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Our reference:
Your reference:
Date: 11 July 2023

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, 19 July 2023 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gemma Dennis'.

Gemma Dennis
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 08 March 2023 (Pages 1 - 10)
4. Role and Remit of Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property will provide a verbal update

5. Biodiversity Net Gain - New Legislation (Pages 11 - 30)
Report of the Director - Neighbourhoods
6. Review of Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium (Pages 31 - 38)

Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

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7. Work Programme (Pages 39 - 40)

Report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services

Membership

Chair: Councillor R Walker

Vice-Chair: Councillor L Way

Councillors: R Butler, K Chewings, J Cottee, S Dellar, C Grocock, P Matthews and D Soloman

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**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY GROUP
WEDNESDAY, 8 MARCH 2023**

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

PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

R Hepwood	Clowes Developments
R Hull	Homes England
A Malik	Clowes Developments
J Richards	Clowes Developments
J Todhunter	Clowes Developments
L Young	Homes England

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

C Evans	Service Manager - Economic Growth and Property
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors N Clarke and J Stockwood

15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

16 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 January 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 January 2023 were approved as a true record and signed by the Vice-chairman.

17 Update on Fairham Development

The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property presented the report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth updating the Group on the Fairham Development.

Mr Robert Hepwood, Mr Ali Malik, Mr James Richards and Mr John Todhunter from Clowes Developments and Ms Rachel Hull and Mr Lewis Young from Homes England attended the meeting, to assist with consideration of the item.

Mr Hepwood, Mr Malik, Mr Richards, and Mr Todhunter delivered a presentation, which was divided into six sections detailed below, with an

opportunity for questions and responses between each section.

- Overview of project.
- Design.
- Neighbourhood centre.
- Public transport and travel networks.
- Sustainability in new homes and commercial.
- Employment

The presentation commenced with an overview of the project, which covered the following issues:

- Details of the Notice of Planning permission.
- Masterplan – Phasing plan:
 - Housing – 13 phases
 - Commercial/employment
 - Neighbourhood centre
 - Landscaping
 - Sports pitch
 - Ecological area
- Key project milestones achieved and to deliver between May 2019 to March 2023.
- Site progress:
 - Extensive highway and drainage infrastructure
 - Ground investigations and earth modelling
 - Archaeological survey work
 - Installation of site wide utilities
 - Installation of sustainable urban drainage systems
 - Construction of a primary sub-station
 - Re-use of leftover tram spoil left from the creation of the Tram Park and Ride
 - Main access works on road linked to Park and Ride nearing completion
 - Strategic new foul sewers constructed to cater for entire development
 - Several new employment deals signed
 - Installation of tree planting on northern boundary
- Site progress – images and drone footage.
- Future milestones.

Councillor Phillips referred to the 13 house building phases and asked when it was envisaged that the final phase would be completed, when would the fees charged by the management company for managing the green spaces commence for residents, and would the fees also be phased in.

Councillor Phillips also asked what was the likelihood of there being noise pollution from the commercial area to the residential area and would there be any mitigation measures put in place.

In respect of the phasing, Mr Todhunter advised that the phasing had been set up in strategic parcels, so that the market would not be saturated, with a maximum of six phases at any one time, and it was anticipated that the last phase would go over in 2030, with the last build out in 2035.

Mr Hepwood confirmed that the management company was very close to being in place, and it was proposed that upon completion of each phase, it would be handed over to the management company, to ensure that open spaces would be managed from the start. Mr Hepwood advised that there was considerable landscaping linked to each phase, and that would be laid out and ready before people moved in and confirmed that in the beginning the fees would be pro-rata.

Mr Todhunter went on to say that the way the management company would be set up, the management charge to the householder would be capped for the first few years; however, the actual management fees charged every year were actual fees incurred by the management company, so for the first few years the costs to the residents would be lower, with them increasing later as more phases were completed.

Councillor Way referred to the timeframe for residents moving in, in late 2023, and the proposed later dates for the completion of the school and health centre and asked what residents were supposed to do before those facilities were completed in 2025.

In respect of schools, Mr Todhunter stated that the County Council had confirmed that there was sufficient spare capacity in at least three surrounding schools, including at Clifton. In respect of health provision, the Group was advised that again there was sufficient capacity around the development; however, many of the buildings themselves were not fit for purpose and so the idea was to look at the opportunity to amalgamate some of those into a new centre.

Mr Hepwood went on to say that the delivery of the school was a delicate balance, as it would be inappropriate to provide a school too soon, as it could be open but without any students, and if that happened, there was a danger that it could be filled by students who lived outside of the development. He also hoped that the timescales referred to in the Section 106 Agreement would be bettered, as having those facilities in place would also help to improve house sales.

Councillor Way stated that she had a great deal of concern about management companies and how they often imposed additional onerous charges on things that had little to do with the management of open space, and asked Mr Hepwood if he had any thoughts on that matter.

Mr Hepwood advised that he did and stated that this issue was being taken very seriously. The Group noted that there were very few developments of this size in the country, and in particular not with the amount of landscaping and public open space that was proposed, and the quality of the landscaping and its future maintenance at a reasonable cost to residents was very important. Talks were currently underway with a major organisation with an extensive track record, and it had been agreed that once residents had moved in, if they were unhappy with the delivery and maintenance of the open space, they would have the ability to take back control themselves, with a fall back Community Trust Company set up. Mr Hepwood concluded by advising that he

had every trust in the company that had been chosen, the confirmed house builders had also been involved and were happy with the proposals to manage the site.

Councillor Barney asked a series of questions.

In relation to the school and health centre, were talks taking place with the Academy Trusts and health care providers, particularly in respect to the recent problem at Gotham, where the health centre had burned down.

Was asbestos on the site, or was it a rumour, and if it was present, had it slowed down progress and was it under control.

Where would the development's foul discharge drain to and where would the clean-up station be.

What businesses would be moving into the commercial properties and what was the rationale in place to choose them.

Finally, since the Fairham development had been granted permission, there were now many more new developments, including the proposed Local Development Order, which were promising an extensive programme of cycleways across southern Nottinghamshire, and it was a concern that Fairham would be an obstacle to connectivity for those other ambitious plans, and he asked if a collaborative approach could be taken on this.

Mr Hepwood confirmed that asbestos had been encountered on the site in some old farm building rubble, it was not the most hazardous type of asbestos and was being appropriately dealt with and he stated that it had not delayed matters. Mr Todhunter went on to advise that a Mediation Strategy was in place, and it was anticipated that work would commence in about five weeks, and it would take five to six weeks to remove the asbestos, recycle the other material there and clean the top soil, with all of that certified cleaned material then being used on the site and taken to the receptor site across the other side of the A453. The Group was advised that a further smaller site had also been found, and that would be treated in the same way.

Councillor Cottee reminded Councillors that there were slides to come in the presentation and the points raised by Councillor Barney could be covered then.

Councillor Butler was pleased to see the progress being made and again referred to the sensitive issue of the use of management companies and asked that the issue be treated seriously and stated the importance of ensuring that the future monitoring of the management company would be assured.

Councillor Butler went on to mention design, including the inclusion of tree lined boulevards, and sought assurance that the chosen developers would keep to that ethos.

Councillor Butler concluded by asking about public transport and how the early occupiers of properties would access this, compared to later on when more phases had been completed.

In respect of the earlier question related to foul discharge, Mr Malik advised that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken with Severn Trent to ensure that this would be dealt with correctly and advised that there was an oversized off-site sewer, which would cater for the entire site.

