: Timber.

Chimneys: The majority are located within the gable wall.

Although a wealth of vernacular cottages and farmhouses form the bulk of the buildings within the conservation area there are also a number of more formally designed buildings.

The parish Church is the most notable of these, built during the high Victorian Period in the scholarly Gothic Revival style. The Thomas Cranmer centre, begun 2008, represents a successful modern addition to the church and an example of how careful modern design can respect historic character.

7 The character of the Conservation Area

7.1 Character areas

1. Rural approaches to village dominated by Hawthorn hedges with gardens in front of the properties.
2. Narrow lanes, closely bordered by properties and a mixture of walls and hedges which give a sense of enclosure.
3. The southern half of Main Street has a distinct enclosed feel with properties abutting the road creating an enclosed urban feel.

4. The Northern half of Main Street becomes more rural in character than the southern half, but still has a number of properties fronting directly onto the road and a predominance of brick boundary walls where buildings are set back.

5. Chapel Lane, rural character with a strong entrance boarded by important hedgerows and trees.

Part 2 Generic Management Plan for Conservation Areas In Rushcliffe

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** The quality and interest of the whole area, rather than individual buildings, gives a Conservation Area its special character. This includes factors such as historic street layout, use of local building materials, scale and detailing of buildings, boundary treatments, shop fronts, street furniture, vistas along streets or between buildings as well as trees, shrub planting and open spaces.
- 1.2** This is particularly significant in Aslockton where few buildings are offered statutory protection via Listing.
- 1.2** In carrying out its planning functions, the Borough Council is required to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Conservation Area Appraisals identify the special character of each Conservation Area and the Borough Council has a programme for preparing or reviewing these.
- 1.3** There is also a duty to formulate and publish management plans setting out policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. Many of these policies and proposals are common to all Conservation Areas and these are set out in this document. Supplementary documents will be issued for individual Conservation Areas where specific policies or proposals are needed.

2.0 Aims and Objectives of this Management Plan

- To set out clear management proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas.
- To guide residents and professionals on:
 - features of value and worthy of preservation;
 - characteristics worthy of preservation;
 - opportunities for enhancement.
 - development proposals which preserve and enhance the special character of the area
- To foster community commitment to conservation principles

The Borough Council will follow these objectives in its own activities and will encourage other public bodies, including the Highway Authority to do the same.

3.0 National And Local Policies and guidance

- 3.1** Central Government guidance applies to all Conservation Areas. This can be found in the following

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment”

English Heritage “Management of Conservation Areas”

3.2 The County Structure Plan contains the following policy:

POLICY 2/12 HISTORIC CHARACTER

Local planning authorities will protect and enhance the historic and architectural character and appearance of the landscape of the Plan Area. Permission will not be granted for development within Historic Parks and Gardens, Historic Battlefields and other areas designated for special protection except where it demonstrably conserves and enhances the characteristics of these areas. The protection and enhancement of the historic character will be achieved through:

- a) the protection and maintenance of buildings listed as of special architectural, historic or landscape importance, including their settings;*
- b) the identification, protection and maintenance of other individual and groups of buildings which are important for their local architectural distinctiveness, or significance;*
- c) the identification, maintenance and enhancement of other locally distinctive and culturally important aspects of the historic environment;*
- d) the designation, enhancement and preservation of Conservation Areas and their settings;*
- e) sensitively designed environmental improvement and traffic management schemes in Conservation Areas and other appropriate areas;*
- f) finding appropriate alternative uses for, and the restoration of, listed or other buildings worthy of retention; and*
- g) informed design of new development.*

3.3 The adopted Rushcliffe Local Plan was replaced in 2006 by the Non Statutory Replacement Local Plan for development Control purposes and the following policies from that plan will be used for guidance in Conservation Areas.

EN2 – CONSERVATION AREAS

Planning permission for development including changes of use and alterations or extensions to existing buildings within a designated Conservation Area, or outside of but affecting its setting, or views into or out of the Conservation Area will only be granted where:

- a) the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area by virtue of its use, design, scale, siting and materials;*
 - 1*
 - 2b) there will be no adverse impact upon the form of the Conservation Area, including its open spaces (including gardens), the position of existing buildings and notable features such as groups of trees, walls and other structures; and*

there will be no loss of part or all of an open space which contributes to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

EN3 – DEMOLITION IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Where planning permission is required for development which includes the demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas it will only be granted where the proposal does not detrimentally affect the character or appearance of the area, and any permission may be conditional on

redevelopment proposals for the site being approved, and contracts for them accepted, before demolition is begun.

