

# Public Document Pack

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**Our reference:**  
**Your reference:**  
**Date:** 13 September 2022

To all Members of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group will be held on Wednesday, 21 September 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>  
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Yours sincerely



Gemma Dennis  
Monitoring Officer

## AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 July 2022 (Pages 1 - 8)
4. Sewerage Infrastructure and Discharge within Rushcliffe (Pages 9 - 12)  
Report of the Director – Neighbourhoods
5. Covid-19 Business Recovery Update (Pages 13 - 20)  
Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth
6. Work Programme (Pages 21 - 22)  
Report of the Director - Finance and Corporate Services



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West Bridgford  
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## Membership

Chairman: Councillor N Clarke

Vice-Chairman: Councillor J Cottee

Councillors: M Barney, R Butler, M Gaunt, A Phillips, V Price, J Stockwood and L Way

## **Meeting Room Guidance**

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**MINUTES  
OF THE MEETING OF THE  
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP  
WEDNESDAY, 27 JULY 2022**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena,  
Rugby Road, West Bridgford

**PRESENT:**

Councillors N Clarke (Chairman), J Cottee (Vice-Chairman), M Barney,  
R Butler, A Phillips, V Price, J Stockwood and L Way

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

J Bate	Principal Planning Officer
C Evans	Service Manager - Economic Growth and Property
A Langley	Project Officer – Conservation Area Review
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillor M Gaunt

**1 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 April 2022**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**3 Conservation Areas - Part 2**

The Principal Planning Officer and the Project Officer - Conservation Area Review presented an update to the Group regarding conservation areas.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that there were three outstanding matters from the previous update to the Group, being:

1. How to undertake the review of Conservation Area Appraisals and encourage enhancements to conservation areas.
2. Consider developing a list of non-designated heritage assets.
3. Training for Planning Committee members regarding the potential for cumulative impact of development in a Conservation Area.

The Project Officer - Conservation Area Review explained that Conservation Area Appraisals would be carried out for all of the Borough's conservation

areas. The Group was advised that two approaches would be taken, a participatory approach involving the communities and a Council led approach where there was not enough capacity within a community for the review to be community led. In relation to enhancements of conservation areas, although this was difficult without funding, Article 4 directions could be considered to remove permitted development rights from properties and require planning applications for works which would not usually require them. The Project Officer - Conservation Area Review explained that there was a fee for planning permission for previously considered permitted developments.

The Project Officer - Conservation Area Review said that an order for conducting the appraisals had been proposed, commencing with larger settlements, moving to smaller settlements and then to very small villages. The order could be shared with Members of the Group after the meeting.

In relation to the local list of non-designated heritage assets, the Principal Planning Officer said that the Council had a policy within Part 2 of the Adopted Local Plan which set out criteria from which a list could be developed. Some of the Borough's communities which had developed neighbourhood plans had used those criteria to develop localised lists.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the process of identifying non-designated assets engaged the test for non-designated assets within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The test required a balanced judgement to be made on the level of harm to or loss of a non-designated heritage asset and its relative significance. The Principal Planning Officer referred to comment that positive buildings identified within the appraisals that lay within a conservation area should be identified as non-designated heritage assets. Whilst this may be the case in many instances, loss of a positive building in a conservation area would be harm to a conservation area which was a designated heritage asset.

The Principal Planning Officer clarified that a positive building was a building that made a strong, positive, contribution to the character of a conservation area but was not a listed building. It was noted that this could include modern buildings that may make a positive contribution, perhaps architecturally, but which would not necessarily be classified as non-designated heritage assets because they were not of historic interest. Identifying non-designated assets within conservation areas added a layer of extra of protection, but lesser protection than they would already have by being part of the conservation area. Having non-designated status was of greater value to assets which lay outside of a conservation area, and which would otherwise have relatively little consideration within the planning system.