The presentation continued.

- Details of the design.
- Design team and consultants – led by Adam Architecture.
- Design code – Sitewide Design Code.
- Design code – Approval process.
- Design process:
 - National Planning Policy
 - Local Plan Policy
 - Design Code
 - Building for Life
 - National Building Regulations
 - Local and National Highway Standards
 - Individual Housebuilder Pledges
- Design process:
 - Tenders
 - Housebuilder Plans submitted
 - Plans reviewed by Adam Urbanism
 - Planning application submitted
 - Plans assessed by statutory consultees
 - Plans considered by Rushcliffe Borough Council

Mr Todhunter summarised that the overall goal was to ensure consistency across the site, with cues being taken from the surrounding areas to ensure that the local vernacular was mirrored, whilst ensuring that the developers flair came through. The drive was to ensure quality and the Group was reminded that the final applications would be signed off by Robert Adam Architect, only when they were 100% acceptable.

The presentation continued.

- Neighbourhood centre plan.
- Proposed neighbourhood centre timetable from March 2024 to 2025.

Mr Todhunter advised that in respect of the question regarding the delivery of the school, the County Council had requested that the building be completed, including facilities such as the gym and the kitchen, with the rest being left as a shell, and as the development grew, the classrooms would be fitted out, as required. Mr Hepwood went on to advise that discussions were taking place with the Education Authority and meetings were planned with the Academy Trusts. The Group was advised that the school could potentially be built and delivered by Clowes, which could accelerate the timescales. In respect of the question regarding the situation at Gotham and its health centre, Mr Hepwood confirmed that Clowes would be happy to talk to the relevant people and help if possible.

Councillor Butler referred to the existing problem of traffic congestion associated with school drop offs and asked if it would be possible within the proposed school grounds to have a dedicated area off the public highway as a drop off zone.

Mr Todhunter advised that there would be a dedicated drop off area on Nottingham Road and the possibility of having a circular route within the grounds was being considered for buses and cars. In respect of the car parking across the other side of the road, that would be required, as some people would want to go shopping after dropping their children off at school. Mr Malik went on to advise that in respect of traffic modelling this was a challenge, with an am/pm peak and then less between and to ensure that a correct balance of function and timing was achieved.

The presentation continued.

- Public transport and travel networks:
 - Bus services
 - Bus stops
 - Tram services (existing)
 - Tram passes
 - Future tram extension and new stations
 - Cycleways
 - Pedestrian links
- Public transport plan – map.
- Footpaths and cycle routes – map.

Councillor Barney was encouraged to see the proposed provision of footways and cycleways, stating that a considerable amount of land was required to have a cycleway that met current standards and asked if there would be a guaranteed arterial route all the way through the development.

Mr Todhunter confirmed that there was a strategic route from north to south, with the important element being to separate those from the traffic, and so many of the strategic routes were planned within the green open spaces to allow movement to the school, sports, and recreational areas throughout the site. The Group was advised that there would also be strategic footways and cycleways against the main spine road too as it ran from north to south. Mr Malik reiterated that in terms of strategic routing, the main loop road did have a foot/cycleway to provide connectivity, a safe, quality walking environment, access to bus stops and for the housing.

The presentation continued.

- Sustainability in new homes and commercial.
- Landscape and green spaces.
- Landscape tracker plan.
- Biodiversity.

Councillor Price referred to electric vehicle charging points and asked what plans were in place to ensure that there would be adequate provision.

Mr Todhunter advised that this would be the responsibility of the house builders on individual plots.

Councillor Price noted that many houses would be built with south facing roofs and hoped that there would be solar power generation on those roofs and asked how that would be achieved.

Mr Todhunter stated that again this would be the responsibility of the house builders and the trend was to have panels on roofs, as well as installing air source heat pumps, and whilst it might not be seen on the first phases, as the legislation had not been in place for those, they would be incorporated into the later house building phases. Mr Malik went on to advise that a strategic view would also be taken in respect of those charging point locations, for example as part of the neighbourhood centre development, and it was anticipated that there would be a range of charges, as technology advanced.

Mr Todhunter advised that in respect of the question regarding how delivery of green spaces would be assured by the housebuilders, he stated that it would be assured as Clowes would be delivering it themselves.

Councillor Way stated that it was very positive to have an overarching point of view, including the interconnectivity between the phased sites, which would encourage people to walk. Councillor Way asked why there were no solar panels on the roofs of the commercial buildings. She went on to ask about buses and questioned if the new development would have any impact on the one local bus route currently operating.

Mr Todhunter hoped that with the increased patronage, there should be more buses, and confirmed that there would be a slight diversion to the current bus route. In respect of the inner loop within the development, if the bus companies did not feel that there would be sufficient patronage, they might choose not to operate; however, that would be a separate bus route. Mr Todhunter concluded by stating that he hoped with over 3,000 houses eventually being built that there would be sufficient patronage for bus frequencies to increase. Mr Malik went on to advise that discussions with bus operators had already begun and would continue as the phasing commenced and the bus operators would see the potential and how it would work for them. The Group noted that all the bus stops would have real time information, which again would enhance the service and potentially increase patronage.

Mr Richards added that Rushcliffe Borough Council would shortly receive two planning applications for the installation of solar panels on the roofs of two of the commercial units currently being constructed.

Councillor Phillips asked if the sports fields would be grassed rather than using an artificial surface, and Mr Todhunter confirmed that they would be grass, and that there would be a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) adjacent to that and confirmed that there would be no floodlights.

Councillor Barney welcomed the proposed connectivity of the site and asked that when each section was sold to developers, would there be any mechanism in place to prevent ransom strips, and were there any currently in place, which

could act as an obstacle, and Mr Hepwood confirmed that there were no ransom strips.

The presentation continued.

- Employment.
- Commercial Area Masterplan.
- New occupants.

Councillor Phillips referred to the green spaces and the commercial site and to the fact that they would be open to everyone and asked if it would be the same management company responsible for those green spaces as for the residential areas.

Mr Richards advised that it would be a different management company, and a separate management company had been set up called the Fairham Business Park Management Company Ltd, the directors of which would be the owners of the businesses. The Group noted that Clowes currently held the preferential share in that company and that would be retained until the site was built out, to ensure that during its development all control would remain with Clowes. This would ensure that the management of this part of the site would never fall onto the residential areas.

Councillor Cottee advised that he was very impressed with the work already undertaken and the future plans and thanked all the representatives for attending the meeting and giving such an informative presentation.

It was **RESOLVED** that

- a) the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group agreed that the progress on site was in line with the original aspirations for the site; and
- b) that the governance arrangements were in place to support delivery of a high quality site.