3.4 Village Design Statements

Village Design Statements exist or are being prepared for several villages in the Borough, some of which are also Conservation Areas. Although these offer no statutory protection they identify the qualities that are valued by the local community and the character that should be preserved.

4.0 Development in Conservation Areas

4.1 Article 4 Directions.

Article 4 of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 allows planning authorities to restrict specified permitted development rights in particular areas. Many councils use these to assist with the preservation of the special character of Conservation Areas although there are currently none in Rushcliffe.

Many buildings still possess original or traditional architectural details which contribute to the special character. These include windows, doors, porches, door hoods, pilasters and fanlights, chimneys, brick detailing and roofing materials as well as walls, gates and railings. However, the increased use of upvc windows, plastic barge boards, inappropriate roofing materials, high spiked metal railing and electric gates is eroding the character of many of our Conservation Areas. The use of Article 4 Directions will be proposed where considered appropriate following the completion of each Area Appraisal

4.2 Building Design

Extensions to buildings in Conservation Areas should respect

- The key characteristics of the original building including scale, mass, materials and proportions
- The contextual setting and character of the Conservation Area

This does not mean slavishly copying the original, which can devalue it and destroy the ability to “read” historic change and dilutes our historic heritage. In some cases this is impossible, for example Flemish Bond brickwork cannot be replicated in cavity walls and narrow lime mortar joints cannot be replicated in modern cement mortar.

4.2.1 Good contemporary designs will be encouraged where it respects the scale & character of its context. This must be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement submitted with any planning application.

4.2.2 In particularly sensitive locations, such as uniform terraces, exact replication may be necessary to maintain compositional unity. In which case, attention to details, choice of materials and high quality workmanship are the keynotes.

4.2.3 Where new building is appropriate, on infill sites or where an existing building detracts from the character of the area, the opportunity should be taken to re-establish the streetscape, reinforce enclosure, open up distant vistas or views of landmarks or hide unsightly views.

4.2.4 As with extensions, good contemporary in design which respects local character and the context of the site will be encouraged.

“New and old buildings can coexist happily without disguising one as the other, if the design of the new is a response to urban design objectives”.
(DETR - ‘By Design’, p19)

4.2.5 Pastiche designs, incorporating poor imitations of other styles will be resisted, particularly where they incorporate details which are not locally appropriate. Careful high quality replication may be required in a few very sensitive locations.

4.2.6 All new buildings should respond appropriately to the existing frontage and normally follow the established building line. Development or redevelopment will normally be resisted if:

- it blocks important views identified in the individual appraisals
- uses important open spaces identified in the appraisals
- adversely affects the setting of any Listed or key buildings
- fails to maintain or re-establish the streetscape where appropriate
- dominates its Conservation Area background
- fails to recognize the context of the site
- destroys important features identified in the individual appraisals such as boundary walls, fences, hedgerows or trees

4.2.7 New development that stands out from the background of buildings may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances if it contributes positively as a landmark to enhance the street scene, to highlight a corner or to signal a visual change of direction such as along a curving vista.

4.3 Materials

Rushcliffe’s older buildings are predominantly brick, some incorporating earlier timber framed structures. There is a little local stone, mainly a soft grey liass & higher status buildings in stone imported from Lincolnshire and elsewhere. Roofs are mainly plain tiles or pantiles, with some Swithland slate and Welsh slate from the mid 19c onwards. A few original thatched roofs remain. There were many small local brickyards, some of which only worked for a few years and produced bricks in various shades of orangey red.

Most of these materials are no longer available except in limited quantities, second hand. Generally it is preferable to use good quality new materials, even for extensions to existing buildings.

4.4 Boundary Treatment

Boundaries, such as walls, fences or hedges, separate private spaces from the public realm of roads and pavements, physically and visually. They are as important in determining the character of a Conservation Area as the buildings behind them.

4.4.1 Types of boundary

4.4.2 High brick walls and buildings on the back of pavements create a hard, urban feel to the Conservation Area whilst hedges, verges and trees produce a more rural character. In some Conservation Areas one or the other predominates whilst some have a mix of these features.