The Principal Planning Officer thought that the scale of task could be considerable noting that whilst only four of the parks and gardens identified by the Parks and Gardens Society in the Borough were determined by Historic England to be worthy of registering, a further twenty five were considered to be of some value. The Group was also informed that the County Council's historic environment record did not include all of the buildings identified as positive buildings in conservation areas.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the best way to create a list at some speed would be to take a community, crowd sourcing, approach, asking the public to inform the Council of buildings which may be of architectural interest, but not listed. Whilst there may be differences in awareness of positive buildings across different parts of the Borough, the Council would be able to identify areas of low reporting for further review. The Chairman added that some people also may not wish for certain buildings to be designated.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the list would never be complete and would continue to be added to, and as such required a rapid and light touch system for adopting assets onto it. One option could be for the Planning Portfolio Holder and the Ward Member for the ward in which the item was situated to sign off on whether an asset was to be adopted, or not. Local Councillors would enable local input and the Portfolio Holder would enable a consistent approach across the Borough.

In relation to training for Planning Committee Members on the assessment of cumulative impact scheduled for 28 September 2022, the Principal Planning Officer said that that training would also include the assessment of impact.

In relation to Permitted Development Rights, the Principal Planning Officer referred to questions as to why a permitted development right may be revoked or withheld for a building within a conservation area, and then planning permission subsequently granted for something which would have been permitted under the right which had been withheld. It was explained that permitted development rights often allowed for things which would not be considered appropriate but could be used to deliver things which would be acceptable. These rights were described as “all or nothing” in that that they could either be allowed to stand in full or be withheld in full, that it was not possible to modify them and the only way to control inappropriate permitted development was to also bring appropriate works under control via the application process.

In relation to suggestions to form either a Conservation Area Planning Sub-Committee or a Conservation Area Advisory Committee, the Principal Planning Officer highlighted potential administrative difficulties with both. A sub-committee would require at least four members from the Council’s Planning Committee to sit on it and may necessitate early publication of Planning Committee agendas to enable sub-committee review, with the added potential implication of pre-determination. It would also be outside of the usual, short-term, focussed, remit of sub-committee usage. A Conservation Area Advisory Committee would usually be constituted of residents with specialist skills and Council representation, including at least one Councillor and one officer. If all conservation areas of the Borough wanted to have an advisory committee there could potentially be up to thirty, and if asked to consider planning applications each could need to meet as regularly as every six weeks, which would be outside the capacity of the Council to support.

The Chairman referred to the recommendations of the report and presented his suggested alterations to the Group, noting suggestion that the option to create a sub-committee be kept under review should the need arise and that conservation areas be incorporated as a standing item into all planning

training.

Councillor Price asked why the Council would wish to create a list of non-designated heritage assets and what would potential consequences be to owners if their building were added to that list.

The Principal Planning Officer said that there was no special planning mechanism created for non-designated heritage assets, whereas listed buildings required listed building consent and conservation areas required what had previously been called conservation area consent [Now 'planning permission for the relevant demolition of an unlisted building within a conservation area'] controls. Whenever a planning application was made its impact on non-designated heritage assets had to be assessed through a balancing exercise where the harm caused to, or complete loss of, the non-designated heritage asset was assessed against the benefit of the proposal. Internal alterations did not require planning approval and so sat outside of such scrutiny.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the planning system already allowed for non-designated heritage assets to be identified at the point of application and so creating this list would be helpful to provide advance knowledge of assets to be considered.

Councillor Price queried what criteria constituted non-designated heritage asset status. The Principal Planning Officer referred to national guidance issued by Historic England which local authorities were free to tailor for their localities. Rushcliffe Borough Council had adopted criteria as set out in supporting text under Policy 28 of Local Plan Part 2, with two main criteria being that an asset needed to have some degree of public visibility and that it had to be in some way recognisable in its original form. There were also additional criteria such as being designed by a known architect, of which it was suggested that three criteria be met.

The Principal Planning Officer clarified that non-designated heritage assets did not have to be buildings, that they could include assets such as parks and gardens, non-designated conservation areas and architectural assets.