18 **Work Programme**

The Service Manager – Economic Growth and Property presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, which detailed the proposed Growth and Development Scrutiny Group Work Programme for 2023/24.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Work programme detailed below be approved by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

19 July 2023 (provisional date)

- Review of Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium
- Biodiversity net gains – New legislation
- Work Programme

4 October 2023 (provisional date)

- How the Borough works with partners to plan for the infrastructure required to support growth
- Work Programme

3 January 2024 (provisional date)

- Sewerage infrastructure and discharge within Rushcliffe
- Work Programme

6 March 2024 (provisional date)

- Work Programme

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 19 July 2023

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - New Legislation

Report of the Director - Neighbourhoods

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report provides information on the Environment Act 2021 and the new Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in planning rules required under the Act and what this means for the Council.
- 1.2. The members should consider if the proposals are acceptable, whilst the duty to secure biodiversity net gain is a legislative requirement, members need to satisfy themselves that the proposals meet the requirements to discharge this duty.
- 1.3. Biodiversity Net Gain was briefly covered by the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group on Wednesday, 4 January 2023, where it was resolved to request a future scrutiny item be presented with details of requirements for the monitoring, enforcement and reporting of Biodiversity Net Gain.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) acquaint themselves with the new Biodiversity Net Gain in Planning rules and the proposals on how this will be implemented in Rushcliffe
- b) agree with the proposals for assessing strategic significance
- c) endorse the proposals on the; consideration, assessment, delivery and monitoring of BNG in Rushcliffe
- d) recommend to Cabinet that the proposals are adopted by the Council.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The Environment Act 2021 amends the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, such that “provision for grants of planning permission in England [are] to be subject to a condition to secure that the biodiversity gain objective is met”.
- 3.2. Local planning authorities in exercising their planning and development duties must therefore secure BNG on all developments requiring planning permission unless exempt.

- 3.3. This report sets out the proposed procedures to implement this requirement in Rushcliffe and requests members endorse the proposals to be recommended to Cabinet for approval .

4. Supporting Information

Environment Act 2021

- 4.1. On 9 November 2021, the Environment Act 2021 received Royal Assent. The Act contains a number of nature and biodiversity related issues, including provision for making “biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England”. BNG is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature while developing land. It is a mechanism to make sure the habitat for wildlife is in a better state than it was before development.
- 4.2. The Act imposes a requirement for a minimum improvement value of 10% BNG where the legislation applies. The value is to be measured in “Biodiversity units”, which are defined in the published guidance.
- 4.3. Some of the new obligations under the Act will need to be implemented under secondary legislation or regulations and official guidance which is yet to be published. The Government has stated that BNG will become mandatory from November 2023.

Local Policy

- 4.4. The Rushcliffe Local Plan sets out requirements for BNG. These are unaffected by the requirements for Mandatory BNG, except where the law increases the requirements. Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies, adopted 8 October 2019, includes four policies which require that BNG be demonstrated.
- 4.5. The Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan is under development and will replace the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy in due course, this will incorporate further BNG policies and can, if there is the appetite to, go further than the mandatory BNG, under the Environment Act 2021.

Exemptions from Mandatory BNG

- 4.6. Mandatory BNG must be demonstrated on all sites unless exempt. Details of exemption are still being developed but are expected to be:
- development impacting habitat of an area below a ‘de minimis’ threshold of 25 metres squared, or 5m for linear habitats such as hedgerows
 - householder applications (for example proposals to alter or enlarge a single house (but not a flat), including works within the boundary/garden, or as per guidance / secondary legislation to be published)
 - biodiversity gain sites (where the application is only for habitats that are being enhanced for wildlife)
 - small scale self-build and custom housebuilding (subject to further guidance to be published)

- permitted development
- urgent crown development
- temporary impacts that will be restored within 2 years.

Delivery of BNG

Location

- 4.7. BNG arrangements can be on-site, off-site or, as a last resort from November 2023 (expected date), by payment to the Government's credit scheme. Agreements must last a minimum of 30 years from completion of the development, including the creation of any BNG, and will be set up and monitored through legally enforceable planning conditions, S106 agreements or (in future) Conservation Covenants. Conservation Covenants are not yet available (as of July 2023).
- 4.8. Off-site provision must be registered on the Government's / Natural England off-site register (once available, expected November 2023) and allocated to the development and has the value in relation to the development as specified in the Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) and legally secured for at least 30 years.
- 4.9. Off-site providers operate in Rushcliffe. They are independent of the Council, the Council does not vet them, and we are unable to endorse any provider. However, the Council is open to discussion and provides advice on appropriate biodiversity proposals and management. It is proposed that Internet links to offsite providers who have been in discussion with the Council will be highlighted on the Council's website (to be developed).

BNG Metric

- 4.10. In order to demonstrate BNG, a biodiversity metric (spreadsheet), published by the Secretary of State / Natural England, must be completed by a competent person. Further guidance from Government on the definition of a 'competent person' is not yet available. A simplified version of the metric is available for small developments.
- 4.11. The metric must be used to assess the baseline biodiversity value before development, based on appropriate ecological surveys and the expected value post development (including all on-site enhancements and any off-site enhancement or credits purchased). On-site measures are prioritised and incentivised in the metric.
- 4.12. The baseline metric for the site prior to development must be provided with any planning application (including for both full and outline applications) along with Biodiversity Gain information (in the form of a BNG Statement or BGP). A flow chart for assessment of these has been developed and will be presented for comment from Councillors. The intention is that small sites will be assessed by the Council's Development Management Team and larger sites will be assessed by the Council's Senior Ecology and Sustainability Officer.

Strategic Significance

- 4.13. The BNG metric includes a multiplier depending on the strategic significance of the site that will provide the BNG. The sites that are “Formally identified in a local strategy” gain the highest score multiplier; sites that are at a “Location Ecologically desirable but not within a local strategy”, gain a middle score multiplier and “Area/compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy” gain no score multiplier.
- 4.14. It is proposed that sites that Rushcliffe Borough Council regards as strategically significant and benefiting from the “Formally identified in a local strategy” multiplier in the biodiversity metric are development sites which are within or immediately adjacent to:
- designated Priority Sites, i.e., designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves or Local Wildlife Sites
 - listed Green and Blue Infrastructure sites, identified in the Greater Nottingham Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy January 2022, which have biodiversity value
 - Focal Areas identified within the Rushcliffe Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping report (published by Nottinghamshire Biodiversity Action Group / Notts County Council)
 - sites with a reasonable wildlife value that are managed with nature conservation as a major priority, as identified in the Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy.
- 4.15. It is proposed all BNG provided within Rushcliffe Borough, outside these areas listed above will be regarded as “Location Ecologically desirable but not within a local strategy”. BNG outside of Rushcliffe Borough will be regarded as “Area/compensation not in local strategy / no local strategy”.

BGP and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan

- 4.16. A detailed BGP and final biodiversity metric must be submitted (if not previously provided) and approved prior to commencement of development. The delivery of the BNG should commence as soon as practicable and must be delivered prior to occupation and must be as agreed in the BGP.
- 4.17. A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan must also be provided, setting out how the site will be managed and monitored for the 30+ years. All habitats provided must be managed in accordance with good practice (e.g. timed to avoid disturbing breeding birds, hedgerows managed at the appropriate time).

Monitoring

- 4.18. As the BGP is delivered it must be monitored by the developer (or its agents) as per the Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan with reports made to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) at agreed intervals, through the life of the agreement. This should state the success / failure of the work, the condition

achieved at the time of the monitoring and any remedial action that has been or will be taken if required.

- 4.19. The planning administration team will need to record a range of data about the quantity and types of BNG secured through planning to provide evidence to Government. This will need to be provided to Government as part of a new Biodiversity Duty Action Report, to be provided every 5 years, including other Council Biodiversity action (under the Environment Act 2021).