- 4.4.3 Where the character definition is strong it is important to retain and promote a continuation of the theme. A high brick wall in a predominantly "green" lane will impact adversely on its character and the introduction of a hedge in an urban scene may be equally inappropriate. Where there is a variety in the type of boundary there will be more flexibility.
- 4.4.4 Local materials and design play a vital role in successful boundary treatments which maintain or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. Brick walls which match or compliment the local architecture or locally native hedgerows and trees invariably have the greatest conservation benefits.
- 4.4.5 Any boundary detail should be in keeping with the street scene and be complementary to the building to which it is the boundary. It should reflect the status of the property and not attempt to create a sense of grandeur where unwarranted.
- 4.5 Landscaping
- 4.5.1 Trees can be a key factor in the special character of Conservation Areas. Each Conservation Area appraisal identifies trees that are particularly important to the Conservation Area.
- 4.5.2 In Conservation Areas there is a duty to give the local planning authority six weeks notice of any proposed work to a tree. This period allows the local authority to assess the trees and decide whether a tree preservation order is desirable.
- 4.5.3 In many instances, the planting of new trees or groups of trees, would enhance the character of the Conservation Area. The Council is keen to promote this, where new planting contributes to the public realm and works with Parish Councils to carry out small scale planting and other landscape schemes in their areas.

5.0 Buildings at risk and sites which detract from the character of the area

- 5.1 A number of important buildings in our various Conservation Areas are currently vacant or not in regular use, with some being 'at risk' of neglect or decay. There is a presumption against demolition of buildings which contribute to the character of the area unless there are exceptional circumstances. It would therefore benefit both the physical form and the function of the Conservation Area if these buildings were repaired, maintained and brought back into use.
- 5.2 The Council will encourage owners of key properties in Conservation Areas which are in need of renovation or repair to carry out the basic maintenance work necessary to make sure the building is structurally sound and weather tight. The Council will encourage and advise on renovation and repair work that is sensitive to the original or traditional historic character of the building and retains original features.
- 5.3 The Council may take formal action if the condition of any building (listed or unlisted) which makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area is considered to be at risk.

6.0 Management of Public Realm

6.1 Management of highways and footpaths is the responsibility of the Highway Authority, Nottinghamshire County Council. The Council will use its influence to ensure that the principles of good street and public realm design, such as those set out in

- “Streets for All: East Midlands” (English Heritage, 2005),
- “By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice” (DETR/CABE, 2000)
- “Manual for Streets” (DfT, 2007),

are applied within Conservation Areas.

6.2 Grass verges can also be lost during road or pavement improvement schemes and kerbstones may be added. They can also come under threat from property owners seeking to create hard-standings for off-street parking. The loss of grass verges, and the cumulative effect that this has over time, can result in the gradual deterioration of the special character of a Conservation Area. Such works will be resisted.

6.3 The quality and design of street surfaces and street furniture can also have a major impact on the character of the Conservation Area. Where historic or traditional street surfaces and street furniture have survived, these should be preserved and maintained. Any streets or public spaces in poor condition can have a negative impact on the Conservation Area and may need to be improved. Materials should be carefully selected to ensure that they complement and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

6.4 Any surfaces, whether public or privately owned, that are in a severe state of disrepair and/or have a negative impact on the Conservation Area should be a priority for any improvement works.

6.5 The public footpaths and other rights of way within and adjacent to the Conservation Area play a vital role in allowing people to enjoy and experience the area. It is important that these paths are well maintained, clearly marked and made accessible.

7.0 Monitoring

7.1 This Management Plan will be reviewed in accordance with a programme to be agreed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and government policy and best practice guidance at the time

7.2 This review could involve residents and/or members of a residents’ conservation group or conservation advisory committee under the guidance of the Borough Council. By this means, the local community would become more involved with the process, thus raising public awareness of and commitment to conservation issues.

Appendix 1 – Listed Buildings and Structures

CHURCH OF ST THOMAS, MAIN STREET.