Councillor Barney asked whether there was any statutory element to non-designated status and the Principal Planning Officer advised that there was no legislation that local authorities must have a list of their non-designated assets. The Council was currently carrying out identification of such assets at point of application and also referenced assets, if not explicitly designated, within the Local Plan Part 2, such as Grantham Canal. The Government had also made funding available to support creation of non-designated heritage assets a few years ago to encourage creation.

Councillor Barney referred to the historic environment record held by Nottinghamshire County Council and asked whether the Council could make use of that information. The Principal Planning Officer advised that the record would require considerable examination and contained much information not directly relevant to this process.

Councillor Barney referred to the Local Development Order (LDO) currently under consultation, the associated employment and development linked to it and the likely need for more housing in the future, creating pressure on local villages. Councillor Barney asked whether Green Belt plus type frameworks were available that could be applied to the Borough's precious historical villages to create protection zones. Councillor Barney thought that Leicestershire already had such protection frameworks in place, and he had asked a planning consultant to prepare a brief setting out details, which he would share when received.

Councillor Butler said that he supported crowd sourcing and involving parish councils in identifying local assets and the process of conservation area review but thought it important to manage expectations. Councillor Butler wondered whether a Frequently Asked Questions type document would be provided. The Principal Planning Officer said that the Council was in the process of identifying the first local groups and part of this would involve holding briefing sessions with interested people to provide information about conservation areas. The Chairman agreed that a guidance note would be useful.

Councillor Butler confirmed his support of the Planning Committee training and encouraged non Committee members to attend also. The Chairman noted that Councillors may be required to substitute onto a Planning Committee at any time.

The Chairman said that there were occasions where local residents questioned how some planning applications could be approved for development in conservation areas and villages. The Chairman asked how harm and appropriateness of design would be assessed in a conservation area and what weight would be given to those aspects.

The Principal Planning Officer said that there was a process, the first step of which was to identify the heritage asset[s] that would potentially be affected by the proposal, how far away it was and what about its setting contributed to its significance. The conservation of an asset related to the significance of that asset, and the setting only inasmuch as it contributed to the significance. The Principal Planning Officer explained that the impact of the proposal on the asset would then be assessed as to whether it harmed or preserved the significance. Some schemes may remove something that had already harmed significance and replace it with something that was less harmful and in that way development and change could be positive.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the final stage was to ask whether a proposal had sought to avoid harm and maximise enhancement as far as possible. The Group was informed that applications were assessed holistically to determine the overall impact on significance, with a presumption in favour of preservation. Potential outcomes included that a proposal did not cause harm, that it caused harm, but that harm was less than substantial, or that it caused substantial harm. The most common outcome was that a development caused less than substantial harm as substantial harm had a high threshold.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the upcoming training on the cumulative impact of development in a conservation area would review this

topic in more detail.

The Chairman said that Members often received criticism for allowing developments in 'chocolate box' villages and asked about assessment and subjectivity of assessment of applications in those locations, particularly in relation to design. The Principal Planning Officer referred to architecture being described as a mixture of form, function and delight and thought that it was the delight element which was most open to interpretation and subjective view. National policy made it clear that design policy should not exclude the potential for innovative and contemporary designs and that it depended on the specifics of a building and its context as to what would be appropriate.

The Chairman suggested including assessment of harm and the weight given to that harm, particularly in conservation areas, in the upcoming Planning Committee training session.

Councillor Way referred to applications coming before Planning Committee where attention was drawn to negative developments that were nearby as if they were a reason to approve something detrimental and asked if this aspect could be included in the training.

In relation to cumulative impact, Councillor way thought that there were instances where an application having a negative effect was followed by another application having a negative impact, that individually their impact may not be significant but combined could bring considerable destruction to a positive asset within a conservation area.

Councillor Way asked for an explanation about certificates of lawfulness which she thought seemed to override everything else. The Principal Planning Officer said that historically not many were received as they were an application to determine that you did not require planning permission. They were not required by law and a fee was required to obtain one. It was possible, however, that the Council was currently receiving more due to it having temporarily discontinued its pre-application advice service due to pressures from the pandemic. This service provided people with advice as to whether they would likely require planning permission and was now being phased back in.