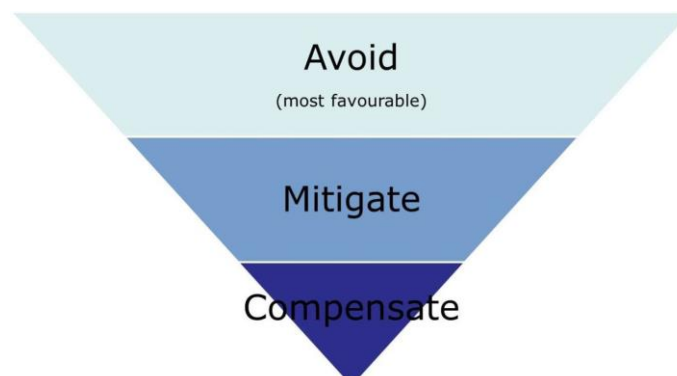
Pre-application damage to site

- 4.20. The Act includes measures to address destruction or damage to a site to deliberately lower its pre-development Biodiversity value.
- 4.21. Any works carried out since 30 January 2020 which reduce the Biodiversity value of a site or where sites have degraded through poor management will require the use of the expected conditions prior to the degraded state, where evidence is available to determine the prior condition, this should be used (including aerial photography).
- 4.22. Where conditions have changed the baseline with the higher value should be used.
- 4.23. A date for measurement of the pre-development Biodiversity value of onsite habitat to set the baseline may be agreed between the LPA and the applicant (for example within six months of the application date).

The mitigation hierarchy and irreplaceable habitats

- 4.24. The mitigation hierarchy of:
- a) Avoid Ecological Impacts where possible
 - b) Mitigate impacts where impacts are unavoidable
 - c) Provide Compensation where there is still an impact after mitigation.

still applies; developers cannot simply go straight to the 'off-set' option, which is a form of "compensate".



- 4.25. BNG will be easier to achieve on biodiversity-poor land (such as arable, unvegetated land and improved grasslands) and harder to demonstrate on

already biodiverse sites, such as wooded sites and those with semi-improved permanent grassland or open mosaic habitats, including habitats on previously developed land.

- 4.26. If the on-site habitat is 'irreplaceable', BNG cannot be demonstrated. Mitigation for adverse effects should be delivered on-site. There is no current definition of 'irreplaceable'.
- 4.27. Natural England aims to set out the definition and a definitive list of irreplaceable habitats in England, in conjunction with key stakeholders.

BNG and other statutory protection for sites, habitats, and species

- 4.28. BNG provisions in the Environment Act do not supersede or replace other statutory measures to protect wildlife. Site, habitat and species protections and assessments, mitigation and compensation must still be assessed, and BNG must be additional to any mitigation and compensation.
- 4.29. The Biodiversity metric does not address impacts on species, nor does it recognise the significance of site designations (other than through the site significance multiplier), or take account of indirect impacts, cumulative impacts or in-combination impacts.

5. Risks and Uncertainties

- 5.1. Failure to implement the new BNG requirements, would lead to a failure of our duty as a Local Planning Authority, a reputational risk and the implication of being deemed to fail. A failure would also prevent the authority delivering its strategic environmental policies. Theoretically, the failure of the Council to implement the new BNG requirements could lead to the imposition of a Section 62A Designation Notice (loss of planning control).
- 5.2. The alternative approach using a commercial provider may also fail to deliver the new BNG requirements, with the same consequences.
- 5.3. To mitigate these risks, the Council must establish a system to deliver the new BNG requirements.
- 5.4. It is unclear how much resource the new BNG requirements, will take, however approximately 1500 planning applications were received in 2021, only a small number included BNG information, each BNG assessment is taking approximately 0.5 hours to consider, and none have required site visits to date. If 50% of applications require resourcing for BNG, this will add up to 375 hours, without considering site visits and monitoring visits.

6. Implications

6.1. Financial Implications

6.1.1. An existing post has been enhanced to deliver this new burden: Senior Ecology and Sustainability Officer and a new post Assistant Ecology and Biodiversity Officer (part time) is currently being recruited to and anticipated to be in place by September 2023 in advance of the new duty.

6.1.2. The Government has provided new burdens funding to support this work. The Council was awarded £36,854 in 2022/23 and provisionally £15,638 for 2023/24, funding beyond this has yet to be announced. This funding supports the new Assistant Ecology and Biodiversity Officer post.

6.2. Legal Implications

The procedures in this report enable the Council to meet its Biodiversity Net Gain obligations under the Environment Act 2021 and Town and County Planning Act 1990.

6.3. Equalities Implications

There are no specific adverse impacts on protected characteristic groups in relation to meeting the BNG obligations.

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

No known implications.

7. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	Although the environment is usually discussed within the context of sustainability, it is equally important for an individual’s quality of life. Indeed, environmental conditions not only affect human health and well-being directly, but also indirectly, as they may have adverse effects on ecosystems, biodiversity, or even more extreme consequences such as natural disasters Biodiversity Net Gain aims to ensure that we improve our biodiversity as part of our growth and not adversely impact it.
Efficient Services	The Council will ensure that it identifies and implements efficient arrangements for the discharge, recording and monitoring of this duty.
Sustainable Growth	It is critically important the significant growth projected in the Borough is sustainable and takes the bio-diversity net gain targets to ensure sustainable growth
The Environment	The report supports all aspects of the Environment theme of the Corporate Strategy

8. Recommendations

- a) acquaint themselves with the new Biodiversity Net Gain in Planning rules and the proposals on how this will be implemented in Rushcliffe
- b) agree with the proposals for assessing strategic significance
- c) endorse the proposals on the; consideration, assessment, delivery and monitoring of BNG in Rushcliffe
- d) recommend to Cabinet that the proposals are adopted by the Council.

For more information contact:	David Banks Director of Neighbourhoods dbanks@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers available for Inspection:	<p>Rushcliffe Local Plan online at https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/planning-growth/planning-policy/local-plan</p> <p>Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy online at https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/about-us/about-the-council/policies-strategies-and-other-documents/accessible-documents/rushcliffe-nature-conservation-strategy/#app1</p> <p>Greater Nottingham Blue and Green Infrastructure Strategy January 2022 online at https://www.gnplan.org.uk/media/3375738/blue-green-infrastructure-strategy-final.pdf</p> <p>The Rushcliffe Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping Report online at https://nottsbaq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Rushcliffe-BOM-Report-2015_V3.pdf</p> <p>Government advice online at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain and https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain</p>
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 - Strategically Significant Sites / Areas 2022

Appendix 1 - Strategically Significant Sites / Areas 2022

Table A1: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (from Greater Nottingham Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy)

Site Name	Total Area Hectares
Barnstone Railway	1.52
Gotham Hill Pasture	8.47
Kinoulton Marsh and Canal	2.72
Normanton Pastures	16.34
Orston Plaster Pits	4.65
Rushcliffe Golf Course	19.48
Wilford Claypits	2.17
Wilwell Cutting	7.34

Table A2: Local Nature Reserves (from Greater Nottingham Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy)

Site Name	Total Area Hectares
Bingham Linear Park	9.52
Keyworth Meadow	1.4
Meadow Covert	1.86
Rushcliffe Country Park	75.43
Sharphill Wood	9.72
Sutton Bonnington Spinney & Meadows	3.41
The Hook	13.02
Wilwell Cutting	7.33

Table A3: Local Wildlife sites (from Greater Nottingham Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy)