Grade: II. Date Listed: 01/12/1965 GRID REFERENCE: SK7424540163

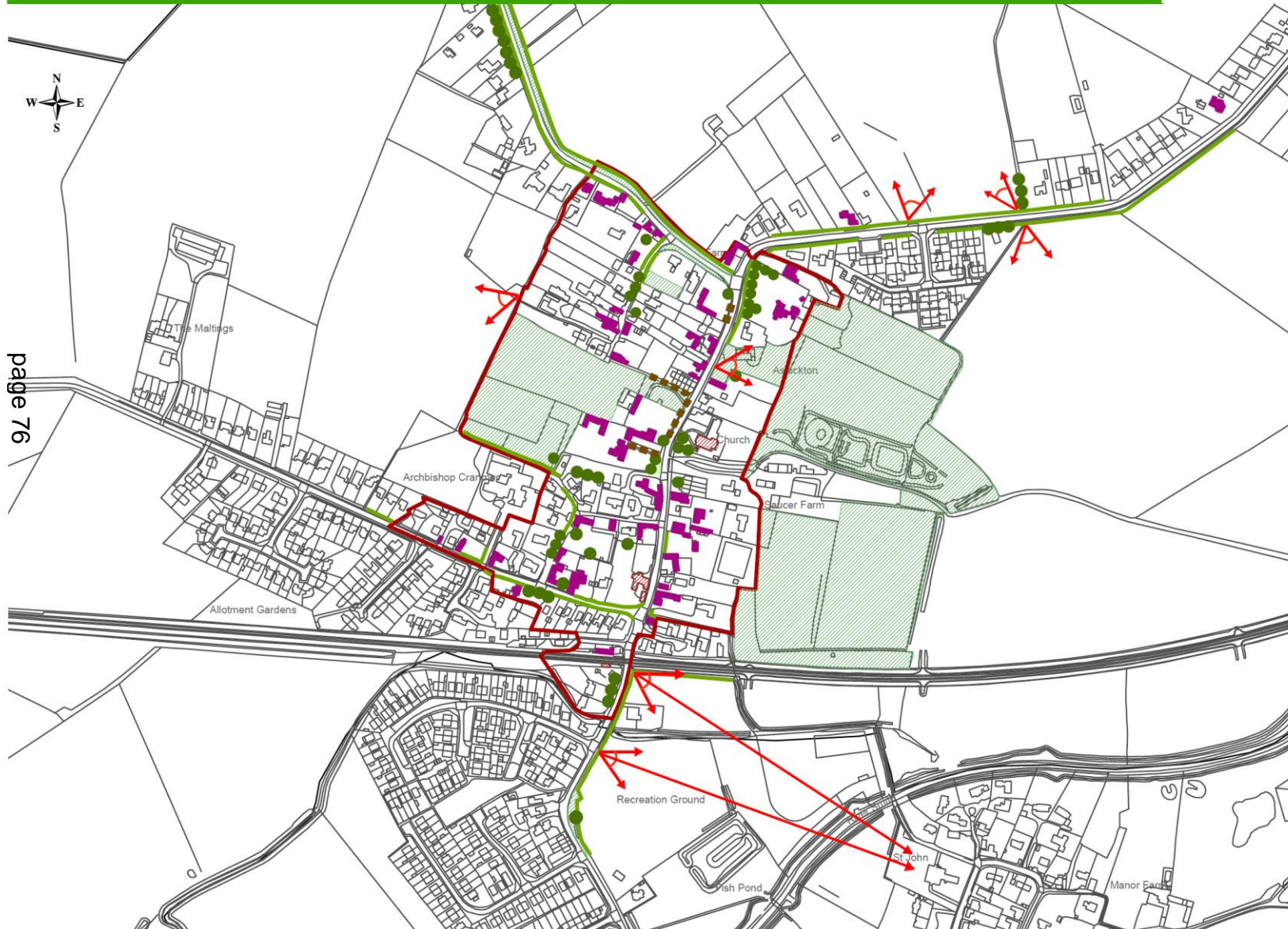
SHELTER AT ASLOCKTON RAILWAY STATION, MAIN STREET

Grade: II. Date Listed: 28/01/1999 GRID REFERENCE: SK7413239908

Conservation Area Boundary

Aslockton

Note: A townscape appraisal is not a mapping exercise and the symbols illustrate the character of the area, rather than exact positions and sizes of individual features. No appraisal can be completely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.



- view of positive building or landscape
- panoramic (wide) view (medium to long distance)
- listed building
- positive building (special architectural or historic character)
- positive open spaces (landscape)
- significant trees
- significant hedges
- significant walls/ railings/ gates
- current conservation area boundary

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