Councillor Way asked whether certificates of lawfulness overrode national planning framework and the Principal Planning Officer advised that permitted development rights did not include tests as to whether harm was caused to a conservation area.

Councillor Way had additional questions which the Chairman said were outside the scope of this meeting and suggested that they would be best put to planning officers separately.

Councillor J Stockwood noted suggestions from the Group about training and said that the Member Development Group would take them on board and questioned whether it was not the role of the Member Development Group to set the training programme for Councillors. The Chairman said that it was important that it be included as part of this scrutiny process as it formed an important part of the future workings of the Planning Committee.

Councillor J Stockwood referred to the Council's previous review of conservation areas when not all of the Borough's thirty conservation areas had been included, or it had taken some years for them to be included. He asked whether it was possible for the Council to commit that it had the resources to complete a thorough review of all conservation areas, with no outstanding issues, within the three year timeframe.

The Principal Planning Officer said that the last holistic review completed by the Council had been around 2008-2011, with many of those appraisals needing to be completed from scratch. It was thought that as the current review would be able to build on previous work it would therefore be possible to complete within the three year timeframe.

Councillor J Stockwood referred to the Council's existing Asset of Community Value process and suggested that it provided an example of process guidance and the collation of lists, both for things being considered and things that had been accepted. The process set out a model for how to ensure that information was published, how to engage, information about what was happening and what had been achieved and was available on the Council's website to learn from.

Councillor J Stockwood hoped that the Council would continue to move forward with its digital agenda and that digital mapping would be made available as it was easier for people to engage with.

Councillor J Stockwood referred to discussion as to the difficulties of the different types of committee setups proposed and asked what positive suggestions could be put forward to address the issues raised, including the potential to involve non-statutory consultees in the process and having greater engagement with the Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust.

The Chairman suggested that this action came under recommendation D, in that matters could be reviewed as and when they arose, with Members of the Group having input as to whether there was need to change approach to the sub-committee structure. The Principal Planning Officer said that the Council would also look to identify alternative meeting options potentially by early 2023.

The Chairman made an informal suggestion that update reporting could be through an annual report to Cabinet.

Councillor J Stockwood referred to the non-designated heritage assets list and asked if there was a timescale for when it would be available for people to put forward submissions. The Principal Planning Officer said that the Council would review the mechanisms for Assets of Community Value and how they could be adapted and would explore digital mapping tools, including the potential for the Council's tree preservation information to also be put online. Guidance documents could also be created to enable the Council to move forward when all elements were in place. The list could be published on the Council's website and promoted through media channels and Rushcliffe Reports.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) invites Councillors to support this review process by helping to identify local groups within their communities with conservation area who might be interested in assisting with a community lead in the review process, or confirm that no such group exists, and that review will likely need to be led by the Borough Council in their respective area;
- b) agrees to develop a 'crowd sourced' approach to contribute to the development of a local list of non-designated heritage assets including putting forward suggestions of local groups/organisations with which to engage;
- c) supports the proposed mechanism for addition of assets to a local list as detailed within the report;
- d) keeps under review whether there is a need for either a Conservation Area Advisory Committees or a Heritage Planning Sub-Committee; and
- e) tasks officers to incorporate into all future planning training sessions considerations relating to the impact of proposals within conservation areas

#### 4 **Work Programme**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group consider its Work Programme and that the following items for scrutiny were agreed.

##### **21 September 2022**

- Covid-19 Business Recovery Update
- Sewerage infrastructure and discharge within Rushcliffe
- Work Programme

##### **4 January 2023**

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Work Programme

##### **8 March 2023**

- Work Programme

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

CHAIRMAN



## **Growth and Development Scrutiny Group**

**Wednesday, 21 September 2022**

### **Sewerage Infrastructure and Discharge within Rushcliffe**

#### **Report of the Director – Neighbourhoods**

##### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. A scrutiny matrix was submitted by Councillors Barney, Brennan, Clarke, Combellack, Dickman, and Upton to propose the topic of sewerage infrastructure and discharge be scrutinised by Councillors.
- 1.2. Due to the subject matter of this item, officers of the Council have identified external speakers from Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency to attend the meeting and begin to address the key lines of enquiry identified. This is a covering report to outline to members of the Group the areas of focus for scrutiny.

##### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) review the key lines of enquiry contained within the scrutiny matrix and ask questions of the expert speakers focussed on these areas
- b) determine if any further areas, related to sewerage infrastructure and discharge, should be brought back to a future meeting of this committee.

##### **3. Supporting Information**

- 3.1. The scrutiny matrix submitted raised a number of key lines of enquiry covering a wide-ranging number of issues. Subject to presentations and discussions at the meeting in September it may be determined that a further future item relating to a more discreet area of work is required.
- 3.2. The scrutiny matrix specified that Councillors would like to understand the situation in Rushcliffe regarding sewage infrastructure and any unlawful discharges. It is acknowledged that this is a national problem, but a clearer idea of the situation in Rushcliffe is sought and how this could be affecting the environment, humans and wildlife locally.
- 3.3. Research provided alongside the matrix showed that there were 101 incidents in Radcliffe on Trent recorded in 2020 and problems in other villages. The councillors report that there have been concerns with the infrastructure in:

- Nevile Ward affecting Hickling and Kinoulton.
- East Leake
- Ruddington
- Sutton Bonington
- Normanton on Soar.

There is acknowledgement that there may be problems elsewhere from other local Rushcliffe pumping stations; however, no other areas are specifically referred to in the matrix.

- 3.4. Residents need to be reassured that sewage is fully treated before any discharge to water courses; therefore' a better understanding of the sewage system and controls within the Borough would be helpful and how the situation can be addressed.

### **Planning process and controls**

- 3.5. The matrix also highlighted that when new housing is permitted, planning and building regulations can impose measures where appropriate, to ensure the treatment and discharge of sewerage is carried out effectively but there was a question about whether this sufficiently addresses the added demand placed on existing infrastructure, which may be very old. There was a suggestion that the Borough Council may wish to lobby or enhance our liaison with other agencies e.g. STWA and the County Council to further ensure we are protecting the residents of Rushcliffe.

- 3.6. The matrix sought to provide some possible solutions, this included:
- additional planning controls
  - improved consultee responses to planning applications regarding sewage infrastructure
  - to lobby government for amended legislation
  - amendments to existing policies.
  - stronger conditions on planning approvals
  - more rigorous enforcement procedures
  - consideration of apportioning s106 monies to improvement of sewage infrastructure.

### **4. Risks and Uncertainties**

- 4.1. Whilst it is not the responsibility of the Borough Council to rectify issues with sewerage discharge and infrastructure it is important that there is an understanding of the current situation in Rushcliffe. This will enable the Council to take any further action it can to support other organisations to protect local communities and wildlife.

### **5. Implications**

### 5.1. **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### 5.2. **Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### 5.3. **Equalities Implications**

There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

### 5.4. **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications**

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

## 6. **Link to Corporate Priorities**

Quality of Life	Having the right infrastructure in place for our local communities and businesses is important to support their quality of life.
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	The Borough is accommodating a lot of housing growth and this has an impact on the capacity of all infrastructure. It is important to ensure the right processes and solutions are in place to respond to this growth.
The Environment	

## 7. **Recommendations**

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) review the key lines of enquiry contained within the scrutiny matrix and ask questions of the expert speakers focussed on these areas.
- b) determine if any further areas, related to sewerage infrastructure and discharge, should be brought back to a future meeting of this committee.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Dave Banks Director of Neighbourhoods Tel: 0115 9148438 dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	
<b>List of appendices:</b>	

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## Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 21 September 2022

### Covid-19 Business Recovery Update

## Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report is intended to provide an update to the Group on the work being done to support businesses to recover from the impacts of Covid 19. This follows a report to Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in October 2021 as well as a number of reports which went to Cabinet throughout the pandemic and a report to Corporate Overview Group in February 2022.
- 1.2. The report provides some data looking at the impact of Covid 19 on businesses, an update on work done since the last report, and future plans.