Site Name	Total Area Hectares
A606 Woodland	1.21
Adbolton Marsh	0.38
Adbolton Ponds (Pinder's Pond)	2.46
Ash Lane Meadows	4.13
Ash Spinney Assart	1.17
Barleyholme Wood	6.68
Barnstone Dismantled Railway	4.67
Barnstone Disused Railway	1.52
Barton Flash	8.76
Barton in Fabis Fishing Pools	1.68
Barton-in-Fabis Pond and Drain	0.45
Berry Hill Pond	0.36
Bingham Disused Railway	11.82
Borders Wood	59.99
Borrow Pits Barton	1.06
Brandshill Grassland	12.13
Brandshill Marsh	4.37
Brandshill Wood	14.41
Bridegate Lane Verge	1.33
Broughton Lodge Pond	0.02

Broughton Wolds Grasslands	11.07
Bunny Old Wood	32.49
Bunny Park Ponds	2.64
College Wood Pasture	6.14
Compton Acres	5.85
Compton Acres Ponds	0.6
Coneygre Wood	11.62
Copse Kingston on Soar	3.02
Costock Grassland	0.28
Costock Meadow	1.68
Costock Road (iii)	0.79
Cotgrave Colliery	42.52
Cotgrave Forest	150.08
County Brook Willoughby on the Wolds	0.22
Court Hill Grassland	2.84
Cropwell Bishop Gypsum Spoil	5.63
Cropwell Bishop Gypsum Spoil II	1.48
Cropwell Bishop Relict Pasture	0.75
Cropwell Butler Pond Rushcliffe	0.15
Crossroads Meadow Hickling	7.53
Crownend Wood (Eastern Assart)	2.06
Crownend Wood (Western Assart)	1.83
Crownend Wood Ride	0.2
Cuckoo Bush	0.5
Dewberry Hill	7.41
East Bridgford Pasture	2.75
East Bridgford Pasture Bank	1
East Leake Bridleway Verges	1.99
Fairham Brook Pasture	1.38
Fairham Brook Bunny	0.51
Fairham Brook Keyworth	3.56
Fairham Brook Widmerpool	0.65
Fernhill Farm Grasslands	3.85
Field Lane Dyke	0.1
Fishpond Plantation Owthorpe	2.48
Flawborough Ponds (The Triangle)	1.8
Flintham Park	100.9
Folly Hall Lane Meadow	0.4
Fox Hill Scrub Stanford	5.4
Gamston Pits (A52 Pit)	106.55
Gotham Disused Railway	1.79
Gotham Hill Pasture	8.52
Gotham Hill Woods	34.83
Gotham Wood	7.77
Granby Green Lane	1.73
Granby Green Lane Grasslands	3.38
Granby Lodge Pond	0.01
Grantham Canal (Cotgrave to River Trent)	7.09

Grantham Canal (Hollygate Bridge to Kinoulton)	15.24
Grantham Canal (Kinoulton to River Smite)	4.92
Grantham Canal Cotgrave	1.24
Greythorne Dyke	1.6
Gypsum Quarry Cropwell Bishop	2.24
Herrywell Lane	0.85
Hickling Green Lane Verges	3.08
Hickling Meadow South	2.62
Hickling Standard Pasture	9.73
Hickling Track and Bank	0.15
High Westings Farm Marsh	1.57
Hill Road Grassland Gotham	1.85
Hoehill Pasture	2.46
Holme House Grassland	2.29
Holme Pierrepont	82.36
Holme Pierrepont I	29.21
Holme Pierrepont II	13.74
Hose Lane Verges	2.47
Hotchley Hill	7.4
Intake Wood Costock	5.94
Jerico Farm Grassland	5.86
Jerico Farm Pond I	0.07
Jerico Farm Pond II	0.03
Kaye Wood Pond (I)	0.02
Kingston Brook Willoughby	0.57
Kinoulton Gorse	7.46
Kinoulton Grassland	0.94
Kinoulton Grassland II	1.97
Kinoulton Grasslands	1.59
Kinoulton Lane Pasture	3.01
Kinoulton Marsh	2.28
Kinoulton Meadow	7.44
Kinoulton Wolds Lower Pasture	0.97
Kinoulton Wolds Middle Pasture	2.76
Kinoulton Wolds Upper Pasture	1.04
Langar Airfield	20.38
Langar Quarry	23.85
Leake New Wood Track	0.61
Lodge Plantation Pond	2.95
Long Spinney Pastures	4.55
Long Spinney Gotham	14.7
Manor Farm East Leake	1.46
Manor Lane Bank Shelford	0.14
Marblaegis Mine Bunny	2.83
Naturescape	2.58
New Wood Scrub Bunny	0.71
New Wood Bunny	13.88

Normanton Pastures	16.2
Normanton on Soar Pond and Quarry Spoil	3.16
Old Soar Stanford	0.77
Oldfield Plantation Elton	4.8
Orston Horse Pasture	1.77
Orston Quarry and Grasslands	5.82
Orston Railway	2.43
Pithouse Lane Marsh	0.64
Plumtree Disused Railway	4.19
Railway Pond Orston	0.51
Railway Upper Broughton	3.11
Rancliffe Wood	20.02
Ratcliffe on Soar Pond	0.02
Red Hill Ratcliffe on Soar	5.34
Rempstone Pond	0.01
River Smite	6.75
River Soar Loughborough Meadows to Trent	54.36
River Trent Barton-in-Fabis	0.08
Roehoe Brook	0.21
Roehoe Wood	15.24
Roehoe Wood Pond	0.01
Rough Hill	5.72
Ruddington Disused Railway	6.55
Ruddington Moor Drain	0.12
Rushcliffe District Country Park	63.58
Rushcliffe District Golf Course	26.62
Saxondale Railway	8.75
Shady Lane Pits Holme Pierrepont	54.61
Sharphill Wood	9.57
Sheepwash Brook Wetlands	4.91
Sheldon Field Cropwell Butler	4.38
Shelford Carr	20.06
Shelford Manor Pond	0.2
Skylarks	10.89
Stanford Park	113.18
Stanton Railway (including Stanton Tunnel)	13.37
Stanton on the Wolds Field Pond (I)	0.05
Stanton on the Wolds Field Pond (II)	0.04
Stanton on the Wolds Field Pond (III)	0.08
Stanton on the Wolds Golf Course	50.26
Stanton on the Wolds Village Pond	0.02
Station Road Verge Widmerpool	0.61
Stoneydale Plantation	3.64
Stroomfields Verges	0.17
Sutton Pond	0.04
Swallow Plantation	2.35
The Avenue Pool	1
The Stonepits Widmerpool	4.91

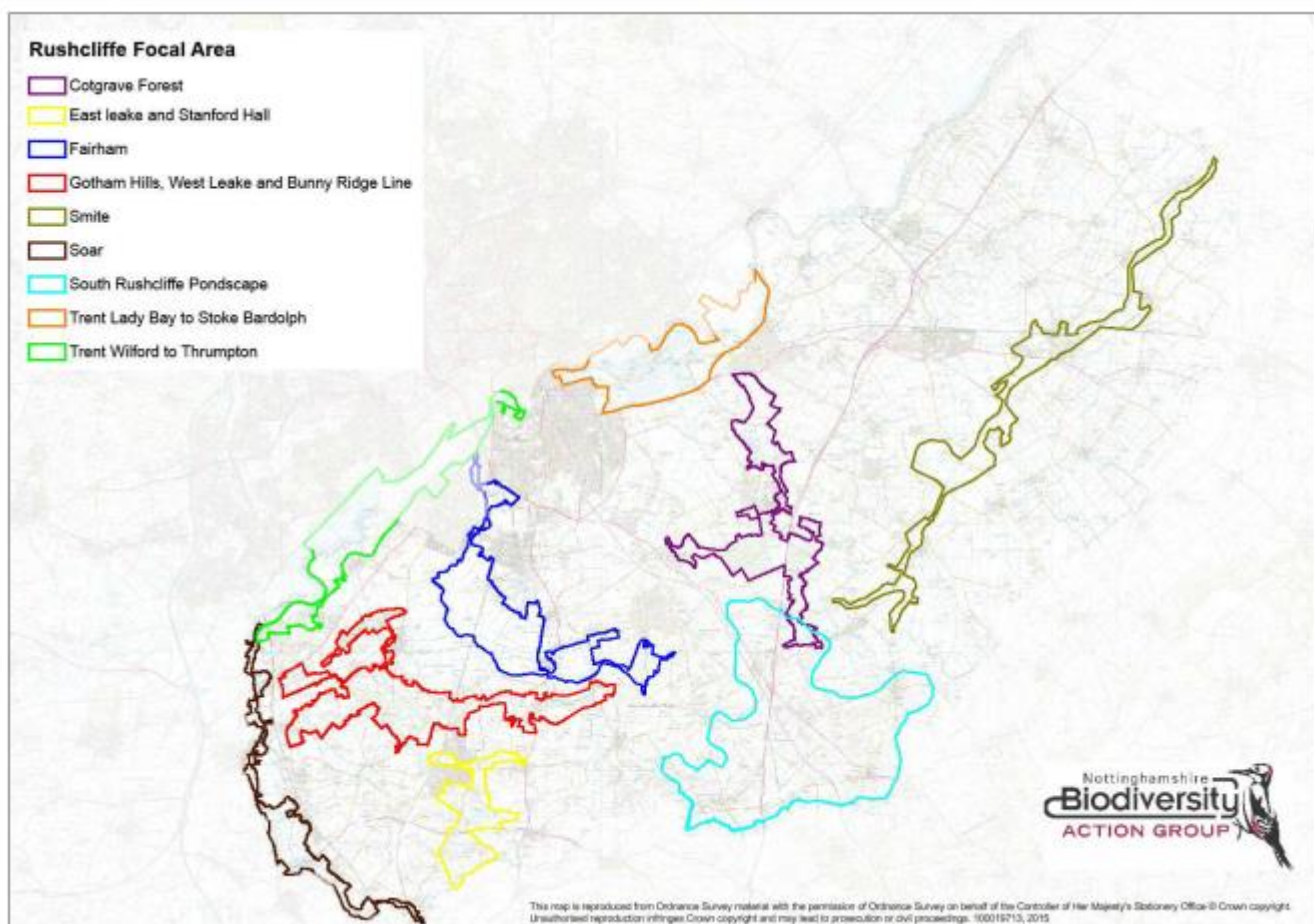
Thorpe Plantation	5.37
Thorpe in the Glebe Boundary Grassland	0.46
Thorpe in the Glebe Meadow	3.74
Thorpe in the Glebe Plantation Grassland	3.3
Thorpe in the Glebe Pond	0.03
Thrumpton Bank	0.36
Thrumpton Park Rushcliffe 76.68	
Thurlby Lane Verge	0.27
Trent Bluff Scrub Radcliffe	3.76
Trent Hills Pool	0.15
Trent Hills Wood East Bridgford	7.79
Trent Hills East Bridgford	0.49
Trent Pasture West Bridgford	4.48
Trentside West Bridgford	6.63
Upper Broughton Meadow	4.76
Upper Broughton Meadow II	2.27
Upper Broughton Meadows	4.71
Upper Broughton Pasture	17.07
Upper Broughton Pond (I) Rushcliffe	0.01
Upper Broughton Pond (II)	0.04
West Bridgford Disused Railway	4.39
West Leake Hills	0.42
West Rushcliffe District Disused Railway	31.87
Widmerpool Grange Pond	1.76
Widmerpool Hall Woods	10.93
Wilford Cemetery	15.88
Wilford Claypits	3.87
Wilford Disused Railway	3.16
Wilford Hill	3.59
Willoughby on the Wolds Border Grassland	2.01
Willoughby on the Wolds Drain	1.41
Willoughby on the Wolds Pond North	0.02
Willoughby on the Wolds Stream Grassland	4.29
Wilwell Cutting	7.83
Windmill Hill Wood	8.06
Wolds Lane Meadow	1.72
Wolds Lane Verges	0.43
Wolds Plantation	0.81
Woodside Farm Grassland	4.08
Woodside Farm Grassland	1.46
Woodside Farm Orchard	0.74
Woodside Farm Pond Thorpe	0.02
Wysall West Grassland	2.96

Table A4: Non-designated wildlife Sites (from Greater Nottingham Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy – details not currently available)

Site Name	Total Area Hectares
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Site Name	Total Area Hectares
BAR05	14.87
BI15	4.98
BI16	2
BI17	0.24
BI20	1.66
BUN01	36.01
CAC02	5.34
COT15	0.1
COT16	0.13
EBR01	1.42
EL14	7.93
EL15	1.96
EL16	18.87
ELT02	2.05
HPG12	105.38
KEY16	1.49
LAN02	18.73
ORST05	1.13
RAD27	7.57
REMP03	0.77
RUD12	1.71
SUB13	0.23
SUB14	2.92
SUB15	18.82
SUB05	3.48
WB059	3.77
WB060	9.58
WB062	5.84
WB063	8.62
WB064	0.55
WB066	0.4
WB067	5.36
WB068	6.01
WB069	2.16
WB070	12.87
WB071	0.37
WOW02	2.71

Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping Focal Area (from Rushcliffe Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping report)



Rushcliffe Sites regarded as Nature Reserves 2020 from Rushcliffe Nature Conservation Strategy

Site	Ownership (Management)	Area Ha	Designation	Habitats	Management Plan (last update)	Public Access
Bingham Linear Walk	Bingham Town Council (Friends Group)	12	LWS; LNR	Grass; Wood	Yes	Yes
Bridgford Street Wildflower Meadow, East Bridgford	East Bridgford Parish Council (East Bridgford Wildlife and Biodiversity Group)	0.5	-	Grass	Yes	Yes
Bridgford Street Copse, East Bridgford	Southwell Diocese of the Cof E (East Bridgford Wildlife and Biodiversity Group)	0.5	-	Wood	Yes	Yes

Site	Ownership (Management)	Area Ha	Designation	Habitats	Management Plan (last update)	Public Access
Bunny Old Wod	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust	16	LWS	Wood	Yes (2019)	Yes
Collington Common, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	1.4	-	Grass	Yes	Yes
Costock Pond	Costock Parish Council	0.8	-	Pond; Grass	Yes	Yes
Cotgrave Country Park	Nottinghamshire County Council (Friends Group)	60	LWS	Grass; Pond; Lake; Wood; Reedbed	Yes	Yes
Dewberry Hill, Radcliffe-on-Trent	Nottinghamshire County Council (Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council / (Radcliffe on Trent Conservation Group))	8.6	LWS	Grass; Wood	Yes	Yes
Gotham Railway Path	Gotham Parish Council	0.9	-	Wood; Grass	?	Yes
Gotham Sandbanks Nature Reserve	British Gypsum (Gotham Nature Reserve Trust)	1.05	SSSI; LWS	Grass; Wood	Yes	Yes
Grantham Canal	Canal & River Trust	25	SSSI; LWS	Pond; Marsh; Reedbed	Yes	Yes
Green Line, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	1.4	LWS	Grass; Wood	Yes	Yes
Gresham Marsh, West Bridgford	Environment Agency	8.8	LWS	Grass; Marsh; Reedbed	Yes	Yes
Greythorne Dyke Open Space, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	2.67	-	Grass; Marsh; Wood; Reedbed	In preparation	Yes