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group reviews the proposed future activity and identifies any additional areas of focus for the team's work.

### 3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. Rushcliffe Borough Council delivered a wide range of support throughout the pandemic to local businesses as detailed in this report and supporting presentation to be provided to the Group.
- 3.2. It is important that Councillors have the opportunity to review the proposed future plans so they are aware of what is being delivered in the area and can support as required. This scrutiny provides an opportunity for Councillors to make additional suggestions for areas of focus for the Economic Growth Team over the coming months.

### 4. Supporting Information

#### Data

- 4.1. Unemployment claims have maintained a steady decline since the significant surges in March and April 2020. They are currently at 1,410 in Rushcliffe, equivalent to a 38.4% reduction on same period last year (March 2022 compared to March 2021). The employment rate for Rushcliffe is 80.9% (employment rate is the ratio of employed residents to all residents aged 16 – 64).

- 4.2. D2N2 LEP have done an analysis of labour market demand<sup>1</sup> in Rushcliffe. This shows there were 800 unique jobs posted between January and July 2022, predominantly in sales, IT and telecommunications professionals and functional managers/directors. The data also predicts a 23% growth in jobs between 2021 and 2031.
- 4.3. Business closures are tracked to monitor potential adverse effects of the pandemic on our business base, this information is only available at a county level. This shows there were 666 businesses which closed in March 2022 across Nottinghamshire. This is down on the previous month (744) and over the last 12 months there have been spikes of 817 in September 2021 and the lowest was 513 in August 2021. However, these spikes coincide with temporary suspension of company strike-offs throughout the pandemic and so this fluctuation is likely due to irregular reporting to, and processing by, Companies House.
- 4.4. During the pandemic, the Economic Growth Team monitored the vacancy rates in our main town and village centres across the Borough. The majority of Rushcliffe's town centres have very few or no empty units, with only a couple in West Bridgford, Bingham and Ruddington. There are a number of office units to let located in town centres, including those above retail units, particularly in the Gordon Road/Tudor Square areas of West Bridgford.

### **Progress update**

- 4.5. In February 2022, Charlotte Gault joined the team as the new Business Support and Communications Officer. This is a replacement to the previous intern roles which have been in the team. Charlotte's focus is on working with our businesses and continuing some of the work started during the pandemic with the additional engagement with high street businesses. A lot of work has been done already, particularly focussed on Rushcliffe Business Partnership, the development of West Bridgford Way and working closely with the RBC events team to better engage businesses. This includes for the Queen's Jubilee and Tour of Britain when local businesses were showcased and involved in the events.
- 4.6. At the Growth and Development Scrutiny meeting in October 2021, Councillors heard about plans for the coming months to support local businesses. The following list gives an update on those actions and more detail will be provided at the meeting:
  - The appointment of a temporary town centre consultant who was in place from September 2021 to June 2022
  - Enhanced and additional events in West Bridgford and some town/village centres - a number of additional events were held over the summer and autumn of 2021 in West Bridgford and some of the towns and villages in the Borough.

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<sup>1</sup> Data provided by EMSI based on official sources and proprietary job posting analytics