Site	Ownership (Management)	Area Ha	Designation	Habitats	Management Plan (last update)	Public Access
Holme Pierrepont Country Park	Nottinghamshire County Council (Holme Pierrepont Leisure Trust /Serco)	109	Part LWS	Grass; Wood; Pond	?	Yes
Keyworth Burial Ground	Keyworth PC	1.05	-	Grass	Yes	Yes
Keyworth Meadows	Keyworth PC (Friends Group)	1.25	LWS; LNR	Grass; Pond	Yes	Yes
Langar Community Wood	Naturescape	4.7	-	Wood	Yes	Yes
Langar Village Pond	Langar Parish Council	0.02	-	Pond	?	Yes
Lily Ponds, Radcliffe-on-Trent	Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council (Radcliffe on Trent Conservation Group)	4.7	Part LWS	Grass; Pond	Yes	Yes
Meadow Covert Wood, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council	2	LNR	Wood	Yes	No
Meadow Park, East Leake	Rushcliffe Borough Council (ELPC / Friends Group)	18	-	Grass; Stream	Yes	Yes
Orston Millennium Green	Orston Parish Council	1	-	Grass; Pond	Yes	Yes
Orston Plaster Pits	Girl Guides	4.72	SSSI	Pond; Grass; Woodland	Yes	Guides
Queens Wood	Aslockton Parish Council	0.3	-	Woodland	Yes	Yes
Rushcliffe Country Park, Ruddington	Rushcliffe Borough Council	85	LWS; LNR	Pond; Grass; Wood; Lake; Reedbed	Yes	Yes
Sharphill	Rushcliffe	9.6	LWS; LNR	Wood	Yes	Yes

Site	Ownership (Management)	Area Ha	Designation	Habitats	Management Plan (last update)	Public Access
Wood, Edwalton	Borough Council (Friends Group)					
Sheldon Field, Cropwell Butler	National Playing Field Association (Sheldon Field Management Committee)	10.4	-	Grass	Yes	Yes
Skylarks, Holme Pierrepont	Notts Wildlife Trust	47	LWS	Grass; Wood; Lake; Reedbed	Yes (2026)	Yes
Springdale Wood, East Bridgford	Woodland Trust (Friends Group)	1.4	-	Wood	Yes	Yes
Stone Pit Wood, Gotham	Rushcliffe Scout District	3.1	LWS	Wood; Grass	Yes	Yes
Sutton Bonnington Diamond Wood	Nottingham University / Woodland Trust	19	-	Wood	In preparation	Yes
Sutton Bonnington Diamond Wood	Nottingham University / Woodland Trust	10	-	Wood	In preparation	Yes
Sutton Bonington Spinney and Meadow	Sutton Bonnington Parish Council	2.5	LNR	Grass; Wood	Yes	Yes
The Hook, Lady Bay	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Friends Group)	15	LNR	Grass; Stream	Yes	Yes
Upper Saxondale Community Nature Reserve	Upper Saxondale Resident Association	3.2	-	Grass; Wood	Yes	Yes
Wilford Claypits, West Bridgford	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Notts Wildlife Trust)	4.3	SSSI; LWS	Pond; Marsh; Grass; Wood; Reedbed	Yes (2013)	Yes
Willoughby	Woodland Trust	2.5	-	Wood	Yes	Yes

Site	Ownership (Management)	Area Ha	Designation	Habitats	Management Plan (last update)	Public Access
Wood, Willoughby on the Wolds						
Wilwell Farm Cutting, Ruddington	Rushcliffe Borough Council (Notts Wildlife Trust)	7.5	SSSI; LNR	Marsh; Grass; Wood; Reedbed	Yes (2013)	Yes

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Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 19 July 2023

Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium

Report of the Director – Development and Economic Growth

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. Rushcliffe Borough Council have been working over the past five years to deliver a crematorium for its residents that offers an alternative to the existing choices and has the environment at its heart. Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium opened on 3 April 2023 located on Main Road, Stragglethorpe, on the edge of Cotgrave.
- 1.2. This report provides the background to the project, updates Members on the current position and provides information on future plans. There are a few areas for development and input from Members is requested.
- 1.3. There have been previous reports to Cabinet on the Crematorium on 13 November 2018, 9 December 2019 and 14 July 2020.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Provide comment on the operation of the Crematorium to date based on the information provided by officers and feedback from residents
- b) Share their aspirations for the future development and growth of the Crematorium.

3. Supporting Information

Background

- 3.1. The report to Cabinet in November 2018 identified the opportunity for the construction of a Crematorium in the Borough and a potential site. Catchment areas of existing crematoria in the Rushcliffe and neighbouring boroughs were analysed and demonstrated a geographical gap in Rushcliffe which was not being served by access to a crematorium within a 30-45 minute drive time (acceptable industry and compassionate standards). This, alongside future demand linked to population growth and trends in death care (i.e., preference for burial or cremation), led to the conclusion that there was a compelling case to be made for the development of a new crematorium in Rushcliffe.

- 3.2. Wilford Hill was previously the only crematorium in the borough and is run by Nottingham City Council. Drive-time catchment analysis undertaken indicated that a new crematorium in Rushcliffe could expect to undertake in excess of 1000 cremations annually, without accounting for the projected population increase both nationally and in the borough. Therefore, a new crematorium in the borough was considered both a necessary piece of community infrastructure and a financially viable proposition.
- 3.3. Planning permission for the development was approved in September 2019 and the land purchase completed in early 2020.
- 3.4. As set out in the report to Cabinet in July 2020, Rushcliffe's carbon neutral targets are embedded in all aspects of the crematorium. This included a recommendation at that time for officers to investigate new technologies to enable the delivery of a greener crematorium within the project budget. One area of focus was the cremator itself and following investigations, the decision was made to install an electric cremator rather than the more traditional gas option, reducing CO2 emissions by up to 85%.
- 3.5. At this time, there was only one other electric cremator in the UK. At the time of opening, Rushcliffe Oaks were the fourth in the UK and the decision to invest in the new electric technology, rather than the traditional method of gas, has played a huge part in being operationally carbon neutral. The excess heat from the cremator is also used to heat the building and hot water.
- 3.6. The construction of Rushcliffe Oaks began in November 2021 and was expected to take 48 weeks with a view to opening in the Autumn of 2022. There were however several delays to this timeline with supply chain issues, covid 19 still being present and unexpected issues that came up during the process, including the supplier of the cladding having a factory fire and no longer being able to fulfil the order. However, these barriers were overcome and the Crematorium opened on 3 April 2023.
- 3.7. The total budget for the build, including land purchase and provision of the cremator, was £8.5m, although the final account is still being finalised, it is anticipated that there will be savings due to VAT recovery.
- 3.8. As well as reports to Cabinet throughout the build process, a cross party Member Working Group was also established. This enabled the team to update members and get a steer on key decisions throughout the programme delivery including on aspects such as levels of fees and charges.

Operating the Crematorium

- 3.9. There are four members of staff working at the Crematorium (Manager, Senior attendant and two attendants) who were recruited into post over the last two years. Recruiting them prior to opening allowed time for training to be undertaken and meant that the team were all involved in the programme delivery ahead of opening, including setting up all the required processes,

procedures and risk assessments. A member of the Streetwise Team is based at Rushcliffe Oaks full time to look after the grounds maintenance.