- Improvements to the visual appearance of town centres including additional planters in West Bridgford and seasonal lighting in Bingham
  - Promotion of job vacancies on Council social media for local hospitality and other high street businesses struggling to recruit – we had some take up on this but the issue of recruitment, particularly in the hospitality sector, remains a challenge across the country
  - Ongoing communications campaigns including the promotion of the Shop Local Shop Safe messages.
  - Exploring opportunities to increase the digital promotion of our high streets – some areas have expressed an interest in this and we are continuing to work with them. Improvements have been made to the established Bridgford Way platform, which will help shape and inform ideas for other areas.
  - Returning to in person networking for Rushcliffe Business Partnership in West Bridgford and Ruddington – this is happening, and numbers of attendees are steadily increasing.
  - Continue to build relationships with local high street businesses – retail forums have been established in some areas. These have had mixed success but are doing well in Bingham and West Bridgford with other areas preferring a more informal communication e.g. WhatsApp groups.
  - The Rushcliffe Big Business Carbon Club has been established and has met several times. The aim is to encourage our large businesses to act as champions and support their supply chains and SMEs to deliver a green economic recovery.
- 4.7. Some of the above activity has been delivered using the Council’s allocation of £212,000 of Welcome Back Funding from the European Regional Development Fund in order to support the safe reopening of our town centres. This was allocated in two instalments, first in June 2020 and again in April 2021. The deadline for spending this funding was the end of March 2022. In May 2020, the Borough Council allocated £10,000 to each of the six larger towns/villages in the Borough (Bingham, Cotgrave, East Leake, Keyworth, Radcliffe on Trent and Ruddington) to spend in their area. In total £196,000 of this £212,000 was spent over the period, all claims for funding have been submitted and final payments have been made.
- 4.8. The Economic Growth Team are now working hard to maintain and build on the relationships established with high street businesses during the pandemic via the retail forums, growth boards, email and in person.
- 4.9. The team work closely with external agencies to signpost businesses to the right support as required. This includes D2N2 Growth Hub who are a one stop shop for business support. In 2020 and 2021 they supported 424 businesses in Rushcliffe ranging from one to one business support advice to attendance at webinars on topics such as financial resilience.
- 4.10. There is an extensive amount of business support available from various organisations, including East Midlands Chamber, Notts Business Ventures and the universities covering various topics including financial advice. Much of this support is at risk, however, with the removal of European Structural

Investment Fund (ESIF). This is being replaced by UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) and a report was presented to Cabinet in June 2022 on this. With Rushcliffe's allocation of UKSPF it is important that we are tailoring activity to meet the needs of our businesses, whilst ensuring the continuation of a generic offer for all.

- 4.11. One key area of business support is advice for businesses on low carbon. As well as the Big Business Carbon Club, the Council works closely with business support advisors to promote their offer to businesses. The Growth Hub Advisors have recently been given some training, so they are better able to do an initial assessment of a business's needs for low carbon support and signpost them to the right support. This also ensures that this is something they more actively promote to businesses. Much of the existing support is currently being delivered by the universities using ERDF and so we are working to identify the areas of this support which are most valuable to our businesses and what we want to continue into the future.

### **UK Shared Prosperity Funding**

- 4.12. A report is coming to Growth and Development Scrutiny Committee in January 2023 on UKSPF, but as this has been a focus for the team over the last few months, it is felt to be useful to provide an overview of the funding and work done so far, with more detail to follow in January.
- 4.13. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is part of UK government's Levelling Up agenda. It provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025, with all areas of the UK receiving an allocation from the Fund via a funding formula rather than a competition. UKSPF replaces the ESIF. The Fund's interventions will be planned and delivered by councils and mayoral authorities across England, Scotland and Wales – 'lead local authorities', working closely with local partners.
- 4.14. The primary goal of the UKSPF is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with the Levelling Up White Paper mission, particularly: 'By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing'.
- 4.15. The fund is split into three investment priorities and each has a list of interventions sitting underneath it that areas can choose to allocate funding to. The three investment priorities are:
- Communities and place
  - Supporting local business
  - People and skills
- 4.16. The Fund will focus on communities and place and local business interventions in 2022/23 and 2023/24, alongside support for people through the Multiply adult numeracy programme (County Council led). UKSPF investment to support people and skills will follow from 2024-25. The

Government is encouraging areas to work with neighboring authorities, particularly on their plans for supporting local businesses and people and skills.

- 4.17. Rushcliffe Borough Council's allocation is £2,571,462 for three years (2022/23 to 2024/25) with all spend to be complete by March 2025. The Government has allocated the funding across the three years as follows:
- 2022/23 - £312,071
  - 2023/24 - £624,141
  - 2024/25 - £1,635,250.
- 4.18. The allocation is a mix of capital and revenue, and Government has set a minimum capital level each year. The Council submitted an investment plan to set out allocations of funding across the three years against the interventions, this is not the detail of the specific projects yet, it is a high level plan which can be changed if required.