3.10. Setting up the operational side of the crematorium was a big piece of work and one that involved a variety of workstreams. These included:

- the procurement of a booking system
- a website
- the identification and supply of the chosen memorialisations
- all cremation paperwork required to enable the team to carry out a cremation
- the operating permit
- pricing structure
- uniforms
- policies and procedures
- signage and marketing material.

3.11. Since the doors of the crematorium opened, there has been a steady rise in take up of cremation services month on month. As with any new business or facility, the first few months are focused on building an excellent reputation and a strong working relationship with partners who the team work alongside daily e.g., funeral directors and celebrants to provide the highest quality of service for the families at the most difficult time.

3.12. Figures for cremations so far:

Month	Full Service	Direct (no service)
April	18	4
May	28	3
June	36	6

3.13. Feedback received from funeral directors and celebrants so far has been very positive, with some travelling from a distance and returning to use Rushcliffe Oaks over other crematoriums nearer to them. However, the most rewarding feedback has come from families following a service. The team have so far supported nearly 100 families and have been surprised that following such a traumatic event, family members have felt compelled to get in touch by phone, email and calling in to say thank you for the service in beautiful surroundings.

Communication and Engagement

3.14. Prior to the construction phase and during the build. Work was undertaken to start to build relationships with all stakeholders. This included:

- Community days prior to and during the build to update local residents and hear feedback. Both of these were held at Cotgrave and attracted a mix of local residents and industry colleagues
- Regular meetings with local businesses to give updates and deal with any issues as required

- Meeting Managers from the other local crematoriums and setting up a peer group who now meet regularly to share best practice and lessons learned (whilst remembering it's a very competitive industry)
- Prior to opening, site tours were organised for all Members, Rushcliffe Borough Council staff, local businesses and industry colleagues
- A funeral director pack was prepared detailing all information needed to access services including step by step instructions on how to create an account and make bookings on the booking system via the funeral director portal. These were hand delivered by the team to all local funeral directors before opening.

3.15. It is still very early days and over the next few months the plan is to build on the positive start by:

- Continuing to build close relationships with industry colleagues in particular funeral directors and celebrants
- Engage with the community by having an open day on Saturday 22 July 2023
- Set up a Friends of Rushcliffe Oaks group with help from the Notts Wildlife Trust to engage local residents in the management and maintenance of the extensive grounds and to maximise the biodiversity
- Regular posts on our dedicated Facebook and Instagram pages
- Adverts placed in local brochures and magazines, for example Cotgrave connections.

Memorialisation

3.16. An important area for the family to consider is how they would like to remember their loved one, often this is through a memorial on site. Great consideration was given to this to ensure families are offered a wide choice of options at a range of price points. This aim was also to ensure memorialisations were made from natural materials, produced locally and in keeping with the local environment. Memorials on offer at present include: an inscribed leaf on a memorial tree; a variety of plaque options including kerbstone plaques along either side of the oak avenue; an engraved wooden slat on the circular bench; columbarium niches; and either rock and log orbs.

3.17. There is also an option for a free entry in the online book of remembrance. This allows family members to add details of the deceased to be available to view online.

3.18. The team are looking at the further opportunity of tree planting for memorials and other options for the interment of ashes.

3.19. The option for taking memorialisation's away is an area yet to be developed e.g., ashes into glass. Funeral directors do offer many options of this type of memorialisation, however, we are looking to offer some items for those family members who visit us, perhaps after a service and would like to see a choice.

Collation of customer feedback

- 3.20. Excellent customer service is an integral part of service delivery at Rushcliffe Oaks and options for how to monitor and measure this are being explored. A simple survey for those who have visited the facility it is felt may not be appropriate therefore other options are being looked at.
- 3.21. The team have had a lot of good feedback verbally and by emails, social media posts or cards and are keeping a record of these. However, it's difficult to get any measurable information.
- 3.22. An option that is being considered is gaining feedback from funeral directors themselves (this is being done on a more informal basis currently) as they are customers of the Crematorium and have, in most cases, more contact with the families. Any additional ideas from members of the Growth and Development Scrutiny Committee would be welcome.

4. Risks and Uncertainties

- 4.1. Cremation bookings and memorialisation sales are unpredictable, especially in the first year of opening. As mentioned above the team are working on a variety of different ways to market the crematorium to mitigate the risk. Based on projections going forward of an average of 60 cremations a month for the next 9 months this would result in a loss of income of £156,750 against projections.
- 4.2. As can be seen in the table at paragraph 3.12, a proportion of the services are direct, which are offered at a reduced cost as they don't include service. This presents a risk to income and the number of direct funerals compared to overall numbers will be monitored. However, it does also represent an opportunity for additional income generation as these can be accommodated around existing service times.
- 4.3. Recent increases in the cost of energy are putting significant pressure on the budget. This is being closely monitored and software has been installed in the building so that energy consumption can be viewed remotely on an hour-by-hour basis. This will enable the team to ensure the building is being operated as efficiently as possible.

5. Implications

Financial Implications

- 5.1. The business model has a target of 4 cremations per day plus 4% of cremations will become memorialisation sales. At present, this target is not being met (see paragraphs 3.12 and 4.1). Rushcliffe Oaks has opened at a quieter time of year and work continues to establish the reputation of this new facility within the local and wider area with funeral directors and residents as another option available to families. Income is being closely monitored. In addition, there are other budget pressures. Budget is required for grounds

maintenance (paragraph 3.9) and there is significant pressure on the electricity costs.

5.2. Performance monitoring is a key area of focus to ensure action is taken, where possible, to meet the business model targets.

5.3. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.4. Equalities Implications

Rushcliffe Oaks is fully accessible facility and open to all faiths.

5.5. 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	Rushcliffe Oaks provides a service for its residents at one of the most difficult times in life in beautiful, tranquil surroundings.
Efficient Services	These recommendations make no contribution towards this corporate priority.
Sustainable Growth	These recommendations make no contribution towards this corporate priority.
The Environment	Rushcliffe Oaks is an environmentally conscious crematorium using an electric cremator which reduces emissions by up to 90%.

7. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Growth and Development Scrutiny Group:

- a) Provide comment on the operation of the Crematorium to date based on the information provided by officers and feedback from residents
- b) Share their aspirations for the future development and growth of the Crematorium.

For more information contact:	Rhonda Churchill Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium Manager rchurchill@rushcliffe.gov.uk Tel: 0115 9148389 Mob: 07599 108834
Background papers available for Inspection:	Cabinet report 13 November 2018 Cabinet report on 9 December 2019 Cabinet report on 14 July 2020

List of appendices:	None
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 <p>Rushcliffe Borough Council</p>	<p>Growth and Development Scrutiny Group</p> <p>Wednesday, 19 July 2023</p> <p>Work Programme</p>
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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 Communities 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 14 June 2023, 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 October 2023

- How the Borough works with partners to plan for the infrastructure required to support growth
- Review of the Growth Boards
- Work Programme

3 January 2024

- Sewerage Infrastructure and Discharge within Rushcliffe
- Management of Open Spaces

- Work programme

6 March 2024

- Work Programme

3. Reason for Recommendation

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

For more information contact:	Pete Linfield Director of Finance and Corporate Services 0115 914 8349 plinfield@rushcliffe.gov.uk
Background papers Available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices (if any):	None.