### **Proposed future activity**

- 4.19. There are five key areas of focus for the team over the coming months to ensure ongoing support for local businesses:
- UK Shared Prosperity Funding – as set out, the allocation of UKSPF will be a key area of work for the team. A more detailed update on this will be presented to the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group in January 2023. As this is such a fundamental part of the team's work, however, it is right that an overview of progress to date will be provided at the September meeting.
  - Rushcliffe Business Partnership – the Partnership has new members on the steering group, and this is driving some new ideas and an appetite to do more. This includes re-introducing the annual business showcase event which it is hoped will be held early in 2023.
  - Business Support – it was a condition of the funding secured for Chapel Lane offices that business support advice would be provided. A Business Support Advisor has, therefore, been appointed to provide this support to those businesses in the new offices as well as other businesses in the Borough.
  - High street support – ongoing support for retail forums and the informal networks established between businesses. This includes further development of West Bridgford Way initiative and exploring this model in other areas of the Borough.
  - Continued support for the Growth Boards and the actions which emerge from them, including West Bridgford Central Avenue accessibility study and Bingham long stay car parking.

## **5. Risks and Uncertainties**

- 5.1. The Borough's businesses have fared well in response to the impact of Covid 19, this is particularly apparent in the Borough's town centres and high streets which still remain vibrant. We cannot be complacent, however, and it is important that we maintain the support that has been provided and continue to work closely with our business community to ensure we are responding to their needs.

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1. Financial Implications**

- Planned activity will be delivered by the Council's Economic Growth Team and any need for funding will be met through the Strategic Growth Board (£100,000 funding already in budget and some allocated) and the UK Shared Prosperity Funding as discussed in paragraph 4.17.
- The Business Support Advisor (for Chapel Lane project) has been appointed using funding secured for the development of the offices at Chapel Lane (European Regional Development Funding Sustainable Urban Development Funding). This requires match funding from the Borough Council of £18,300 and again this is included in the budget for the Chapel Lane project.

### **6.2. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### **6.3. Equalities Implications**

There are no equalities implications associated with this report. All support is available for all businesses in the Borough.

### **6.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications**

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

## 7. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The offer in our towns and villages is important to maintain and improve the quality of life of our residents. It is therefore important that the Borough Council does what it can to protect and enhance that.
Efficient Services	
Sustainable Growth	The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on businesses in the Borough and the support provided and planned aims to mitigate the impact of Covid-19.
The Environment	Supporting a green economic recovery is a key element in the Council's recovery plan as well as our partners including Nottinghamshire County Council and D2N2 LEP.

## 8. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group reviews the proposed future activity and identifies additional areas of focus for the team.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Catherine Evans Service Manager - Economic Growth and Property <a href="mailto:Cevans@rushcliffe.gov.uk">Cevans@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a> 0115 9148552
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	
<b>List of appendices:</b>	

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## Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 21 September 2022

### Work Programme

## Report of the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

### 1. Summary

- 1.1. The work programme is a standing item for discussion at each meeting of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group. In determining the proposed work programme due regard has been given to matters usually reported to the Group and the timing of issues to ensure best fit within the Council's decision making process.
- 1.2. The table does not take into account any items that need to be considered by the Group as special items. These may occur, for example, through changes required to the Constitution or financial regulations, which have an impact on the internal controls of the Council.
- 1.3. The future work programme was updated and agreed at the meeting of the Corporate Overview Group on 6 September 2022, including any items raised via the scrutiny matrix.

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

- Quality of Life;
- Efficient Services;
- Sustainable Growth; and
- The Environment

### 2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Group agrees the work programme as set out in the table below.

#### 4 January 2023

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund
- Work Programme

#### 8 March 2023

- Work Programme

### 3. Reason for Recommendation

To enable the Council's scrutiny arrangements to operate efficiently and effectively.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Pete Linfield Director of Finance and Corporate Services 0115 914 8349 <a href="mailto:plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk">plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers Available for Inspection:</b>	None.
<b>List of appendices (if any):</b>	None.